THE PSYCHIC TRIO

OR NATIONS RECONCILED

BY

CHARLES EDMUND DeLAND

Author of "Thoughts Afield," "Tragedy of the White Medicine," "The Mis-Trials of Jesus," etc.



BOSTON

RICHARD G. BADGER

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TO THE MEMORY OF

MY FATHER

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THE PSYCHIC TRIO

CHAPTER I

HE had graduated from a western university a year ago; was now attending the university law school, having just completed his first year; and was home at the farmstead of his birth for the summer vacation.

In boyhood he had experienced that touch with life's actualities that was the aim of the current school-and-civics system. He had been an inspired student. These had brought to his young manhood a certain mastery in civic conduct and responsibility. With manhood had come the conviction that he was destined to an uncommon career in uplift of community and state.

And the law school taught the ethics of law as embodiment of practical justice, with the same thoroughness that characterized the teaching of legal principles and their application to the facts of life. The law course aimed at making an ethically responsible professional—if below standard here his diploma was withheld.

And Bernard Frame had imbibed the spirit of that standard; realizing that without ethics in law practice society must suffer at the hands of the bar.

This thought had buoyed his spirit to greater yearnings. The history of the federal republic impressed him with what mighty responsibility the lawyer and jurist had been commissioned in the framing and preservation of that government in which the hopes of Christian and pagan races were centered—as his study of recent and still prevailing tendencies had convinced him that the influence of the bar, and in no small degree of the judiciary, was changing from a preservative to a destructive tendency, in society and government.

For years in his early boyhood he had not known Flissey Loor

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as a personal acquaintance—a fact difficult of explanation; since many of his schoolmates had met her. Time and again he had seen her—while passing by or over her home nearly two miles from his own, in his rides and soars; sometimes at church at Belville. Once or twice he had observed her at a distance, at certain school-civics gatherings in the neighborhood. But not until he was in his twentieth year had he exchanged a word with her,—and then the meeting had been purely fortuitous. It came about in this wise:

On his return from Wiltsburg one afternoon in May—to which town he had soared in his airal to see a young friend off for the farther west—and while circuiting toward his father's grainfields, he had glided over the orchard of the Loor farmstead, when suddenly the motor had gone wrong, its wings had nearly ceased to operate. He had maneuvered it to an uneventful drop to earth, and had ascertained that the trouble was with a certain valve. The motor—failing to respond to treatment, he had started brusquely toward the garage of this farmstead, the previously collapsed airal slung over his shoulder; thinking to resort to the aid of the Loor planeman if he were at hand.

He was nearing the point of emergence from the orchard through a gate opening upon the rear of the dooryard and garden-lawn when, coming upon a faint footpath, and turning at an angle in following it, he had come abruptly upon a young lady sitting upon a slight incline beneath an apple tree. She was absorbed in arranging some apple blossoms she had plucked from the low boughs of an overspreading tree.

Suddenly he beheld her bending over the flowers, her face only partly within view. Being at a little distance, she had not become aware of his presence.

Taken in surprise by this presence, his first thought was to go on through the gate—a course, however, immediately checked by impulse.

In a certain confusion, yet desiring to make his presence known, he stammered:

"Pardon me—but my airal's down, and I would like——"

"Oh!" shrieked the girl, springing to her feet, as at his utterance she turned her head and beheld the presence; scattering the blossoms, and starting wildly as if toward the gate, a certain terror in her face—but as suddenly dispelled as reality was apprehended.

Then, upon discovering that, despite its wings, it was not an

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apparition but a thing in form of man shouldering a cabinet, she exclaimed, as she drew a half ludicrous sigh of relief, then blushed in a confusion through which shone a smile doubly inviting from blithesome merriment beaming from her eyes:

"Oh!—I thought it was a——"

"I'm sorry I scared you,—doubly so, in that I was trespassing upon your presence—this motor failed me——"

"Oh, no, but"—she turned her head and looked away, laughing merrily as she pressed her hand to her heart—"those wings!"

"Yes, I must have seemed some outlandish sky-hawk, or something——"

"Really, I didn't know at first—and then it all flashed upon me"—now both were laughing.

Frame was placing the cabinet and appurtenances upon the ground. Doffing his hat, he stood smiling upon the now composed girl, whose radiance under the subsiding excitement of the moment was aspect of beauty in spirituality. He spoke deferentially:

"Begging your pardon, I believe this is Miss Loor—and——"

"Yes; and this is Mr. Frame——"

"I am Mr. Frame, Bernard Frame, Miss Loor, at your service——"

"Yes," she replied, as she advanced to meet his extended hand, "I have, of course, known of you, in a way, as Mr. Frame; but——"

"And somehow," he interposed, "though we've lived almost near neighbors, I had not had the pleasure of your personal acquaintance before, although I am glad to say I have seen you—quite a number of times I think, at places where we have both chanced to be present——"

"Yes," she assented, "I recall quite distinctly having seen you, on many occasions, in years past; but you—" she hesitated, looking demurely upon the orchard lawn at her feet, as Frame, conscious of an intended hint, relieved by interposing apologetically:

"Yes, I am certain it is wholly my fault that we haven't met long before; and I'm pleased that we have finally become acquainted—and, now that I frightened you so, I'm going to try and make some little amends by gathering up these flowers you've spilt when you started to run away," he diverted, stepping toward where she had been sitting and, stooping, commencing to pick up the scattered blossoms; and as Flissey turned and began to assist, he mildly protested:

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"I think you ought to permit me to gather them all, Miss Loor; for the pleasure it affords me—and then, my conscience——"

"Please don't make any further apologies, Mr. Frame; let us join in gathering them," she interposed; and as the two were standing, after having completed the mutually delightful task, he deferentially proffered her the dainty pink-white bouquet he had recovered, remarking with a grateful smile:

"I'm sure this is a pleasure I did not dream of, when I so unceremoniously disturbed you——"

"And I'm certain I am overpaid for the little fright you—I gave myself," she corrected, bursting into another fit of merriment, as she placed the blossoms with those she had gathered. Then, bowing her acknowledgements, she took from the bunch a few sprays, and with evident delight, offered them to her new-made acquaintance, saying:

"I hope you'll accept these, Mr. Frame, for the pains you've taken—and for the pleasure it will give me."

"Thank you; they are beautiful, and so fragrant," he replied, receiving and placing them in his lapel buttonhole. Then, recurring to his adventure, he explained: "I was on the way through the gate to the garage—my motor had gone wrong as I was swinging over the opposite edge of the orchard; and I came down rather suddenly—a trespasser on your father's preserves——"

"Don't say trespasser, Mr. Frame; we know that word became obsolete years ago, when we relate our air-journeys——"

"Well, to end my relation of this adventure—I thought I might find some one at the garage who could aid me in repairing my flyer—and you know the rest, Miss Loor."

"We'll go and see if we can find Maurice," she suggested; to which Frame returned thanks as he hastened to re-shoulder the cabinet. She led the way through the gate and on to the garage door; where, after looking inside, she turned and said:

"I really didn't expect to find him here, Mr. Frame, though I thought he might have returned home; but he's out with Mother in our plane. Won't you come into the house? They'll return very soon, as Mother was to be home some time before the dinner hour."

"Thank you, Miss Loor, it's very kind of you, but I must get back home myself—I had not intended to be away so long when I left to soar and drop down at Wiltsburg this afternoon; and if I may use the garage I'll try and fix up my motor, and if it doesn't work I'll take a short run home afoot."

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"Oh, certainly, if you must go, use anything you can find in there, and you're welcome to it," she replied.

Frame raised his hat, thanking her, as she partly turned, excused herself, and remarked that she would step into the house.

Further examination revealed the loosening of a part that affected the operation of a cylinder. He quickly tightened the parts by use of tools at hand, and was about to take to air again when Miss Loor appeared on the scene with a pitcher of water and a goblet, saying:

"Mr. Frame, since you won't come in, I'm going to offer you a drink of water anyhow; you've been fussing with your airal and must be thirsty," and she held forth the filled tumbler.

"Thank you, so much, Miss Loor," said Bernard, as he took the glass and drank its contents. He was renewing thanks also for use of the tools with which he stated he had readily adjusted the motor parts; then he reverted:

"I am very glad of the privilege of your personal acquaintance, Miss Loor, and shall hope to become better acquainted in future." He raised his hat as Flissey said in parting:

"I'm sure the pleasure is mutual, Mr. Frame; and I hope you'll come over and visit us, now that you're acquainted. I would like to have you meet my parents—to know them formally, I mean—father's away to-day on business, or I would be glad to introduce you to him too."

Expressing deep obligations for the invitation, Frame bowed, and was soon up and out of sight beyond the orchard.

This fortuitous meeting with Flissey Loor had later impressed him as being fraught with destiny—yet as measure of Frame's strange experience of the event, such expression is very like a solecism.

There was a flood-tide of love—but linked with a decree deep in his being; a negative, a bar against recognition of love's behest!

Mastered by this inward reservation, he felt it his sacred duty to explain to her; to tell her of his love—and of this obstacle he could not define, yet that controlled him.

But—and because of this mysterious negative—he had not called; and his vacation was now near its end.

He had again met her casually on the street in Wiltsburg, when she had just bidden adieu to her old schoolmate Selton at the tram station upon his departure to resume his course at an eastern university. To her expression of surprise that he had not yet visited her home, he had not found courage to state the singular situation

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—had stammered his regrets—that some special work during part of his vacation had engrossed him——

"You haven't found time to come over, that's what you want to say, I guess," she laughed, "and I'll excuse you for the past, but I'm going to expect you to call before your vacation ends—and it's almost gone now—oh, you must come before you return to the university," she ended, coming somewhat to Frame's relief.

In response he had summoned courage to declare, as he looked in all earnestness into her inquiring eyes that carried implication of a challenge in the candor of their expression, "If it were not for something I could not well explain to you, perhaps—I know I cannot make this plain to you now—but I repeat, I shall endeavor not to miss calling upon you, Miss Loor."

She had cordially thanked him; and so the second meeting had ended.

"I wonder what all this means?" said Flissey to herself, as Bernard walked away, "this, 'if it were not for something'—something 'I could not well explain'—well, if he comes it won't matter—but will he come?" and she tried to forget this mysterious expression of "something" Mr. Frame had advanced as a possible bar to fulfillment of his promise.

But the vacation had passed without again bringing Frame to Flissey's home.

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CHAPTER II

MISGIVINGS had come and had grown upon her. She had daily watched for him; but no word—not even a phone message—had come to cast further light upon the situation. When the last vacation day had passed, she, late in the evening, had thrown herself upon her couch and wept.

Yet she was not disposed to reproach Mr. Frame with even measurable disregard of his virtual promise. The process of vague imaginings as to why he had not called had left her devoid of tears and full of wonderment—and without resentment. She arose and went to her mother.

Mrs. Loor had been well aware of the state of expectancy of her daughter concerning Mr. Frame's promised visit. With the instinct of a kind and solicitous mother she had participated in the pleasures of Flissey's anticipations. And when his non-appearance began to be felt by her with a certain keenness, she had endeavored to assure her that she should not take the matter so seriously.

"And if he doesn't call, depend upon it, he will have some substantial excuse for disappointing you."

And when Flissey had appeared in the sitting room on the occasion in question, a touch of mild grief was visible in her countenance.

"Mother, since he hasn't come, what do you imagine can be the cause? I'm still wondering what that 'something' he referred to can mean."

"I have been thinking," replied the mother, "that he will surely have some explanation. Yet he might have phoned you, or have sent some message; so I don't know just what to think of it. But we can't know what real obstacle may have been in the way. So wait until to-morrow, dear, and don't feel bad over it as yet."

But Mrs. Loor herself felt that the incident bore an air of mystery. She was half inclined to coincide with a suggestion of Flissey—who could not clearly perceive that Mr. Frame had treated her in all respects as became a gentleman. But she continued to counsel forbearance.

"I cannot but feel that something will turn up before long, dear.

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Just will yourself to thinking of something else, now, and brighten up. You believe there's a Providence in all this, don't you?" she had said to Flissey on the second day following that evening.

"You have always taught me, Mother, that there's a Providence in everything that befalls us; but it's hard to see where God's will comes in sometimes," was Flissey's orthodox, yet doubting, response. Then she added: "But I'm going to do as you say, Mother, I'm going to take the air."

And so resolving, she had kissed her mother, donned her hat and not without a certain gayety had glided out into the front yard—and then visions of the orchard had come like a submerging sea of light upon her soul. To the gate in the rear she tripped, passed through, stood for a moment in reverie; then almost unconsciously she had settled down upon the inclining sward beneath the second apple tree, where she had fallen into daydreaming.

There came a vision of bliss—in living. Out of the intangible yet seeming real, came a personage. The relation was strange—but it was Mr. Frame!

She returned to the house in pensive mood.

The next morning had come; and with it a letter from him.

It bore date at Wiltsburg. He was returning to the law school, it said. Circumstances—so exceptional that he could not explain in a letter—had prevented him from making the call—she would not know how much he felt he had missed, and so forth. He could not expect her to feel satisfied with his failure to explain more definitely, et cetera. It ended with this remarkable paragraph:

"And when I protest, as I do, that I am balked in my desire to be again in your presence, by an obstacle within myself, you may be amazed, Miss Loor. But in truth I am forced to realize that what restrained me from calling grew out of a belief I cannot yet dispel—that it was best that I refrain from calling as promised. But I love you—have loved you from the moment I beheld you in the orchard—with a love consuming. It so peculiarly possessed me when you brought the water that—perplexing as it is, I must declare it—I tried to hide it in commonplace—and I hurried away—I can not explain!"

Nothing was said concerning future communication between them; no intimation that he would be pleased for some word from her. In a sense its ending was brutal in bluntness. Still there was another sense it could bear and wear.

Flissey—after the first flush of feeling surprised by the confession of his love—had sat staring in emotion and wonderment.

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Something from within had deterred him—from the source of that love!

She was sitting in the little bower at one side of the walk in the front yard.

"A case of mad love?" she had asked herself. No, not that, both head and heart had answered. In such case he would have recognized no obstacle, from without or from within. What could be that obstacle—that implied fear!

Flissey's face at the moment of completing the perusal of the letter denoted concern; but calm, inquiring concern. She was a girl of sense. Even in this affair of the heart her experience of surprise did not find her without a balance of incisive mental inquiry.

Moreover, at the moment she did not find her heart responding to Mr. Frame's qualified confession of love. But how could she know her own heart as the citadel—under so strange—so equivocal —an attack?

Yet, upon a second reading, his desire to win her heart seemed to reveal itself in every sentence of the letter. And she thought: As the "obstacle" is from within himself, he could explain it further if he would.

Then, if I were to ask him to further explain, though he refrains from coming, will he consent to explain?—she further queried.

"Hello, Sis! Eating some more thought candies, eh? To what quarter of the globe is thought wafting my treasure, this livelong-day. Oh, a letter"—and the speaker changed countenance, turned his head and smiled significantly.

Grampion Loor had been strolling in the back yard and garden and had approached the front walk by a circuit of the house. When he had entered the bower and thus accosted her, she turned her head away, and with a slight deprecatory wave of her hand, replied:

"Oh, Daddy, you go away!"

"All right, I'll go instanter," he rejoined with a chuckle, "but I'll have my toll first, letter or no letter," and he quickly clasped her head in his hands as he stood behind her, turned her head slightly backward and gave her a smacking kiss.

"Well, I got the worth of my money, and now I'll retire from the business," he observed as to himself in tone of mingled jocularity and dignity as he stalked out of the bower and toward the house.

He at once caught the significance of Flissey's present atti-

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tude in the bower. Most of what he had learned of the situation had come through intimations dropped by the mother.

He now entered the house, sought Mrs. Loor in the sitting room, and said to her:

"Well, Myra, something's happened at last; she's got a letter."

"A letter is it?—from whom, I wonder?" Then she continued: "If it's from Mr. Frame, Grampion, it will be a great relief to her. I wouldn't be surprised if it is from him——"

"Oh, it's from some 'feller,' don't forget that, wife; no schoolgirl's effusion would have set her so sober's she was when I popped down upon her," said the father gleefully.

"I'm going up to my den," thought Flissey, as she rose and hastened to the house as a longing to be by herself came to her; and she mounted the stairs and entered her room.

As she pondered—having re-read the letter several times—the more intense became her desire to probe the mystery. She was impressed with its sincerity—felt drawn to believe Mr. Frame had intended to deal with her frankly and fairly!

"Strange conclusion!" she had said to herself. "Just sets one to guessing what he means—virtually says he can't explain!"—and in spite of herself Flissey had emitted a hearty laugh—loud enough for the mother's ears to have caught it, however faintly.

Then, in response to bells chiming for dinner, she had descended and, in passing into the sitting room en route to the dining room, had accosted her mother, who sat seemingly awaiting her coming.

And Flissey's eyes had met her mother's, then glanced off through the window—there was a blush made faint by a resolve not to seem to appear that way. The joint effect had been that of a dignified bearing of saddened relief. And mother had caught it all; and had said with a smile:

"Flissey dear, you've received some mail—I guess—yes, I know you have; I can see it in your eyes—a change! Something's come."

The daughter's eyes now rested upon her mother's—then she had turned toward the dining room as though to pass by—but the ordeal had been too severe; she had hesitated, turned back, half dropped and half knelt and, burying her head in her hands upon her mother's lap, she had sunk into a faint quiet fit of tears—from which phase she in a sort of rally of joy, had quickly raised her head; and through her tears there shone a beatitude all

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but smothered in a look of doubt as her wide eyes revealed the soul of a daughter who knew she was loved!

"It was a good letter!"—fell from her mother's lips, as she returned the look in a gaze that carried both assurance and inquiry.

"Oh, Mother!—it's so strange—yes, I believe it is good—but I feel too its meaning may be different—but I can't help feeling—that he's tried to explain——"

"*Tried* to explain?—why, Daughter,—you mean of course, explained his not coming—'twas from Mr. Frame, wasn't it?" Mrs. Loor had interposed. She was holding Flissey's hands as she still knelt in front of her.

"Yes—from Mr. Frame, Mother—but you would never understand—I don't myself, fully, what it says about not explaining—but——"

"Says it doesn't explain?—why, Flissey!——"

"Now, Mother dear,"—Flissey was now standing; then she looked calmly down upon her mother, as she had composedly prepared to proceed with her version: "I'll not permit you to go on in that way about Mr. Frame. To begin with, it *is* a strange letter. To end with, it's a sincere letter! He tells me how he regrets that—that he couldn't come—how he longed to come, Mother—but that there's something within him—an obstacle—oh, it's so strange! Mother, it's a mystery but it's white as snow!" she had ended in a climax, as she stood gazing into space in a kind of bewildered, doubting ecstacy; her mother intently watching her every inflection of countenance. Then the latter ejaculated:

"Well, I don't understand!" She now stood, surprisingly contemplating her daughter, whose attitude of measurable composure was beginning to impress her.

Suddenly Flissey had turned and exclaimed, in a spirit of confidence and of seeming faith in the integrity of things:

"Mother, let's go in to dinner. We'll talk about this afterwards. But for the present, I beseech you, keep your mind free until you know more—about this letter." And Flissey instantly hid in her bosom the missive she had just taken therefrom.

"How can I make her understand? For after reading it over and over, I haven't been able to explain it to her," she thought, during the dinner hour. "If she were to read every word of it she wouldn't know what he means!"

Her mother too had been thinking—and not without a cer-

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tain feeling of concern. At first she thought of possible peril lurking in a letter that *tried* to explain, but that presented a self-confessed "obstacle." But she instantly recalled the high character of Bernard Frame; that repute indicated that the force of his studious habits had been to keep him somewhat aloof from society, as that term was usually understood, but that this was accounted rather a mark of distinction, and not at all to his discredit.

Then retrospect brought to mind that when Flissey's concern over Mr. Frame's non-appearance had led to discussion and to counsel on her part, she had advised her not to hastily conclude that his course was not justified. And, after all, if it was a strange letter, was it unnatural for its writer to label it as such and to confess that he could not offer an explanation that would satisfy Flissey?

Mother and daughter had repaired to the veranda after dinner was over. Grampion Loor had been observing enough at the table to have seen that something was transpiring that it would be just as well for him to ignore, as concerned suggestion of discussion. But as he was about to sally forth into the rear door-yard he could not withhold this banter as his merry eyes followed the disappearing daughter:

"Well, I must say I didn't dream that kissing had such a depressing effect on susceptible young ladies!"

The mother, failing to fully comprehend this allusion, was looking first at Flissey, then at Grampion, quizzically endeavoring to solve the riddle; as Flissey, who had turned with a show of ferocity upon her father's retreating form, exclaimed:

"He stole it—the mean old thing!" Then the mother understood.

"Feared to tell you?—of something within him, what!—what could it have been—not his conscience, child?"—Mrs. Loor had interposed to Flissey's attempt to explain that Mr. Frame's failure to clearly explain was because of "something within him—that prevented his coming."

"No—you do him an injustice to imagine him being conscience-stricken, Mother," rejoined Flissey. "He's felt this 'something within him' from the time he first met me—he says so in the letter—it is strange—but he's a good man, and he's manly too!" she declared protestingly, as there flashed up a strange half-celestial fire in her luminous brown-black eyes.

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"Oh, Flissey dear," the mother had responded, looking dotingly and compassionately upon her daughter, "I'm so sorry I've said anything to displease you—you know I didn't mean to do Mr. Frame an injustice. It's my girl, you know, that I'm thinking of more than all else—my only darling!" she had closed, starting up convulsively and stepping to where Flissey sat, and, stooping as she clasped her face between her hands, kissing her with motherly abandon.

Then, returning to her chair as silent tears that told of vindication of her faith had come into Flissey's eyes, Mrs. Loor, touched by the spectacle, had met the gaze of appealing triumph with one of loving maternal sympathy. Telepathy had done that of which words could not give a hint. For somehow the mother had now felt that her own final reasoning at the dinner table was the true philosophy as interpretation of the strange love-missive.

"Mother," Flissey had declared as this exchange of looks had proceeded, "believe me: Whatever the letter may mean, I have more regard for Mr. Frame than I had before it came!"

"I believe you, my dear child—I can see that you feel that way. I trust that nothing exists, or will occur in future to make you think less of Mr. Frame," had been the reply. "And now I'll leave you, Fliss, to yourself; I must go and look after things about the house."

And months had passed; the second year at the law school was nearing its end, and still no word had succeeded the letter, or had passed either way between Flissey and Frame.

For she had resolved to let time do its work, whatever might betide; and to send no response to the letter—but what of anxiety and longing had attended abiding by the resolution!

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CHAPTER III

FRAME had felt compelled, despite his own mental discomfort in this connection, to permit the letter to remain without further explanation or supplemental communication. His attempt to imagine Miss Loor's state of mind and disposition as its recipient, had been coupled with a constantly renewed struggle within himself to throw off the incubus—to reverse the negative that had confronted him from the moment when he had first beheld her in the orchard, and which forbade him, notwithstanding his singularly consuming love for her, the privilege of her companionship.

In this Frame may have constituted a mysterious personage. But mystery itself, analyzed, is but the commonplace. Only we have not fully investigated—have not known environment.

Back of his sincerity was dominant will-power. He was at once a dreamer, a deep student and a man of action. Conscience in such a man meant unyielding obedience to its decree.

At times from her early girlhood he had observed the peculiarly fascinating little Flissey Loor—but from a distance that revealed her as a fairy. Through glimpses that were supplemented by imaginings of her in the heather and in sylvan retreats, silent worship of the fairy became to him inevitable. That his kindred and schoolmates never discovered his boyish entrancement, that these perceptions were barren of expressiveness to others, mattered not.

But that the perception made her out a sprite so blithesome and so flitting that she became a hint of inconstancy, was most significant in the scale of fate. As years passed he had set her down as one best fitted for companionship with those moved by ebbs and flows of the social seas. For himself, a master mind bent upon a career of effort in controlling those tides, and self-conscious of his destiny in that sense, his judgment of selection had decided, and his will had decreed that he would find a helpmeet for life's strenuous journey in one who combined consecration to high purpose with those qualities of mind and disposition that fitted with his own. And in process of inclusion and ex-

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clusion his discrimination had discarded Flissey—she was not for him.

But exterior evidence had reënforced his inclination.

George Selton had been Flissey's companion and close schoolmate from babyhood to the stages of long pants and long dresses. Their homes were less than a mile apart; they had seen very much of one another, and as they grew older had seemed to enjoy each other's presence so much that common repute had crystallized into neighborhood belief that the resultant of these ties might not improbably ripen into a life-partnership. He had long accompanied her at neighborhood functions; seemed scrupulously attentive; and indeed he had come to regard himself as possessed of little short of an omnipotent privilege in the premises.

Most people thought George had come to love Flissey—or that at least it would come to that; and as to herself, that it was but a question of the degree of reciprocation on her part. His occasional appearances with this or that other girl friend had led to no special tie of affection.

And as to Flissey: In a tacit way she had come to regard George's attentions as the legitimate outgrowth of earlier companionship. But in truth she had never seriously asked herself if she really could love him. She had liked him so well and so long that consciousness of affection had been sufficient self-assurance against any weakening of their relations, especially in view of his evident loyalty to her.

But gossip and inference among close friends had led to speculation as to whether Flissey was taking George seriously—or was she ever going to do so? Did she really care for him? As to George's affection for her, common speech answered in the affirmative. But now and then a milestone would read:

"They'll never marry—they've been friends too long; there's been no real demonstration anywhere along the line."

And be it known that such current remarks were more or less rife when Frame's letter to Miss Loor was penned. And down to that hour no one had heard—or imagined, for that matter—that Bernard Frame had ever more than occasionally looked at Flissey Loor, and then only at behest of courtesy.

But the few of these exchanges that had come to Bernard's ears had been of a character to indicate that Miss Loor was George's chosen, and that she had as good as reciprocated his affection.

Now, George, with all his seeming constancy, was at heart

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something of an adventurous spirit; and there were those who did not take his apparent devotion to Flissey without allowances. Moreover, he was debonair and dapper; and, perhaps because also of this, his attachment to Flissey had taken on a certain air of courtliness which, to the general observer, went to confirm the impression of his constancy, while to a few shrewd analysts, who had seen or heard of some little side flirtations, these appearances were but a veneer under which existed and persisted a disposition to be a free lance among the susceptibilities of the circles in which he moved.

A few shreds of the verbal outcroppings of this deeper study of Selton's inner nature had from time to time come to Frame's knowledge. As resultant of all he had heard was deduced: A shallow and uncertain lover; and a return of such love by one who had known him so that she had accepted him with fair knowledge of the elements of his character.

And such a girl was not for him: this in sum and substance.

As regards the elder Loors' conception of the heart-relations of Flissey and Selton, we have seen only that her mother's reception of the incident of the expected visit from Frame, and of its mysterious disappointments, seemed to indicate that she regarded her daughter as free to act concerning Frame's case as her heart might dictate. And the inference that she strongly surmised that matters as between her and Selton were not likely to come to favorable committal, may not be unfair in the light of circumstances.

But the whole secret locked up in Frame's letter is not yet unfolded.

More than a year prior to his fortuitous meeting of Flissey fate had brought him in contact with a young lady whose personality had deeply impressed him. It was at the summer social-civics contest at Ives Waters; a beautiful country center on the border of a lakelet where the township school had developed into the popular functions of the period.

The occasion in question was one that had brought this prospective new acquaintance into public notice, as one combining rare personal magnetism and high mental and spiritual endowments.

This was the afternoon of the second and last day of the contest. Throngs from the near-by country were reënforced by visitors from remoter parts to observe the performances of those on the varied and strenuous program. In keeping with the popular vogue of the day, the accessories of the auditorium hall—

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which, as now arranged for summer exercises, opened toward the shrubbed and shaded spaces fringing the lake—were of Grecian type; the dominant feature of the concluding exercises being in nature of a revival of a phase of the Greek drama.

The present feature of competition was that of superior excellence in presentation of the drama from the relative standpoints of three characters in the play, grouped around the bearer of the title-rôle—the latter being the trainer, from abroad, who had organized and directed the rehearsals.

And Frame, his parents and his brother Horace—some years his junior—had aired across country to attend this contest; and he and they had, from reserved seats, witnessed the presentation and had joined in the acclaims that went up in honor of the girl who, from a remote corner of the township, had come to prove her merit as resultant of her brief training in the drama thus presented.

She had that afternoon won the prize over her two competitors—another girl and a boy of the township.

In the informal congratulations that followed the close of the contest, Frame had been introduced to the winner of the prize.

She was Henrietta Brodein.

He had gone home profoundly impressed with her personality and her genius. For underlying all else in her bearing he had observed the qualities of seriousness and of high purpose; and in her acting the gift of reflecting these in delineation of character. He had fervently praised her effort; for which she had demurely thanked him.

In fine, since he had met Miss Brodein Frame had lived in her so intensely that the relationship was closer, dearer, than were even his boyhood impressions of Flissey's personality. And Miss Brodein was coming to absorb more and more of his dreams of future life-action. This too, though he had never but once set eyes upon her after the first meeting at Ives Waters.

In the following spring, after his return home at the end of his first year at the law school, he had again met her—this time upon the highway as she was on her way to the Waters, where she was now engaged as assistant in developing another rural out-of-doors drama for the then coming annuals.

After greeting her cordially he had again made free to commend her effort of the preceding year, to declare his belief in her possession of exceptional talent—and to emphasize his opinion that in her entry into the seriousness of her rôle lay the proof

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of her power of impersonation. He felt that she was destined to a high place in her coming profession—it was known that she had resolved to fit herself for the stage—and he wished her the full measure of recognition which her merit, reënforced by striving, should bring to her. She had listened to all this with evident interest, her eyes lighting up with a strange kindling as he proceeded; and she had simply bowed a sincere acknowledgement at its close. And to her inquiry if he expected to attend the coming annuals at the Waters, he had replied that he could not say—he would greatly enjoy attending, but that his plans for the vacation period might or might not permit of his doing so.

It had so eventuated that, in spite of his longings to grow nearer Miss Brodein, yet he had not attended this year's annuals at the Waters. On the other hand, because of his present absorption in the possibilities of achievement in the young impersonator, and of his imagining their possible connection with his own future, his consciousness of Miss Loor's charms lay relatively dormant.

Amid these environments of present immersement in the new acquaintance and of his now changed conception of the fairy, did Frame come face to face with the latter in the orchard.

And there, suddenly, in amazement of surprise—detached from all else in creation by the dazzling charm of her personality at close range—had entered his heart a presence which, if not expelled, he instinctively felt would usurp the place where nestled the new presiding spirit—there was a clashing, a revolt against the present approach—which latter nevertheless persisted!

It was revolt of soul against unanticipated and imperative assault of love. For it was intrusion upon a more sacred shrine reserved for Henrietta Brodein—an intrusion that meant an obstacle to a noble ambition!—in an instant he had seemed to experience this truth. The reactive effort to shut out Flissey was behest of soul rather than of love. The conflict was between beauty of loveliness, and lure of achievement—and at the moment Miss Brodein was bearing away the scepter!

This inner, consuming conviction was the "obstacle."

But long before he had reached the end of the present term at the law school, Frame, in facing the alternative involved in his future attitude toward Miss Loor, and being in grave doubt as to where he now stood in her estimation, had been led to a certain self-reproach.

Had he been just toward her? Why had he professed his

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love—only to stun her with an imperative negative! Or, if a negative must have been mentioned, why had he not stated frankly its nature?

"And if I visit her, how can I make it any plainer without revealing the real cause?"—he queried. But—yes! he had loved her passionately!—and he had owed her a letter. Then what wrong in calling upon her and manifesting what he felt—that he was glad to see her again. Would this, a right act, prejudice him in his heart-relations to another? Well, what then? How could he know that Miss Brodein would reciprocate? As affecting her, his longings were a dream—an ex parte attachment—the outcome unknowable.

Yet; while he clung to the dream, it became clear to him that the only manly course would be to call upon Flissey Loor this coming summer. And before he returned home he had resolved to do so.

He had now been at home for some weeks; had sent her no preliminary message; but had brought himself to the point of making the call.

And Flissey: She had been looking forward with anxious wonderment to what the vacation season would develop from the standpoint of Mr. Frame. Nor was this the entire burden of her thoughts and anxieties. Some disturbing evidences of Selton's inconstancy had engaged her mind.

George would be home. Would he request her company at the coming contest at Tromple Shades? If not, what would be the reason? Would it be because he had found new pastures in the east?

But if he did renew his former rôle of regarding her as his general stock in trade in the social scale, should she decline him? Should she snub him for his last year's apostacy to Rhoda Files?

But if Mr. Frame should, for instance, renounce the attitude of the letter, and declare he was no longer captive of the inner bondsman—whatever that mysterious ruler might be—should she then hold herself entirely free to entertain his more untrammeled approach?

Lastly—and it all came to this: If he should continue in his attitude of mysterious aloofness in person, what then? As to this, Flissey, too, had resolved.

If, after sending her a message so strange in its implications—much as she believed he had shown himself manly in spite of the implications from within him—if he should still refrain

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from making himself clear to her, she should feel free to regard the situation as one justifying some course upon her part that would lead to a further demonstration on his part.

She had taken her mother into confidence here.

"You should not concern yourself at present about the part you are to play, Flissey. If he doesn't come, or doesn't send you another letter to make his first one clear to you, it will then be time to think what you should do in acting your part. And after all, these matters do not all come to a pass by planning. Doubtless Mr. Frame will after all wish to see and talk with you," her mother had counseled.

Then she had sounded Flissey concerning her relations with Selton:

"I've been thinking much of late about—well, about what George means. What do you think he intends? I mean, you know, is he really serious in his love? Will it end in—well, what do you think?"

"Why, Mother, you know about George; he always takes things for granted, with me. He's always professing that he has ever loved me—though he doesn't often mention the subject, as he used to do. And as for me—he thinks I want him, that's the long and short of it. But, Mother, I've come to think differently of George of late," and Flissey's eyes fell to the floor, as she seemed endeavoring to reach a conclusion; and her countenance revealed a shade of sadness mingled with a look of endearment that to the keenly observant parent was more expressive than words. As she sat contemplating her daughter she observed in a sense of inquiry:

"George—of course we've been remarking this for some time—is not so constant as some young men are in their attentions; yet he writes to you as usual?"

"Yes, just as usual—that is, he runs on about everything that comes to mind; all just as if he knew I was wild to hear from him. But somehow, Mother, I don't feel that his letters have the old tone—there's something lacking, I don't know how to define it; but if he really thinks as much of me as he once did—or as I believe he did, he—well, it's a different way he has of expressing it, that's all"—was Flissey's response.

To further but guarded inquiries, she continued: "His letters nowadays amount to telling of a thousand things in his university experience, and he doesn't refer to me, somehow, as he used to—I can't express it any plainer," she ended; something like a mild sigh escaping her as she looked into space.

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"We thought, your father and I, that his going off and taking Rhoda Files over to Wiltsburg to the entertainment, was not just in keeping with his faithfulness to you, especially when, as we thought, it was understood he was to take you——"

"Oh, don't mention that circumstance!—as if I cared for her—or thought George did, for that matter. He explained that he owed her as much, on an old score, and wanted to pay it off—and couldn't well escape going with her on that particular occasion."

Yes; she had thought of what it might mean; and she didn't feel just right about it, "if you want to know," she had replied to her mother's suggestion, with evident feeling and embarrassment.

The upshot of which conference was, that Mrs. Loor suggested that Flissey have an earnest talk with George by way of putting his affections to the test; to the spirit of which suggestion she had assented:

"And I don't know but the time has come for an explanation of his attitude toward me."

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CHAPTER IV

AND Selton had in due course returned from the university; had called upon Flissey the following day, all smiles as ever; and Flissey had chatted with him in the bower. His professions were all as of yore; and he had seen no girl in the east to compare with Flissey Loor. Then he went on about his chums, the town, and society in general. His old home acquaintances came in for next to no mention. In a word, Flissey drew therefrom inferences that his life was becoming linked to his new connections; that he regarded the sphere in which he was moving as above the home associations. In vain she tried to bring him to converse concerning matters in the neighborhood.

No; he had not heard of the coming program at the Shades: "Fact is, Fliss, I hadn't thought of Trompie Shades since leaving the east. What's to be pulled off out there—the contest I suppose you mean," he ended, languidly wrapping another feboo * and lighting it; then, as if he had forgotten something, turning toward her and assuming an air of attentiveness.

And when she began to explain that it was something in high discussion in practical local government, and, after being broken in upon by George, she had finished by referring to "a dainty little dramatic piece," and that "there's music all through—and music's the climax! Oh, how I'm longing to hear it all!"—he had followed his interruption in which he had disdainfully referred to "old Frank Cockelwise on government—self-government he mightily calls it," with a lofty show of surprise——

"As if you weren't going to, girl!"—and he haughtily beamed a show of assurance into her eyes.

In her closing exclamation she had surprised even herself. She had unconsciously given vent to a longing—a flight of soul out of vexatious environment into gladness of freedom. Not so much her love of music and music-drama—her acquaintances knew she reveled in these—as a joyous sigh to feel that she could be untrammeled in their enjoyment. But to him it meant that she desired assurance that she might hear it all—in his company.

* A popular weed of the period, successor to the cigarette.

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"Fliss Loor! I enjoy it? On my honor—from my heart, most certainly. Why shouldn't I?"—was his declamatory response to her resolute venture to bring him to sincere expression as to whether he was really going to enjoy the annuals as he would like—"with me, I mean—that is if we attend." Then more professions of olden love undying—he now was sitting with his arm around her—ending with closing his eyes and pressing her hand closer.

As he opened them she looked into them with such a searchingly inquiring, steady, faithful gaze that George found the battery too much for his shallow nature. The wan smile of doubt that was the undertone—this seemed accusing. Beneath his blandness there was a quavering; he was borne back by the onset—turned his eyes away—then elevated them toward the skies where they seemed bathing in bliss—and the momentary coward was borne back to her by that impulse that knows no warrant save the justification that it is! He passionately cast his eyes upon her again, then suddenly lowered his head and kissed her with an abandon that seemed to prove all she could hope from fondest lover.

Who in his place that could resist the charm of that appeal which threw her being into the inquest of love's constancy, would be more than mortal!

"George, if only I could feel that you really, truly love me!"

Slowly came dimness in her eyes. He saw tears. She turned them aside; seemed involuntarily, gently withdrawing herself from his encircling arm. He, surprised and vexed, exclaimed, springing to his feet:

"Why, Fliss! Sniveling over it—this gets me!—oh, I guess I know, yes, yes, I think I savy——"

"Now, George, what do you mean?"—in astonished sincerity her eyes were upon him as, after twirling himself about, he was completing his bodily revolution.

"I mean," he replied in tone almost of retort, "that I think those tears mean—I won't say it—but you're just a little, foolish girl——"

"Mean what, now, what do you think they mean?"—the slight tinge of reproof in her tone was more of endearment than of censure.

"I think—now, Fliss, you've put it to me to tell you plainly—yes, I'll say I do think, that those tears you've shed on the heels of that kiss mean—jealousy! Now you have it!"

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"Jealousy! Why, George—jealous of whom, pray? Oh, no, George, you don't understand——"

"Well"—overbearingly—"I guess I understand. For almost a year I've known how you've been regarding all my devotion to you. You're green with jealousy. And of whom, you make free to ask. Who does not know 'tis of Rhoda Files.—I'll be just with you though, girl. From your own point of view there's a measure of justification—yes, I'll say justification. For you've some reason to envy Rhoda—notwithstanding she's not half so pretty as you are——"

"Oh, George! How can you be so cruel!—to disbelieve me when I told you last fall it was all right—after you explained! You declared again your unfailing love for me and I believed you, George——"

His further attempt at recrimination ended with: "But you don't believe it, Fliss, and you've proved your disbelief."

The icy cutting words were making a scar. Tears of yearning and of doubt, that love professed was not enthroned, were being desecrated in his hurling of them back as evidence of jealousy!

That Flissey did feel, and had felt, some jealousy toward Rhoda Files, was perfectly natural, all circumstances considered. But she was not jealous by nature; and this did not start those tears; they were of far deeper origin than suspicion of rivalry.

The poignant injustice of Selton's attack aroused Flissey's sense of self-respect to a degree he did not anticipate. She saw the time had come to disillusionize him of his imagined privilege to treat her thus with impunity—to teach him that he was trifling with her affections. She spoke again: He knew from her even, determined look, before a word had escaped her, that something in her he had not known before was asserting itself:

"George Selton, you have misjudged me. I feel you are not to me—not for me, what you once was. I do not know how, nor why, but I have felt for some time that your letters are not such as you used——"

"There! Is it the letters, then?—your tears for them, Fliss?"—and Selton protested in a fury of insistence, climaxing in pose of stilted injury:

"Show me a single one that falters in the old-time devotion—specify, if you can? Separate the wheat from the chaff, and prove——"

"Oh, George, I won't call any of it chaff—I don't mean any

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such thing. But what you say to me and of me hasn't the tone it used to have. I don't say, George, that it doesn't ring true, but somehow it doesn't ring—it doesn't impress me as being——"

"I see! I don't put it on thick enough, Fliss. Has it occurred to you that perhaps there's something lacking in your capacity—no, your disposition—to appreciate what I'm sending you? Mayn't it be profitable to read those letters over in a different spirit?"

Flissey's protestations that she had re-read them many times but that she could not believe herself the center of his thoughts as she had once felt she was, ended with reference to his chiding her for her tears: "You don't understand—Rhoda Files was not in my thoughts then—it was—oh, it was George Selton of old!"—and she burst into tears.

He protested that she was paining him more than ever. "It's all one with your reproachful attitude as—it's accusing me of barrenness of heart——"

"George Selton!"—she suddenly straightened up, looking surprisedly and complainingly at him through her tears to emphasize her words—"Can you fail to understand what my feelings mean toward you—to you who profess to love me?" Her eyes were fixed upon him as if insisting upon reminding him of a truth he needed to sense and appreciate.

"Well, Fliss," he returned, stiffening up and grinning a scorn as he looked away at an angle, "I see we're at outs—for once. And as you won't understand—for that's the way it looks to me, I feel myself under the necessity of bidding you good-by, and I'll be going. I hope you'll see things differently when this fit passes off; and we'll meet again"—and he was bowing himself out of the bower. Flissey, still looking steadfastly into his eyes, said:

"George, I want you to think this all over seriously. Unless you do come to understand what I've meant, in a different sense than you have seemed to interpret, there can be no proper adjustment between us. You must see things in a new light, else you'll do me a wrong you will come to regret."

As he passed on to the front gate Selton emitted from the depths of his conceit and vanity the fling: "The misunderstanding isn't here—that's what grieves me!—you forget who's the martyr. Good-by, Fliss!"

In his endeavor to think out a manly way of further explaining to Miss Loor the circumstances under which he had written

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the letter, Frame was more than perplexed—he was for a time baffled. On his way home from the law school he had realized how a revelation to her of the truth could not but be painful to her. For how could he reveal the truth concerning the letter without at least indicating the fact that his heart held something of a consuming affection—yes, a longing—for another!

But consciousness of the responsibility he was facing resolved him to declare to her, in final explanation, that he had felt that because of another attachment—perhaps equally inexplicable—he had been inwardly warned that it was not right to himself or to her for him to do less than struggle with and overcome his passion for her. Justice to him compels the declaration that he met the bitter thought that such an explanation would be neither clear nor satisfactory to Miss Loor, with his conviction that such a course was imperative. But the ordeal had given him an unusual aspect of countenance; first noticed by his mother.

"Why, no, Mother, I never felt better in my life, why do you ask such a question?" had been his response to her inquiry as to whether he had been sick. "Or what makes you so sober? Somehow you seem to be depressed in spirit?" His endeavor to disabuse her mind of such a thought by suggesting that because he might have something on his mind she should not be concerned—his affectedly unconcerned rejoinder—did not suffice to end her inquiries.

"It must be something special, eh, Son?"

"Oh, Mother, it's nothing that need be discussed. Dismiss all such thoughts, you're needlessly concerning yourself about me, I assure you," had been his last rejoinder.

Melita Frame took her son at his word, despite certain misgivings that would persist. But to his father she said that afternoon—it was the day following his return:

"Have you noticed, Jule, how changed Bernie is—how silent and thoughtful at times, so different from his usual spirits?"

"Yes, Meta; but that's easily accounted for. It's his contact with law studies. Then you know he's always thinking out something ahead—something beyond, you might say. That's characteristic of Bernie, don't you know?"

Then Julius, after assuring the mother that she should not "borrow concern about him," suddenly lapsed into thinking; which evoked a new suggestion:

"But like as not he's got some girl on his mind at last. You don't suppose he's gone off on such a tangent, do you?"

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"Well, Jule, it *has* occurred to me that he may have that very subject on his mind, though I've not the slightest idea of who it may be. Of course if there is such an attachment it's with some girl at the U. But that don't explain his reticence. Ordinarily such an experience—new to him, we must suppose—would make him both cheerful and inclined to converse—that's a safe guess," she ended with a laugh.

"Oh, well, whatever's on his mind is good for him. He's all right," declared Julius Frame, with a look of parental pride and a glance of assurance into his wife's face, which she returned with more intense show of motherly affection.

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CHAPTER V

"FELICIA, of course you're coming over to the rehearsal at the Shades to-morrow?" inquired one of her girl friends, Miss Eleanor Kiteler, of Flissey Loor, on the occasion of a passing call at her home one day in May of the present year. "We want you to be there for more reasons than one, you know, and——"

"I would like to go, if Mother's so she can go along," replied Flissey. "You know she's not been very well of late, though she's better than she was a week ago." Her manner of response carried a slight appearance of evasiveness.

"Well, do come—you must be there to hear and criticize the musical; in fine we can't very well let you off, for you're on the committee, and we've always relied on you to help so much in giving that part of the contest program its proper accentuation and setting, Felicia—and it's beautiful! Miss Florier is noble in the leading rôle of the drama; and several students are coming out strong in their parts. We want to make it the crowning of all we've so far had out there, so don't fail to come and assist us in putting on the finishing touches," persisted Miss Kiteler.

"Yes, I'm deeply interested in it all, Eleanor; and shall expect to be present and look in on the rehearsals, unless something prevents."

Not only had Flissey, almost from her babyhood, been endowed with love of music, she had been beguiled by its lure to make it a heart-study. Not that she had become enslaved to its demands upon her time. Rather her bent for it was such that its mastery as she grew toward womanhood seemed to come by intuition. She sang well; but her forte in performance was at the harp and the piano. Crowning all her accomplishments of late was her skill in suggestion and critical oversight in connection with the festivals and the social-civics functions at the various country-centers of the neighborhood.

And as these local performances—embodying civic instruction and entertainment—in connection with analogous doings in the ultra-suburban quarters of the principal towns and cities of the

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state, were rapidly becoming the primary and popular centers of public activities and diversion; this in development of citizenship, as well as of inspired love of rural entertainments, as against those of the cities proper, the accomplishments of such as Flissey were in increasing demand. Which means that her usefulness to the public was universally recognized wherever her talents were known.

Then, too, Flissey loved the country. Its beguiling scenery, its social atmosphere, inspired her enthusiasm for the work in hand. She had never cared much for city life, nor was its social lure such as to have tempted her to allow her devotion to rural centers and activities to wane. Her love of music was logically affiliated with that department of the social-civics.

Again: Not only was Flissey unassuming—she seemed almost wholly unaware of the real importance of her station as it was publicly regarded. She labored purely for love of the work, not for distinction or applause.

While Selton had known from infancy Flissey's precocity for music, it was to him matter of course, and had been ever since as a little girl she had so enchantingly thrummed the guitar and, later, the harp, to the delectation of family and friends. When the piano had come into prominence in her development, he was wont to say that while that instrument was not what it was "cracked up to be," she could make it very interesting to "her friends in general," and so on. Lastly, his expressions indicated his indifference to, if not his displeasure over her "hooking herself up to a propaganda of social-civics which is so irksome that the pull of music has to be kept up to make it tolerable." He shrewdly guessed, however, that "music would be her fad as long as she lived," and opined that "such slavery to such frivolity" was not worth while.

As for Bernard Frame, he had known something of Flissey's reputation as associated with the social-civics of the surrounding neighborhoods. While not by nature especially responsive to her call, music did appeal to him as an elevating and refining power. In this sense his heart went out in sympathy toward all the higher conceptions in expediency put forth in popular efforts to employ this art in the general uplift. He had mentally commended this trait in Miss Loor from the time of her entrance upon the stage of his boyish fancy as the flitting fairy; in which flights the harp had figured in imagination.

Miss Kiteler's call upon Flissey occurred several days after

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Selton had so surreptitiously and rudely betaken himself from her presence; and nothing had passed between them since that occasion. She had heard, however, that he had again called upon Rhoda Files; and the intimation had just come to her, in form of a roundabout report, that Rhoda had received his invitation to accompany him to a local entertainment.

"George's defying me!" she exclaimed to herself, "he's going to test my 'jealousy,' as he calls it. Humph!" Then her brow was clouded, and she had again fallen into sadness.

She had related to her mother the incident of the colloquy and of George's angry departure. Guardedly refraining from any committal in counseling at present, Mrs. Loor had broached the subject the next day by inquiring:

"What do you think of George's action, Flissey?"

She frankly answered that she thought he had acted unfairly; that his suggestion of jealousy was without reason; another rereading of his letters had left her with the same belief. Through suppression of a mild sob she declared she thought less of him for his action. She did not know whether he cared more for Rhoda Files; he had given no intimation of having met any young lady in the east. Her mother then related that she had talked with her father concerning this matter; that he had counseled withholding of advice for the present.

"You know we both feel that George's relations with you have been of so long standing that there's something almost sacred in them, and we don't desire to be even suspected of being a disturbing element between you and him, Flissey," she continued; then ended with:

"All that I will say now is, there's some reason for you to feel that he did not treat you justly; but perhaps you'll both get new light by thinking further of the matter."

Later, when Flissey heard of the appointment with Rhoda, she resolved to in some way bring matters to an issue. She related to her mother what she had heard, then said:

"Mother, unless he gives me some very strong reason for doing as he has done I shall—I'm done with him, that's all!"

While Mrs. Loor was shocked by this intelligence of Selton's precipitate action—it had seemed such to her—she restrained further expression than to say she did not understand "this attitude of affairs" with George.

"The next time I see him I shall ask him what it means!" said Flissey with indignation and a look of resolution. Further

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reflection had confirmed her feeling that he had wronged her—and furthermore, that he was not regretful, but was rather glorifying in this latest manifestation of his fickleness and duplicity.

As she lay on her couch—where she had finally sunk in tears after retiring from the sitting room—she suddenly thought of her attitude when, nearly a year ago, she had given vent to her feelings after suspense concerning Mr. Frame's non-appearance. In this connection she thought of her then relations to George. Did she love him then? Was it love all those years, or was it, on her part, a dream of love—and on his—what?—real love? Real love! . . . Why had she wept for Mr. Frame? Why had she then wept!

Then came a revelation: That when she had wept for Mr. Frame she had already inwardly suspected George's inconstancy—the Rhoda Files incident had then come to pass and her tears were half of regret for George. And what was now transpiring was dawn of the sequel to what she had then suspected.

"And if I didn't love George from the beginning, I believed that I did," she said to herself, as she stifled a lingering whimper of grief that was half a sigh of relief. "And if George didn't love me, I believed he did—oh!" she continued.

Then Flissey fell into a restful slumber; from which she awakened an hour or so later to descend and declare to her mother:

"It's been a revelation, Mother. I can't express it. It saddens me yet—but somehow I'm so relieved that I feel that God will bring the right out of all this!" she ended with a smile that shone through the wanness of her countenance.

And within an hour Miss Kiteler had called and departed; and Flissey's thoughts were now of the morrow and of Tromple Shades.

She and her mother—who felt able to make the trip—aired the next day to the Shades; where Flissey sat through the final rehearsals, vocal and instrumental, and including the music-drama, that were listed in the program for the annual contests. At the close she conferred, in the critiques committee, concerning many phases of the work that had been inspected; this in presence of all prospective participants, who gave very marked attention to every criticism and suggestion made on behalf of the committee. Some phases of the music-drama were re-rehearsed then and there under auspices of the committee; who again exchanged views and comments with Miss Florier. Then followed free expressions upon the work done and the coming contest.

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All these formalities were enjoined upon the various functionaries by state laws and rules and regulations made pursuant thereto, as part and parcel of the public school courses. The members of the various committees were appointed by a head committee composed of several county officers, of which the superintendent of schools was one, and certain head teachers in the schools. There were three social-civics districts in the county. No one outside of the schools, save the trainer for the annuals, received any money consideration for services performed. There were certain financial and reimbursing exchanges between the townships in handling the problem of securing to participating pupils coming from a distance to the locus of the annuals a fair share of the benefits bestowed. The right to enter as contestants was restricted, and conditioned upon superior merit adjudged under individual school contests by certain primary committees.

The final contest at the annuals embraced, as civics, declamation, dialogue, impromptu interrogations, debates, etc.; and in the field of music, choral and solo singing, with other variations; recitatives with various instrumental accompaniments; and as crowning the whole program, a concluding music-drama. These contests were far more than for preferment. It was clash of mind and soul out of which came, primarily to participants but ultimately to the public, the keen shining steel of practical workmanship of self-governing citizens, and inspiration to refined and happy rural community life.

Among the compliments given Miss Florier as trainer, Miss Kiteler remarked concerning the work of the pupils: "Some of the most encouraging performances I have seen anywhere I have witnessed at this rehearsal. You seem to have triumphed in impressing upon them what the drama means when inspired and reënforced by music."

"And the theme—so reflective of true patriotism! This idea of brotherhood and solicitude between nations, now becoming ingrained in the citizenship of all peoples, can not be too forcibly inculcated in the schools," said Joe Cotsworth, a staunch member of the committee. "I think you are entitled to special credit for the part you took in the selection for this annual." . . .

Frame had finally resolved to write to Miss Loor again before calling upon her.

The second day following her attendance at the rehearsal there came to her this note from him:

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"DEAR MISS LOOR:—

"I have resolved, if it may be by your permission and desire, to call upon you for a brief—and, I fear, an unsatisfactory exchange of expressions with you upon the subject of my letter of last September. I have come to hope that, consistently with my own sense of honor and of your dues in the premises, a personal interview may serve to make clearer to you the real purpose of the letter.

"The prolonged—and were it not for the exigencies involved, wholly inexcusable—delay upon my part in communicating with you further concerning the letter, is itself explainable only upon the ground of my inability sooner to bring myself to perceive what now seems my bounden duty to you and to myself—to suggest that I be permitted to call upon you and to endeavor to justify the unseemly contents of the former letter.

"Craving a response indicative of your wishes, permit me to subscribe myself,

"Your Friend,
"BERNARD FRAME."

This note was the net result of his struggle with himself and with circumstances, as to the ways and means of acting upon his resolve to again come face to face with Miss Loor. A certain decided feeling of relief came with the placing of the note in the mail-tram.

When Flissey took the note from its federal guardian at the front gate and looked at the superscription, she was flushed.

Her still firm belief in Frame's honor and integrity of character had convinced her that after returning home he would not much longer refrain from acting in the matter involved in the former letter. Beyond this, her efforts to divine the outcome left her in a suspense and uncertainty accompanied by but one element of tangibility—that he would seek to satisfy her that his only course of action lay in adhering to his resolve that he must not permit his love for her to so assert itself as to countervail the "obstacle." If this did not mean the end of correspondence, and mutual recognition of cessation of special social relations between them, she knew not what else it could mean.

She hurriedly stepped to the bower seat, tore open the envelope and eagerly began a perusal of the note. Her wondering face had caught the purport of no more than the first sentence when it changed into a fearsome frown, as she convulsively slammed the note upon her lap and stared in anxious strain, her mouth slightly agape and eyes widening as another "negative" became clearly registered upon memory's tablet; and exclaimed:

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"Fears!—that it will be unsatisfactory!"

Then she picked it up and read the next sentence—raised her head and looked afar; then the following paragraph—and to the end; her countenance reacting in successive stages, first to that of equivocal reassurance under the impress of "hope," "honor," "dues," "clearer," and "real purpose"; then to virtual dismay when the phrases "exigencies involved" and "endeavor to justify the unseemly" registered in inexorable lines upon the delicate leaf of her heart.

Out of the soulful ordeal came the thought: "He could not see the light—himself hesitated!" and then: *"Who* knows what it meant? Is he, too, still groping?—will endeavor to justify—'the unseemly'"!

Then Flissey mentally traversed the entire note again without looking at its contents; and settled back against the seat-rest as she reflected that there was but one version of this second note: it was, in intent, but an affirmation of the first—and he wanted to know if she was willing that he should come again to prove the justness of his declared attitude if he could—"and do this as my friend!"

"Yes," she ponderingly repeated, "as my friend. His honor—and my dues!—and these vouch for his friendship!"

As Flissey began to grasp the real significance of Mr. Frame's attitude, reflected in both letters—as now unfolded to her in a new sense—she saw not only that sincerity was its keynote, but that his unswerving aim was to be just—just to her; that in bravery of resolve to be just he had overcome himself, though spurred by deep love—and for the sake of justice to her whom he loved. That to save her from himself he had had to become heroic. It was sublime!

And there dawned upon her consciousness that which transfigured her before herself:—to be the subject of such heroism! to be—yes, its beneficiary! In this she had been exalted to its throne—its sublimity! In this they had sat side by side! This heroism and all that it implied was unchangeable—inevitable. An end!

How, as she rose and with stately, restrained steps entered the house and ascended to her room, pride, then dismay were dethroned by another heroism—till in its sublimity it arrayed her in a majesty that looked down with gracious eyes and beaming gratitude upon the personage whose memory it enshrined, and bade him welcome, and said Amen!

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As she imperturbedly laid herself upon that couch that had twice witnessed tears springing from a heart that had been touched by those of two lovers—but how differently!—she now, without tears but with a heart that towered above the vale of emotion, felt that she renounced them both. But in this self-revelation she saw George Selton through reproachful, yet pitying eyes, as he vanished in cowardly retreat; while the spirit of Mr. Frame loomed on the opposite verge of the imagined landscape, as guardian against devastation from man's duplicity of the feminine heart, and as exalter of the beneficiary through that sacredness which withholds love where it may not, without duplicity, be bestowed.

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CHAPTER VI

AFTER Frame had mailed the note he returned to his room; his thoughts reverting to the phrase "exigencies involved."

He reflected that when he should call upon her he must confess that his hesitation it was that constituted the "exigency." But might not she infer therefrom that those words might signify that during his past year at the law school he had met some new female friend who had made an impression—but he spurned this afterthought. He was vexed, however, as he realized that those words were misleading—that there was no real exigency.

"And I've kept her in suspense all this time—from what?—fear?—or cowardice! . . ." He forced himself to cease such speculations; and fell to trying to conceive what would be Miss Loor's response to the note.

That she would answer promptly; would not discuss the note, was his belief. "She will leave that for verbal conversation when we meet—if she does not decline to see me," he concluded. But she would desire to meet him face to face—where he must prove the justness of his motives,—this too, he could not but believe. He rose, came out of the house and emerged into the air; strolled out into the field where were the clover, the springing grains, the green pasture, the waving alfalfa; then back to the familiar group of trees by the side of the house, where he threw himself upon the lawn. . . . A new atmosphere enshrouded him. He was not living there. The theater of existence was a world wide—boundless—of opportunity; of advance in achievement; a far journey, spurred by duty, guided by conviction. The field was sublime!

At the dinner table that afternoon his changed mood was so marked that no one seemed to care to allude to the subject in his presence—there was a kind of tacit thankfulness to parents and brother that precluded inquiry—that was its own satisfaction to them. . . .

As Flissey approached her mother in the sitting room after coming down from her room, to which she had gone with the note, Mrs. Loor noticed the peculiar look of triumphant res-

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ignation that lit the daughter's countenance. The latter said:

"It's come to an end, Mother."

"What do you mean—that's come to an end, Flissey?—has George——"

"No, Mother, it's not George; it's Mr. Frame——"

"What—have you seen him?—or what has happened?—I don't——"

"No, he has sent me a note—and it's like the letter. He wishes me to say if he may call—but it is to justify what was in the letter. And, Mother, it is as it should be; it's right," Flissey ended, gazing tranquilly into her mother's face.

"I don't understand!"

Flissey explained what she termed the heroic spirit in which Mr. Frame had declared in the note that it was due her that he should vindicate his strange attitude; that she now saw it all in a new light; that "it is best as he wishes." No, it was not that he regretted anything in the nature of some wrong he had done in the past—she felt that he had been right all along.

Mrs. Loor contemplated her daughter with an air of quiet, querulous astonishment that indicated the new and exalted estimation in which Flissey now stood before her. She expressed her belief that this state of resignation must have been attended by a great inward struggle—and she turned her head aside as tears of solicitude—and of pity, came to her eyes.

"Do not feel that way, Mother dear," said Flissey, in tone of reassurance and without bitterness. "The ordeal I have been through was worth much to me. I feel that I am more worthy than before—and because there has been revealed to me a higher worthiness—toward another—and toward me!"—and then, as if the pent-up feelings of the hour, reënforced by those of months preceding, had at last broken the floodgates and were leaping forth to assert their own, poor Flissey's head sank into her hands, and she relapsed into a restrained but long-drawn sob that seemed more pitying than of anguish, as she rose and hurried away and up to her room again.

From impelling sympathy her mother passed into the hall and slowly ascended to Flissey's room.

"My dear girl, you have my sympathy in this matter. But, somehow I feel that you are taking it too seriously to heart. Why should you believe that all is about to end between you and Mr. Frame?"

"It was not—not just that that overcame me"—Flissey arose

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and stepped away from the couch and sat down. "It was a sudden realization—a revelation," she went on, gazing intently upon the floor as she struggled to grasp and to express the thought she wished to communicate—"that he—who has given this proof of his nobility of character—that—that some one else has a larger place in his heart—and yet—that he has been going through a terrible ordeal to reconcile himself to—to repress—to overcome—his love for me!—and I passionately pitied—and oh, how I honor—such a man in such a situation!"

Mrs. Loor sat like a marble form, in contemplation of Flissey's countenance, which seemed beyond her power to read. It was something oracular. She said gently that she was unable to fathom what the daughter meant. "Yet I think I get a glimpse of what came to you. You were giving yourself up out of sympathy for his discomfort of heart."

"No, Mother, no thought of personal sacrifice—not that at all. It was all for him, his noble action—I felt that the delay itself was action!—that it was suffering—but that out of it came such heroic resolve to do me justice—such transcendent justice as cut me off forever!"

"To cut you off for another girl, Flissey?"—in a relapse to bewilderment.

"To renounce his love for me because it was just—best for me, so that he would not sacrifice me to—to a duplicity in love—and himself—to a false pretence to another, to whom, as I believe, he is closer in love—but that he found it a mighty sacrifice to end with me!—there it is, Mother!" said Flissey in a kind of rapture, as she seemed relieved through process of divination. She ended with declaring in tone of calm unreproachful determination:

"I shall mail him a note to-morrow welcoming him to call, and stating that I believe I comprehend his meaning, and that I honor his motive, and am fully resigned to what it implies!"

Before she retired that night Flissey wrote a response to Frame's note. It ran thus:

"DEAR MR. FRAME:—

"To your note of yesterday I send you this: to say that you are free to call upon me when you may wish; that your note has been considered, and that its import is such that I believe I understand its meaning and purpose.

"I am ready to receive your personal explanation—I trust, in the same spirit in which, as I believe, your note and the preceding letter were written.

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"I truly feel that your attitude toward me is justifiable. I have no disposition to offer criticism, or to indulge in the slightest reproach, for anything you have communicated in these messages. I believe they spring from your desire to be just toward me; and I trust that you will not fail to believe that this note is penned in a similar spirit.

"I am glad to record myself,

"Your Friend,
"FELICIA LOOR."

She had written it out with but slight hesitations between sentences. When ended and subscribed, her mental comment was that it was done in sincerity. "My candor may surprise him," she thought. "But as I do not allude to any particular expression he uses in either message, he may think I don't really comprehend how far he has gone in overcoming his love for me, nor as to his motive in making the effort;—but he will gather enough from it to convince him that I do," she ended, as she inclosed the note in an envelope, addressed and stamped it and laid it upon her dresser for mailing to-morrow. Then she retired.

As she lay musing upon what Mr. Frame's further explanation would be when he should call after reading her reply, she thought:

"Whatever he may say, it will but make clearer what I already understand." The sigh that followed as she verged off to sleep was of mingled relief, exultation in resignation—and of a kind of sacred sadness.

The reply note was mailed next morning. The automatic mail-tram, which would click one of its tri-daily passages, would deliver the missive at destination within an hour.

About the middle of the forenoon, and following the tinkling of the signal-bell, there appeared across the face of the electric tablet in the hall the words "Some news." The indicator said it came from the northwest.

Flissey had been called in from the front yard, as it was known that some one was about to call. "News," she replied. "Something unusual, perhaps," she thought. She began to ascend the stairway, remarking: "I'm going up to my room."

Miss Kiteler's airal soon alighted. From it, as though evolved from its folding form, emerged two ladies. They came jauntily stepping along the walk toward the house as she who was in advance—Miss Kiteler—gleesomely greeted Mrs. Loor at the door:

"We didn't mean to alarm you, Mrs. Loor—good morning

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to you—and this is Miss Brodein, Mrs. Loor," she continued, turning to her friend and introducing her. "We've come by here on our way to my home, as I wanted to tell Felicia what good luck we've had in fixing up our program for the annuals, since it broke down with Miss Florier's falling sick. She's at home?"

"Yes, she is in her room"—this after cordially greeting Miss Brodein—"come right in, ladies, and I'll call her."

Flissey was now coming down the stairway—she had detected the voice of Miss Kiteler. She came quietly into the sitting room—having met her mother, who had passed into the hall to call her—and Miss Kiteler advanced to exchange greetings; then turned and, addressing Miss Brodein, said:

"Miss Brodein, I'm so glad to introduce you to Miss Loor."

Formalities were exchanged; Flissey saying with enthusiasm:

"I've long been wanting to make your acquaintance, Miss Brodein—and more especially, because of some of your work of which I have heard."

"I can not believe your desire is greater than my own has been to meet you, Miss Loor," said the new acquaintance in quiet undemonstrative tone, but with a look of profound appreciation of her from whom the initial compliment had come. "While I can lay no claim to a special taste for music, your reputation as a participant in these features of the social-civics is not unknown to me; and I believe I appreciate in some measure the good you are doing in this way."

Flissey expressed thanks, and her delight that Miss Kiteler had brought her friend along.

After some exchanges of commonplace between the visitors and their hosts, Miss Kiteler reverted to the subject of Miss Florier's inability to carry out her work at the annuals. To Flissey's inquiry as to what was to be done by way of securing a substitute, Miss Kiteler replied enthusiastically:

"We've secured one already, Felicia—by unbelievable good fortune, too," and, smiling her appreciation of Miss Brodein, she continued: "It's Miss Brodein. She has finally consented—and at a sacrifice not easily comprehended by the public. And we're all so grateful!"

With genuine pleasure Flissey expressed thankfulness. Miss Kiteler explained that Miss Brodein had been obliged to give up some of her work, and to make special arrangements for new help at Ives Waters, in order to do so; to which Flissey replied that

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the present committee would be unable to suitably repay this generosity:

"The more so, in that we've been laying ourselves out to bring off the best performance this year that Tromple Shades has ever produced—and now I feel we shall surely realize our expectations to the full—and perhaps with something left over," she ended, with a characteristic lapse into laughter, her eyes beaming with gratitude.

"These complimentary remarks are certainly beyond my deserts," remarked Miss Brodein, as she smiled her appreciations. There was a mingling of shrinking retirement with a shade of naïve timidity suggestive of humility, in her response. "It would have been inexcusable to have refused to assist at Tromple Shades annuals, when I knew that special efforts were being made there this season, if I could arrange to respond to the request, which I found could be done without at all seriously disarranging any work I had in hand anywhere," she ended, in explanation of the whole situation.

Flissey, in response to some pressure from her visitors, played a cantata upon the piano; then sang a lightsome song to harp accompaniment, in deference to what had been an informal encore.

Then Flissey, alluding in warm terms to Miss Brodein's reputed accomplishments, and to the fact that neither herself nor her mother had been privileged to witness her appearance in such a rôle, cordially requested that she would favor the present company:

"Won't you please recite something, if only some brief production you will readily call to mind?" Mrs. Loor pleaded to the same purpose; eagerly reënforced by Miss Kiteler, who declared that to hear her once greatly enhanced the privilege of a repetition of the experience.

Miss Brodein's countenance bespoke a certain reticence, while yet betraying no lack of innate confidence and courage. Silently her soul sought a response. The kindling brilliance that rose in her eyes became a fusing heat of divine passion. She seemed borne by a force from the Infinite.

Without withdrawing her eyes from the carpet; and seeming to be rapt in reverie that characterized her utterance as one addressed rather to a secondary audience, she said:

"Yes; it will be Hagar's Sacrifice in Love; From Bolacci."

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In meek deference she rose to her feet. Tenderly compassionate eyes seemed dwelling in endless space and realizing an ideal.

The setting of the theme was by the noted dramatist of Montevideo.

The observers were borne into an exalted realm of consciousness of the miraculous.

Miss Kiteler, who had once heard this rendering, quickly brought from the mantel-piece an Egyptian water bottle and placed it upon a stand beside the impersonator.

The initial interpretation of deep maternal love for a doubly-cherished but doomed child, was aided by the natural aptness of the impersonator for the part. Her raven hair, luminous dark eyes, and tall and gracefully regal form; all speaking in unison with a voice ravishingly soft, oriental in modulation, and of marvelous intonation, depth and expressiveness in delineation of moods of the affections.

The moaning child lying beyond ken of its mother; the clasped empty receptacle the possible link between his waning life and rescue from death; her long-drawn cries of agony and of supplication as she beckoned with the freed arm to Jehovah: "Come, save my child, oh thou God of our fathers!—come with one drop of the blessed water! Give him, give him to live!"—beholders were living in midst of these.

Now Hagar in reaction is seen; brows alternating between hope and despair; contemplating fateful consequences that hang on issue of life or death to her famishing boy—how a branch of Israel would go down for default of water!—a well-spring within reach would perpetuate her line to glory of posterity!—and how omnipotent fate "makes Hagar love her God of Hosts for that He knows how best to prove her love of sacrifice!"

Lapse into that despair "that knows no hope but in despair!"—the reactive paroxysm of savage revolt against fate, in which "Hagar tears her hair to tell how tears her heart!" Here the actress shines in versatility—the voice becomes richly and dramatically masculine in flinging defiance into teeth of destiny.

Then, in succession, submission to the Higher Power: "Her darling and herself, oh Thou Just Judge, doth Hagar lay with willing contrite heart upon the altar of Thy boundless love!" Then, from this kneeling: upturned face gives tidings of a voice—not of the mourning boy, but of "the angel of her God that heard his cry"; ear "harks for confirmation of such sign." Then the voice in the wilderness: "Thou need'st no more to fear, go

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bring the lad; a nation shall he be—his succor's nigh, thine eyes shall it reveal!" Then: "Doth Hagar hear a voice from heaven's heights—an angel's beauteous call—oh! I'm cast in woe of woes—my child!—is lost—what? I cease my fears! My heart leaps wild—what?—ah, now I do behold in vision a land of plenty—amid those trees a—what?—a well of water!—Jehovah's boundless love!—I'll to the well—there—Hagar's child is saved!—with this I haste to where my boy lies by the bush—ah! hear his cry—his dying cry!—haste—now I have his dear form in my arms!—there, sweet, my life, take of this draught—'tis sent of God!—there!—oh, he's saved at last!"

All listeners had been in tears; first from depiction of woe, then of rejoicing. Henrietta, the recitation ended, stood with eyes resting upon the carpet at her feet, and as if in emergence from an entrancement. As she now raised them to suit the movement of replacing the vessel upon the stand, Flissey in rapt adoration swiftly glided up to her—they stood vis-à-vis, soul probing soul. Then Flissey's arms were thrown in wild abandon around Henrietta's neck; they embraced, clung to one another for an instant in a certain bliss, then held each other in an ecstatic lingering kiss.

As Flissey stood before her after having led Henrietta back to her seat, still holding her hand and beholding her in devotion and worship, she exclaimed:

"I shall love you, Miss Brodein, as long as I live!"

Unexaggerated laudations came from Mrs. Loor. Miss Kiteler commented: "You have even outdone yourself to-day!"

Henrietta looked lingeringly upon Flissey as she expressed thankfulness for such fulsome praise. She felt that Flissey's demonstration had come from the heart.

The Kiteler party having taken their leave, conversation between Mrs. Loor and Flissey turned upon events at the Frame home; the daughter remarking that she had thought of the note when her mother had been overheard to mention "Mr. Frame," but that when she had descended to the sitting room she had realized that Mr. Bernard Frame could not so soon have been calling in response to her note. Her mother, in expressing the belief that he would probably act at once upon receipt of the note, counseled Flissey not to fall to worrying again over the matter; to which she replied:

"I'm firmly where I stood last night, Mother; and am prepared to hear from his lips that he is impelled—well, you've heard it once, it's unnecessary to repeat it."

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Conversation reverted to Miss Brodein's wonderful impersonation; Mrs. Loor remarking that she had great talent and a brilliant future.

"Oh, Mother!—I have never been drawn as her personality drew me—right away from myself, so that I actually lived in her as she went on—oh, it's so grand to have such power! And she doesn't seem to realize her power. Our compliments didn't seem to move her at all," was Flissey's enthusiastic tribute to her new-made friend.

"She is a rare spirit," replied the mother. "By the way, Daughter, it occurred to me that you and Miss Brodein will be likely to be doing some team work before long, if the acquaintance keeps up——"

"Mother, that's the very thought that impelled me to go and embrace her as I did—it seemed that if we could only coöperate in program work it would be *so* nice—grand!—that I must seal the matter, in a way, right there!" Her mother was even at the moment thinking: "This will help to tide over what I fear may be a further trial of fortitude in her experience with Mr. Frame."

From lightheartedness under impulse of impressions of Miss Brodein's visitation, came reaction when Flissey found herself alone in her room again. Some sense of a burden, as thoughts of another meeting, then a parting with Mr. Frame, came over her. Yet she realized that she was still at peace with herself.

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CHAPTER VII

AT almost precisely the hour when the Kiteler party were calling at the Loors, Bernard Frame sat on the farmstead veranda contemplating Flissey's reply note.

He had anticipated its arrival by the morning mail-tram; his confident belief that she would not delay in responding to his own not having been impaired in the meanwhile. Immediately upon the passing of the tram he proceeded from the veranda to the mail-box and, finding the envelope which he realized must have been addressed by her with other mail which he extracted therefrom, he had briskly returned to where he had been sitting, opened and read the missive. As he proceeded his face brightened; and before he had finished reading it he felt that the writer had interpreted his note to her so unerringly as that each now understood with substantial fullness the spirit of their mutual attitudes. He without hesitation mentally declared that he would call upon Miss Loor during the forenoon.

Then he re-read the note; and was impressed by two thoughts —his "personal explanation" she was ready to receive—and that she gladly subscribed herself his friend!

And the explanation—he would not recast that which he had previously resolved upon. He would take it for granted that she would receive what he had to offer, in the spirit reflected in her note.

He ascended to his room and prepared for the airing trip; returned to the hall and entered the sitting room, where he found his mother; to whom he remarked:

"I'm going out for a fly-about this forenoon, Mother, and will return by lunch-time, if not earlier."

The mother had borne in mind the fact of the seeming revival of his spirits to the normal plane, that had taken place on the preceding day; and she now noticed that he was arrayed in keeping with the suggestion of neighborly sociality—a hint of which in connection with Bernard had entered her mind on yesterday. She quietly surveyed his countenance; then inquired evenly:

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"Where are you going, in particular, Bernie?"

"Why, just across fields a ways, and around and then back—not to any town," was his non-committal response. As their eyes met the mother perceived with unerring maternal instinct that something more than a casual soar for recreation was in store for her son; but she made no comment, further than to rejoin: "Well, I'm sure you'll enjoy it, the day is so fine, Bernie."

Bidding her good-by—his father and Horace were now somewhere about the fields—he started forth to the air-plot, brought out and unfolded his airal, started power and made the go-off. However, he was headed north-northwest—directly opposite the course that would take him to destination.

Since his return home his mother had once alluded to Miss Loor's connection with the social-civics—had seemed to wish to dwell upon her personality as though to impress it upon Bernard's mind. In now recalling to mind that incident, thoughts of his own previous relations to the civics arose; he realized in some sense he could not define that the emergency before him might become more significant than it had previously appeared to him.

He had not seen Miss Brodein, nor had he learned of her special activities in her dramatics, since he had returned home.

He had swung round to southward preparatory to heading toward the Loor farmstead. As he now approached that locality, reminiscence of the first meeting was coupled with thoughts of Miss Loor amid the inspirations of the music-drama—as a leading spirit in a sphere which itself became more alluring with the thought!

But the reality he was now to face!—would it—but could it—disillusionize?

He had descended into the plot; was making his way along the sidewalk. . . .

Some time after the breakfast hour Flissey sat in the sitting room, her thoughts upon an out-of-door stroll she was about to take. She made known to her mother her intention, saying she would return soon, and passed out upon the lawn, thence into the highway. She walked vigorously for upwards of half an hour, going and returning. Bowing and curveting grasses and weed-flowers greeted her coming and going. Here and there a cluster of cultivated flowers was met. Beneath one of several groups of shade-trees she had rested in a rustic seat, her soul wooed

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by symphony of nature's murmuring tones in unison with sweet-voiced birds that flitted or soared—broken at irregular intervals by boisterous warbling of the bobolink exultingly mounting golden rod or briar branch in distance. Amid them all Flissey thought she loved to live—and would some time love to die!

She returned through the gate; walked into and seated herself in the bower. Her mind verged from concrete subjects by insensible degrees until consciousness was merged in day-dreaming.

Suddenly, as she cast her eyes toward an angle of the bower roof, a vivid picture of George Selton was revived in memory. He was receding from the bower—just as he had appeared when last she had seen him on the occasion of his recent call. She recalled his last words:

"A 'martyr'—to his love for me!—and my jealousy the cause!—oh, George!"—the whispered sigh was more of compassion than of reproach.

Her face lit up through lines of sadness until it again spoke complete submissiveness to fate—as concerned consciousness of an impending end of relations with Selton.

She heard approaching footsteps upon the sidewalk—toward the air-plot. A voice from her heart seemed to inquire: "Is it George?—has he returned?"

The lines of sadness deepened—thoughts of the parting rushed in. Had he come to taunt her with tale of love for another—justified by her heartless misappreciation!

At first Flissey hesitated to turn her head and look—a certain fear—or was it merely misgiving?—restrained her.

Then she turned and peered through the lattice—it was Mr. Frame!

She rose from her seat, her face suffused by sudden conflict of emotions intensified by surprise—saddened resignation—and a deeper, more sacrificial, spiritualized by victory over self through vision of the higher good; and hope—*life,* in such resignation!—she felt she was facing destiny as thus enshrined she stepped forth and faced Bernard Frame.

Frame was now almost at the junction of the lateral walk with the main one leading to the veranda. He had had no thought of encountering Miss Loor before reaching the front door—he was the more surprised of the two.

There before him stood Flissey Loor: picture of rarest womanhood; transfigured from crucible of doubt, disappointment, and resultant sorrow into dominant resignation of soul in triumph—

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in which justice reigned and radiantly smiled on him as just!

The vision transfigured him as her eyes met his in a recognition refined and sublimated from restrained grief into tender submissiveness to kind fate!

He had halted—surprised, nonplused—was about to stammer forth words more in excuse than greeting—yet in greeting—but even the accompanying impulse to extend his hand while with the other he would doff his hat in deference of greeting was restrained—for Flissey held him rigid in thrall of her presence.

She had partly raised her hand in greeting; had let fall her eyes that had met his own; they were resting on the lawn; her head slightly bent in submissiveness that seemed a mild contrition—she was a sacrifice at his feet ready to be immolated upon the altar of his welfare! So seemed it to him.

Poor Bernard Frame! Before this spectacle—so true in intent that words of dramatist could but dissemble it—he felt himself a shameless being for that he could ever have conceived of her as one not made for him!—as one not fitted for him!

Both—after the instant of pausing—were now advancing and extending hands in greeting. Flissey exclaimed:

"Mr. Frame, I am so pleased to meet you again—that you've called!—come right in."

But the two were standing with clasped hands, looking so eagerly into each other's eyes—souls!

In that exchange Frame read all: that the notes had revealed to each that the other was understood in all essentials. Even her interpretation of the "exigencies" had not misled her!

But he had professed to desire to call upon her to make, and she had expressed her readiness to receive, his "personal explanation." Moreover, each had recognized that justice was the other's purpose;—all this flashed upon his consciousness on the instant.

"Miss Loor," he began, "I have come—tardy as I have been in resolving to do you justice—to explain——"

"Mr. Frame," interposed Flissey, raising her hand in protest, her face shining in comprehensiveness and gratitude that dispelled all sense of occasion for forgiveness, "do not speak of explanations. Your note—and the letter too—I believe I understood them both; and I am—content."

Her eyes were again upon the lawn. Her handclasp was closer, in a certain assurance. Bernard saw such embodiment of sacrificial reconcilement in her personality at this moment, that sudden impulse to recognition of it in words impelled him—and that

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he felt humiliated by her transcendent consecration to—yes, to his welfare!—this impelled him the more. Standing more erect; still clasping her hand, their eyes again meeting, he declared in mingled humiliation and generous appreciation:

"Miss Loor, you have sacrificed so much—and forgiven so much, for my sake, that I feel humiliated——"

"Do not speak of sacrifice!—and there's nothing to forgive—oh, let us go into the house!"—Flissey's spirit rang the changes from gentle command to gracious assurance and genuine ecstasy as she ended in an exclamatory. Frame was being joyously led up the walk to the front door.

His heart was palpitating—he felt himself in keeping of some ineffable superior power.

Flissey took his hat, conducted him into the parlor and bade him be seated. Then, as she sat smiling upon him, she said:

"Mr. Frame, you should not feel the slightest embarrassment in coming to our home at any time—oh, it would be so cruel in me if I were to permit you to feel otherwise! You know I've wanted you to come for years; and so have my parents—we've always wished that you felt freer to come than you have seemed to be. And even though your first letter implied some reservations which controlled you, I beg you to believe I would have regarded it an ignoble desecration could I have conceived of trespassing upon the sanctity of your right to be exempt from any further 'explanation.' I came to feel that you were in the right—and that I honored you the more for your frankness——"

"For my brutal resolve, is what you should have termed it—I feel it could not have failed to convey such an impression, Miss Loor—yet I was impelled, my sense of duty drove me—yes, to be cruelly blunt in telling you—I must confess it—must repeat it—that my love for you——"

Here Frame's eyes looked full into Flissey's face—her own were cast upon the carpet——

"Deep as it was—as it is—that I felt it must be overcome—that because of—that my purpose in life—and justice to yourself, demanded that—that the course indicated in my letter must be pursued"——he ended, but with painful hesitation—and, he felt, a lack of resolution that must have been apparent to Miss Loor.

"Yes, Mr. Frame; and I felt that your purpose was to do some right thing; and that to do otherwise would not be just toward me."

A strangely penetrating radiance illumined her eyes as she ut-

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tered these words; in which he saw fire of consecration to heroic action, tempered by adoration—and compassion! She was still speaking:

"And for this I felt that I had been so honored that—I experienced a thankfulness toward you I could not express in words; and I believed that some higher aim than selfishness 'impelled' you, as you say."

"Miss Loor, I had not looked for—had not deserved such a response as this."

"Did you think that I could have given any different interpretation to your letter?" she asked, calmly and with a look of frank inquiry.

"Yes; I conceived that you might have derived a different meaning from some of its expressions. I have believed that—I think the term 'obstacle,' and certain other allusions in the letter, might have been regarded by you as conveying a different purport than that which you—in your nobly generous and charitable spirit—have given them," replied Frame in tone of gratitude revealing in a slight tremulousness a touch of emotion. He was prompt to add:

"And I owe you a debt of gratitude I can but poorly express. Yet this does not indicate all I feel, Miss Loor. I want to say I can not know how much of sufferance—and of sacrifice—you may have undergone in finally analyzing my letter in the spirit——"

"Mr. Frame," again interposed Flissey, "you are doing yourself an injustice. Please do not continue to speak in such a strain; since I shall never be persuaded that any different version than that which I gave your note would have been just to you." Then, looking frankly into Frame's face with a gravity in which unrestrained cheerfulness and peace of mind dominated, spoke what was intended as the final word by way of reconciliation in the matter of their correspondence:

"Let's don't talk any more about the subject of your letters, Mr. Frame. It is enough that we now understand each other—for I feel you have not mistaken me in what I have said concerning my own thoughts and conclusions. For myself, I can not conceive that I have done more than to accord to you a meager measure of praise for your courage, and your uprightness of purpose."

Then suddenly and tactfully changing the subject, she entered enthusiastically into the account Miss Kiteler had given her of the rehearsal work and of the prospective outcome of the con-

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tests at the annuals. That lady and her friend, Miss Brodein, had called earlier in the day, she told him; and the circumstances leading to Miss Florier's enforced withdrawal from the leading rôle in the dramatics were related.

"But Miss Brodein has very kindly consented to substitute for Miss Florier," she explained. She continued with renewed enthusiasm:

"By the way, Miss Brodein—have you met her, Mr. Frame?" He replied that he was slightly acquainted with Miss Brodein; that upon the occasion of his attendance upon the annuals at Ives Waters at the last vacation, he had had the pleasure of an introduction to her after her appearance at the annuals.

"Then you know about her exceptional talents," she rejoined. Then followed her account of Miss Brodein's singularly captivating recital during her call with Miss Kiteler. Flissey went into superlatives:

"And her impersonations, they seem entirely natural—she seemed to *live* in her characters! And she is so sincere, and so unaffected."

Frame—so interested that a detachment was visible as she proceeded—was unconsciously assenting through certain pantomimics. And as she ended he was ready with a verbal assent:

"My impressions have been very like your own—that she possesses such exceptional native fitness for real art in dramatic impersonation as to promise a brilliant future for her."

"Yes; and then, she's so sweet!—I couldn't help falling into the lure of her. I'm sure her friendship is of the enduring kind, and that I'm going to like her more as I become better acquainted with her," was Flissey's response. Then she excused herself to bring in her mother.

Mrs. Loor was aware of Frame's presence in the parlor. As Flissey entered the sitting room she rose and gazed with motherly affection and tenderness into her eyes and kissed her; the daughter responding with a heavenly smile as she led her mother into the parlor:

"Mother, of course you know Mr. Frame—but here he is at last." In the bow of recognition ceremony was merged in cordiality, as Mrs. Loor in response to Frame's greeting said:

"We are all pleased beyond measure to have you with us, Mr. Frame; and we've wondered why you haven't found time to call and become better acquainted before this. Grampion is about the place somewhere; we must have him come and visit with you too." Then Flissey left the visitor to momentary entertainment

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by her mother while she went to the phone to call in her father. Her reconnoissance "touched" him out in the pasture, where he was showing a friend some strains of Misely cattle he had been developing for some years. This visitor was about to soar away; and Grampion promptly winged back to the plot; from whence he entered the house, and after making his toilet and certain incidental preparations, stepped into the sitting room. Thence he was escorted by Flissey into the parlor. She was about to make some sort of informal introduction, when Grampion burst forth with:

"Oh, Flissey, I know this young man—have known him for years—have heard of him too. How-do-you-do, Mr. Bernard Frame, I'm glad—and we're all glad to see you—glad that you've *called,* too. How long you've been, getting over here to our house—thought you never were coming. I'm doubly pleased that you've come at last, sir."

"I must confess my delinquency in not having made a formal call at your home before this time, sir," replied Frame with certain embarrassment, "and especially when I realize that we are not really distant neighbors. I need not add that the present pleasure is certainly mutual."

The social atmosphere at the Loor home was so charged with cheerfulness and vivacity that Frame was charmed by its influence. Mrs. Loor and Grampion were delightsome hostesses at the head of the family. And Miss Loor, he felt, was the center and soul of that charm. To him she embodied a peculiarly beguiling lightsomeness of spirit and a reserve of tender deference and graciousness that sank deep into his being. This realization became more impressive when he coupled her buoyancy of spirit with the wondrous example of innate resignation she had manifested to the resolve his letters had virtually announced to her—which resolve left her out of his life in so vital a sense, but which she yet was facing with such triumphant joy in submissiveness! This last thought was secretly working upon him—he was perceiving the marvel that lay in and bottomed her character.

Frame's experience at the law school was touched upon by him in response to Flissey's inquiries; in course of which he mentioned the current feature of the faculty's purpose of making the students, first of all, men, then fit them for coping with the legal principles involved in law practice. From this the conversation led back to some of his work and aspirations incidental to his previous course at the university—his preparation for a career having as its chief aim the public welfare. Discussion then drifted

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to certain phases of social and civic activities abroad in the country at large and in the surrounding neighborhood. Mr. and Mrs. Loor were eager listeners to all that passed between Flissey and Frame upon these kindred themes, so vitally embedded in educational and social life.

Flissey inquired as to what he thought of the prevailing vogue of concentration of public interest in rural centers; to which Frame responded:

"This I think is inevitable. The evils of congestion in commercial centers—largely the consequence of the past mania for city life—convinced the people that a radical change in redistribution of the masses was necessary; that humanity should be brought back to elemental consideration of the economies and socialities of what, in this process of reform, came to be termed 'sane living' and 'sane government.'"

"Yes," Grampion interposed at this point; "and I remember hearing, years ago, a lecturer who was promoting this very issue of 'country life'. Said he: 'Patrick Henry well said: "Give me liberty or give me death," but I say give me *country* or give me death, and to give me country you must give me the social-civics as a *country* institution'; and he brought the house down."

"I believe we all feel a deeper interest in our social-civics than we did a few years ago," said Frame, continuing the discussion. "The whole movement is so inspiring, and so closely associated with all we live for——"

"There!—you've hit the nail on the head, Mr. Frame," Grampion broke in with enthusiastic emphasis. "More than once I've said to Myra that we take more interest in life than we did a few years ago—I mean, we take a *different* interest; we feel that we are part and parcel of the world in a sense that is new; and, as you say, it's inspiring."

"Yes," assented Mrs. Loor, "and—I don't know just how to express it, but we all feel that the young perform a larger part of what is being done in a responsible way, than they used to do; and they enjoy it so keenly because they are taking more responsibility. And Felicia; she just seems to live in this social-civics atmosphere."

"I have heard much of the leading part Miss Loor is taking, especially in the musical rôles," remarked Frame.

"Oh, my part isn't much," said Flissey deprecatingly, "but I do enjoy it, Mr. Frame; and it seems to grow upon all of us who take part. Miss Kiteler's just as deep in it as she can be;—and the young men—well, in fact you know all about what they're

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doing, since you hold so prominent a place in the 'movement,' as you call it."

"That's very kind of you, Miss Loor, to speak so assuringly of the little part I may have played in development of the civics. However, I do realize that almost every one who has joined in leadership of the work is enthusiastic."

"Yes, and the young chaps," remarked Grampion. "Only the other day a boy of about thirteen or so came along—he was a member of the arborage committee—and pointed out that some of my catalpas were too near the maples. Said he: 'You see, Mr. Loor, as we all have a pride in keeping things as they should be in beautifying the roads and grounds, why, we just have to keep our eyes peeled for anything that's out of proper form or setting,' and so on. He said he wasn't thinking of citing me before the committee, 'but,' says he, 'if you would like to be cited to the regulation, we will give you a reference to it, any time you like, sir.' It turned out, however, that I had set those catalpas a few months before this particular regulation was adopted, as I learned at the subsequent committee meeting. This same boy, speaking for his committee, went on to say they were making a specialty of ornithology in connection with the arborage. 'We are doing everything we can,' he went on, 'to entice and to hold the birds in our township;' and he spoke of the close competition in these matters between the townships, and so forth."

"And some of the elderly men, too,"—Frame was remarking——

"Yes, I was just going to say. There's Budlong; he was present at that meeting," interposed Grampion. "This boy—Cyrus somebody—remarked that his committee wanted to feel that the people were one with them, 'in the spirit of the thing, as Mr. Budlong says,' said he; and Budlong, who was present, sat there and said not a word, but his face glowed with pleasure as he listened to the boy spokesman."

Grampion then rose, remarking that he would now go out and attend to some work in hand; and, stepping toward Frame, he added: "Of course you'll be with us at dinner, and I'll see more of you before you go." Frame expressed regret that Mr. Loor was going to leave the company; and continued:

"For myself, I feel that I must be going home soon——"

"Oh, no, Mr. Frame," Flissey interjected, "you must not think of it, you've only just begun to visit. We of course expect you to remain until after dinner"; and, turning to her father, she charged him not to go away far, nor for long.

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CHAPTER VIII

FRAME'S further allusions to the subject of returning home being silenced, and Mrs. Loor having found an excuse for absenting herself from the parlor for a time, the two young people were left to themselves. Flissey at once began to importune Frame to sing.

"Mr. Frame," she said, "I've heard that you sing so nicely, and here's the new song 'The Days to Come,' by Guerin. It's a beautiful solo for just such a baritone voice as I've heard you have. Come over here and sing it—do, please, while I accompany;" and she glided into the seat before the piano, then turned and beckoned Frame to join her. Without rising from his chair he declared that he really did not sing, beyond sometimes joining in something quite commonplace in chorus work, but that to sing a solo—no, he must decline. Then he rose, stepped to where she sat, and declared with animation:

"But we know that Miss Loor is a princess among entertainers, at the piano, and with her voice, too." He would be delighted to listen to any song she would be so kind as to sing. But Flissey, thanking him for this compliment, would not be put off; he must sing, and she would carry the second part. He still demurred; protesting also that he was but slightly acquainted with the piece—was unacquainted with the notes, and had never attempted to sing it. Then she pronounced her "ultimatum"—this at his persistent importuning—she would take the air, he the bass:

"Now, I'll play it all through slowly, and you follow me—and then we'll sing it together!" She began to play; repeating some bits of it, and almost inaudibly humming the air. Then she suggested that they go through it together: "Just humming our parts—now!"—and Bernard, finding himself insensibly falling into the spirit of Flissey's masterful leadership, acted upon the suggestion.

There was something so resistlessly inspiring in her initiative that he began to imagine in a new sense that he liked to sing!

As she was about to strike the keys for accompaniment to the

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joint rendition of the piece, she stopped, threw up her hands and, looking up into Frame's face, burst into vivacious laughter, exclaiming:

"Mr. Frame, I've given you a lesson!—and you've proven a most manageable pupil. You've looked 'Oh, I can't,' but you haven't said 'I won't!' I knew you didn't need any instruction—of course!—I've just been disillusionizing you. Now we're going to sing:"—and she turned to the instrument and played the prelude.

Frame, as he had listened to the restrained but clear, resonant and spiritualized tones of Flissey as she ran through this delicious production of one of the great masters, was fascinated by the depth of buoyant feeling that welled forth from her being. In process of her initial sketching of it for him he had been insensibly borne back through his earlier experiences of her —when she had seemed the unstable sprite of the woods! In this few seconds' span was dissolved forever the last remnant of illusion that she was by nature and trend one out of harmony with his own being—and with his destiny!—for somehow destiny seemed encompassed in what was transpiring.

Now they sang together! Flissey the animate soul in dominance; he the enthralled participant who, in the real drama that was being enacted, knew only that he sang and loved to sing because a soul in song entranced him!

The two voices in perfect harmony rendered the closing strains so nobly and so impressively that Flissey, when the last note died out, sprang to her feet, grasped Frame's hand as her eyes flashed through him fire of a soul now in even fuller revealment, she pronounced in tremulous but subdued intonation that was majesty—eye and voice joining in adoration and supreme approval—the expression awed by what she had discovered in him:

"You have a wonderful voice, Mr. Frame: a voice of song—but so enhanced by a higher faculty—that of manhood!"

Each was again reading the other's soul—but in light of this new mutual revelation of song. To her it was conscious presence of greatness in his being thus awakened. To him, wonderment over discovery that merged all else in life—that he had found himself in her!

Frame, as if impelled, in hushed subdued tone said:

"Miss Loor, I dare not tell my thoughts: I am marveling!"

Startled by his words, she yet responded with that which most deeply moved her:

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"I dare to tell you mine, Mr. Frame. You are destined to a great end in life!"

Then she seemed emerging from abstractedness, as in a kind of ecstasy she exclaimed:

"I'm so glad you sang for me!"

Instantly impulse moved him as with a radiant smile that reflected a deeper note than he had before revealed to Flissey, he spoke:

"I can never forget how you sang for me!—to me, it seemed!" Then, in response to her inquiry as to how he liked to sing it, he replied:

"I scarcely realized that I was singing: I knew only that it was being sung—and that I was enchanted!"

Flissey, indicating a negative of the implication thus conveyed, declared in a sincerity he could not doubt: "I could think of nothing but your voice when once we were under way!" She ended with:

"I was sure I discovered in you an element that could manifest itself only in song: But my own singing!—I suppose it is my attachment for music. I really love the harmonics."

"But your faculty for leadership in bringing out musical expression:—is very rare indeed. I felt that more than——"

"Now, Mr. Frame," interposed Flissey, "pardon me for changing the subject—let us think of something else. I'm going to ask if you wouldn't like to go with us for an omniplane ride-and-soar for a little while? It's so pleasant, and we're all ready to start whenever we say the word?—I'll call up Papa and we'll be off very soon, and then we'll return before dinner time."

Frame was coupling a resistless expression that such an outing would be extremely delightful, with another suggestion concerning returning to his home——

"Oh, but your people won't suffer from your absence a little overtime,"—and Flissey laughed deliciously, "and here's the afternoon news-bulletin," she digressed, stepping into the hall, "perhaps you would like to glance through the dispatches while I call him;" and she disappeared as he approached the tablet and scanned the synposized intelligence in headlines:

"Hong Kong virtually fallen. Allies' Flags Over Her Outer Ramparts."

Flissey, after notifying her father to have the plane brought for an immediate start, passed into the sitting room and made a similar announcement to her mother: "Just a little runabout

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for the air—I've an idea, Mother, so get your things on, we're going right away."

Frame was cogitating over the news as Flissey returned to where he was standing. To her inquiry as to what he thought the capture of the oriental stronghold would mean to the Chinese, he replied:

"I was thinking that England's insistence that her retention of Hong Kong is essential to preservation of Chinese integrity and empire—to save it from dissolution—is not without force from her viewpoint."

The tinkling of the plane-signal bell in the sitting room took Flissey to the front door—the plane was at the front gate. As she was handing Frame his hat and cane the parents joined them; and the party passed out to where the plane was in waiting.

Flissey spoke: "First we'll take a run-and-soar over to Miss Kiteler's—just halting at Fount-of-Flowers—if you are agreeable, Mr. Frame; then we'll glide back by way of the Sidner Vines and drop down there for a few moments, and then we'll return home."

"Most delightful!" exclaimed Frame. "Your plan is exquisite, Miss Loor."

The parents occupied the front seat, Flissey and Frame the rear one. The omni was surfacing along noiselessly under guidance of the family planeman. From the corners eastward of the Loor home the party coursed northward to the Fount. As the plane drew up to the group of spacious roadside shadetrees set in midst of a beautiful lawn and flower-garden, all disembarked at Flissey's suggestion that they tarry a moment and partake of some refreshing drink. They were now seated on the rustic bench facing eastward.

After Flissey had inquired of the other members of the party as to choice of liquid delicacies, and the planeman had memorandized the specifications, he at Grampion's request proceeded to where stood a cabinet beneath the trees a short distance away, and within a bower over and through which bounteous sprays of water were playing from fountains—having shut off the flow for the time being; the interior of the cabinet being isolated and cooled by circulating air tempered by contacts with enclosed streams of water —which latter was cooled by a simple and inexpensive process. After touching certain of the stops arranged on the façade of the cabinet, and placing in its slot a coin representing the price of the refreshments, he returned to the seated party with a tray containing them; with which the visitors regaled themselves as eyes feasted upon the surrounding ensemble in horticulture and

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ears were beguiled by lisp and patter of fountains mingled with voices of song-birds in the trees.

These rest-and-lounging places were furnished by the township boards under auspices of the social-civics; the refreshments were disposed of at cost; the entire civic plant being under the immediate superintendency of the rural resident living immediately beyond the Fount gardens.

The plane having been adjusted to air-action, the party reëntered it; power was shifted to the mechanism operating the aërial screw and the wings, and the upward soar began; the plane being headed northeasterly to make the fly to the Kiteler home.

"Isn't this a fine prospect!" exclaimed Flissey, as she flung apart her hands and looked ahead and below upon the panorama spread before the vision. "I think the Dolton Woods and that cunning lake beside them are just bewitching. And then, this tragedy that occurred there last fall—ugh!—it makes me shudder; yet its mystery is full of romance, and somehow it increases my fascination for the Woods."

"It is certainly quite grand," assented Frame. "And I have heard that they are to have an aërial roost over there by the lake"—pointing toward the locality mentioned.

"That reminds me," said Mrs. Loor. "I'm told they are about to enlarge and elevate the Boniface Roost over here by the Rosedale School."

"Well, it never was quite high enough to secure best results in the heat of summer, you know; and they've complained too that the airal-drop lacked proper space for alighting," remarked Grampion.

The plane was now nearing the suburbs of Cannington, the little semi-hamlet where was the Kiteler residence; the soar having been taken at a slow, rather lagging speed.

Clouds were gathering to southwest; the sun being frequently obscured. Ragged shadows and sun-patches below were chasing each other over hill, dale and forests in a wild succession that lent peculiar attractiveness to the whole landscape over wide areas.

"Even to the seas!" exclaimed Flissey in exuberance of spirit, her reference being to the remote horizons that were banked in a haze imparting to them the appearance of far ocean spaces.

The plane alighted. Miss Kiteler had just returned from the drama-recital at Tromple Shades.

She was entertaining the callers with an enthusiastic reference to the civics side of the coming annuals program:

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"The two productions in polemics will be among the very best we have ever had," she declared. "Two boys and one girl take the chief parts in the little political drama we're to schedule as 'The Rebuke of Tom Schindles'; and Joe Cotsworth is training the boys. It's not merely didactic, there's lots of humor in it, and something pathetic too. The other is the debate on 'Our National Relations to the Oriental Problem——' "

"Yes," interrupted Grampion, who had been listening closely, "well, they'll have to recast that, and do it instanter, to bring it down to date—since we hear that Hong Kong has as good as passed out of England's hands—pardon the interruption, Miss Kiteler, but I couldn't help breaking in there."

"So the British are losing out in that campaign, are they?" replied Eleanor. "So much the worse; for we'll come to realize now that civilization is losing ground in developing China—but that's all I care to say, I'm coming back to the Shades program."

"Yes," said Flissey, "that's right; and let us hear about the music-drama, how is that work progressing?"

"Felicia, I was about to explain that very feature," was the ardent response. "You should have been present at the last rehearsal of 'The Black Idol of Dahomey!' " the narrator proceeded, looking around at all present, "it was so absorbingly realistic—and too, Miss Brodein has her hands full between instructing the drama-class and carrying the title rôle. As 'Princess of Ashantee' she is—well, one of the girls says 'marvelous.' She certainly performs with great power, and her impersonations are wonderful! By the way, have you heard of the offer she has had?"—addressing Flissey, but looking about upon the assembly.

"No; tell us about it, Miss Kiteler," Flissey responded in astonishment and eager expectancy.

"Well, it's this—as I've heard it: It is currently reported that an agent of Boehm at the Athenian, Chicago, has been out here to observe her performances; that he was fascinated with her trial work, and went back enthusiastic; that the management have offered her five hundred dollars per week for a sixty days' engagement; and that she has the proposition under consideration."

"Well!" said Grampion. "Pretty good for a girl that nobody knew three years ago, even at Tromple Shades."

"It doesn't surprise me a bit," said Flissey, gazing at the ceiling as if in wonderment of what further might be in store for such genius; "but I do hope she won't leave us!" she ended, with a certain sinking of voice and posture into an aspect of dis-

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may, as she gazed ruefully out of the window. "I do want so much to know more of her—and to be with her, oh! so much longer!—and I'm glad I am to be over there to-morrow at the final preliminary recital. But I know I shall be so absorbed in her rôle that the music, so far as I'm concerned, will fall by the wayside!"

The allusion to Miss Brodein's part in the doings thus narrated had awakened Frame's deeper interest. And when the proposition from the dramatic center now regarded as the climax of American art was related, he became lost in an absorbing contemplation. He seemed spiritually picturing a dazzling histrionic effort by one upon whom he was so intently gazing as to have become transfixed!

Instantly Flissey perceived his transport. Her eyes shone with a kindling light as she said to him with animation: "Mr. Frame, you will recall what I expressed to you concerning Miss Brodein's talents. What we have just now heard goes to confirm all that I said to you as to my belief in her future success." She looked at her mother and ejaculated: "Her remarkable impersonations at our home, Mother!"

"She is something more than an actress, to my mind," responded Mrs. Loor. "She is an embodiment; we don't think of the faculty of impersonation. I do not recall that ever before was I impressed in this sense when observing dramatic action. When she was presenting 'Hagar's Sacrifice' there this forenoon, it just seemed to *evolve* from her. And her voice: remarkable as it is, it seems simply to tell of a *being* that is living a life—and it's all so undemonstrative!"

Before any response had been made to what she had said, Mrs. Loor added: "There's one more thought that comes to me: All my life I have somehow been impressed by one name that towers above all others in my mental category of great actresses—of course the conception is based wholly upon tradition. I refer to Rachel; and to the quality of the innate *being* of the woman—the character of the *source* of her personality. I have thought that her genius was something generic in its mode of self-revelation; something that eked out through passion moved by the 'eternal verities,' if I may so express myself. Now, that's the idea that haunts me as I think of Miss Brodein."

Frame was stirred to speech by these impressive words that so vividly recalled his own impressions of the young actress. He said with evident gravity and feeling:

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"I chanced to have heard Miss Brodein at the last annuals at Ives Waters. I can not refrain from observing that Mrs. Loor's analysis of her singular faculty of becoming the character she represents, and of her seeming to live its life as if moved by innate absorbing power, strikingly reminds me of my own impressions at the time."

As the visitors were about to take their leave, Miss Kiteler suggested to Flissey that they go some day after the annuals to call upon Miss Brodein.

"Oh, grand!" responded Flissey. "I'm so glad you have thought of me in connection with your visit. Of course I shall be only too glad to be with you."

On the return trip it was noticed that a slight breeze had sprung from westward. The landing at Sidner Vines was made without special incident.

Here the party sat within a large and magnificent bower of wood and other vines, over and intertwined with which were spread charming lacings, festoons, draperies and other decorative forms and fashions in lovely creepers; these enhanced by fern and other kindred effects. The side of the enclosure facing the roadway was open, save at the ends and the center, where were beautiful formations of vine-and-flower-covered supports. The canopy of the bower was some fifteen feet above ground, and culminated in a narrow dome surmounted by a flagpole from which floated the silken national emblem; the bower being some forty feet in length. In the rear was an area of one acre of ground devoted to lawn-and-tennis purposes. Trees and shrubbery formed a fitting setting to the entire grounds, including the roadside spaces adjacent to the bower.

Grampion, at Flissey's suggestion, stepped to an inner corner of the bower and called up Wiltsburg by wireless, requesting to be placed in touch with the Coliseum Matinée, Chicago. As he hung the audion upon the automatic connector and commutator he remarked—crossing to the opposite end of the bower as he spoke:

"Now we will listen to something from the afternoon program at the Coliseum, Mr. Frame." A certain adjustment of various inclosing and overhanging wings was now made by Grampion, to concentrate and properly diffuse sound emanating from the telemuse about to be put in operation; which arrangement included lowering of curtains on the open side of the bower. Returning to the telemuse end, and arranging the motion-picture mechanism

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there installed, he connected the same with the telemuse-graph combination. Certain synchronizing adjustments brought into harmony the functions of receiving from abroad the wireless impactions of sound, light and color from the Coliseum, and those of distribution thereof from the bower instrument to the auditorium. He then wirelessed Chicago and was informed that the day's production was:

"Selections from Mosceles' 'Dread March of the Sikhs'; International Orchestra."

The telemuse began to pour forth the strains of the prelude; the stage became illuminated; the far spaces within its frame showing a landscape with undulations and escarpments indicative of a scarred battlefield; colors and atmospheric effect being true to nature.

Then came the march; whose every tone-feature was so perfectly transmitted as to give the impression of the immediate presence of the orchestra. Metals, woods and strings each registered expression with precision and charm unmarred by distance.

This additional detail—concerning admission to the entertainment—should be here explained: The entry into the pay-slot of the coin covering cost of the production was automatically registered upon a placard outside the bower. Through an auxiliary mechanism it was practicable and permissible for any one outside who desired to enjoy the entertainment, to deposit in a slot-machine a coin representing a certain proportionate part of the amount registered on the placard, and thereby to become entitled to pass inside and become one of the audience—this, however, only upon previous permission of the entertainer of the visiting party inside, indicated through a placard-system under which responsive appearances of "yes" or "no" were made to appear outside. The contributory payment was withdrawn by the original entertainer at the end of the program. This and similar arrangements were established through the social-civics, throughout the rural districts as part of the rural entertainments the country over.

It chanced on the present occasion that the Wadsworth family from Wiltsburg, who were touring in the neighborhood, became beneficiaries of this privilege of listening to the entertainment; they being people with whom the Loors and Frames were well acquainted.

The orchestral tones died down to a low murmuring of portentous expectancy of tragi-courageous onset at arms; then rose to booming thunder of heavy artillery at the rear of the devoted

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band now seen in the trenches, who were about to rush to victory —and to immortality in death. Roar became pandemonium—intervals followed by mightier poundings upon surface of a riotous sub-tone; commingled with which were responses from enemy field-pieces, distinctly distant and in a different quarter of the general scene. Beyond the trenches surgings and counter-surgings of British infantry against the German foe—the former slowly yielding to superior numbers.

Now sudden cessation of artillery; then momentous instant of suspense—muttered prayers to pagan deity—sententious order: "Charge"—glad fanatic leaps from trenches—the momentous yet ecstatic battle-shout of the Sikhs of India!

Rumbling rhythmic tread of heavy-booted feet—now roll, recurrent roll, tear and staccato of small-arms—shrieks, huzzas, altercations, groans; thrust and counter-thrust of sabers, bayonets—desperate wrestlings and bouts of death—new-rising sounds from thrilled throats, whose increase in tone of triumph denotes victory of the Sikhs—mad evacuation of enemy redoubt—planting of British flag upon the smoking crest of battle-torn hillock of the foe's last rally—the struggle to his feet of a survivor who rushes up and grasps the hand of his sinking comrade color-bearer, the standard now between them; turbaned heads upturned, free hand of each outstretched—the final long-drawn huzzah to Krishnal—and the famed conquest of East Indian warriors over the Germans at the redoubt of Neuve Chapelle closes with the climatic éclat of the orchestra!

"And that such experiences are still the lot of us mortals who boast of our civilization!—and that without experience of war, Christianity itself would expire!" ejaculated Grampion, after some exchanges of comment upon the entertainment between the visitors and their Wiltsburg friends.

"It is said," observed Mrs. Seth Wadsworth by way of responsive comment, "that Mosceles was drawn on to compose this march to accompany the realism of the moving-picture, through a soul-study into the innate terrors of war, and for the purpose of impressing this truth upon the public in this way."

"And I understand," remarked Frame, "that the idea of the composer has been in large measure vindicated by the event; that such realism is doing much to emphasize the idea that war, under any circumstances, is national disrepute."

"But this exhibition of sacrificial valor!—is not that a redeem-

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ing feature of war itself?" inquired Flissey, taking a survey of the assembled group.

"A sacrifice for what!" quickly ejaculated her father. "Those Sikhs are haters of the Christians—for whom alone they were dying—and of Christian religion. They scorn the 'cross' and all that it implies in 'civilization'—a word they play upon as a thing accursed. Upon what principle of reason or religion is this sacrifice we've just seen represented, justified?—to-day, or a quarter of a century ago when those Sikhs made that attack?"

"Oh, Papa!" cried Flissey, "men have rushed to death for an idea in every age and clime—it's inherent in the human instinct. But these 'sons of Allah' were called to arms by order of the 'Emperor of India'—and perhaps they desired to show how willingly they, dwellers in Asia, could die for a foreign cause, that of Europeans—that they could beat the British and the Germans on their own ground. Who knows?—it's sublime!"

"Yes; 'it was a glorious victory.' But I'll wager my hat that deep down in their hearts those men from the Indian Empire wanted most of all to show Christians that they would have to be reckoned with when the time came for Asia to strike back at Christianity and Christian civilization—and, by the way, it looks a little as if they thought that time had come, to judge of current affairs in the Orient."

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CHAPTER IX

EN ROUTE home from the Vines, the party were proceeding west-southwesterly. A gale was heralding the approaching storm. More power was applied, the plane was headed dead against wind; propellers angled so as to bear it to southward. The wings were the planes of older days. Wind-impact had automatically thrown out the long tapering snout which pierced and shunted the wind while steering and steadying the craft from the forward end. The normal (rear) propeller was reënforced by the front one—greater relative power given the latter. The elongated helm at the rear was automatically maneuvered to keep the plane headed to windward; all aided by the auxiliary process of "mechanical brain-work," by which irregularity of wind-impact was so dealt with as to constantly tend to overcome errors in direction and poise.

Heavy rain now accompanied sterner wind; curtains were dropped from canopy-top; thickening mist seen through the windows—a coming tempest to end in hail—was made more ominous by booming thunder and vivid sheets of lightning.

The plane was driven slightly eastward by storm's brunt, while working southward. Usual storm-signals had been sent out, being automatically repeated; that process being so synchronized and powered as to register at the Loor home-receiver and at Trompe Shades; and as distance, direction and altitude were recorded, the party could not become lost.

Stress of the storm now compelled thought of a safe landing. Conversation had become fitful and ejaculatory.

"Keep her level, Abner, and let her drop," said Grampion. Wings were automatically folded by cutting off power therefrom; and by switching power the twin horizontal propellers aloft unfolded their fore-shortened arms and began to play by substitution. The plane soon settled to safe bottom, and was standing on its "ducks' legs" in a pasture near the roadside.

Meanwhile, the signals at the Loor home told Jerry Gilder, the general custodian in absence of the family, that the party were returning via the Vines, and that the plane had grounded some

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three-quarters of a mile away. He took from his pocket cabinet his wireless; held it for an instant and listened. Receiving no tele-sound, he called up his employer, and response came:

"Yes, we're here—we don't need any aid—be home soon as this scud's over, Jerry."

Power having been cut off at landing, and noise of receding storm being diminished, Grampion jocularly inquired of the occupants in the rear seats:

"How're you feeling back there?" Frame responded: "Quite comfortably, sir. We did experience a slight trepidation when the planeman shut off wings—or, perhaps, I should say Miss Loor did——"

"Oh, no, now, I was just shouting for glee—I'd have liked it if some slight adventure had overtaken us up there——"

"Oh, yes, I realized all that when that suppressed 'Mercy!' came out," roared Grampion.

The storm had now abated, the clouds were breaking and brightening patches of light were seen in the sky. Curtains were raised; the process of adjusting the plane to surface operation went on; power being turned on to hoist the car to ground-travel height. The slung-up wheels were lowered from the sides, their adjustment resulting in automatic reëstablishment of rigidity to the recently "broken" axles; the trundled "ducks' legs" were snapped up to horizontal and, Abner again aboard, the party started homeward.

"I guess we all enjoyed that little jolt that you received up there, Flissey," said her mother in gentle raillery, recurring to the incident of the daughter's startled exclamatory. "But it always seems to make her happier," she went on, looking back at Frame, "to get upset by a sudden qualm of fear. I sometimes think she delights in courting danger."

"Mother!" was Flissey's parry in words, her merry eyes flashing into those of Frame an air of defiance to the elements. He, catching the spirit of her response, chimed in encouragingly with:

"I'm bound to declare that Miss Loor's little cry sounded rather like a signal that she was just making believe that she was afraid."

Such in very truth had been the impression he had received at the time—that she was ecstatically flinging a challenge at the storm! Her instant rejoinder was:

"That's very gallant of you, Mr. Frame!—for I was almost ready to faint!" and she laughed her brimming merriment as another exchange went on between eyes. . . .

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There was something in the social air at the dinner-table of the Loors that evening which derived character from the circumstances of Frame's visit—and from anticipations of those of its ending. This consciousness was general; for even Grampion had received faint but significant impressions of the truth through certain remote hints from Flissey's devoted mother. There was an undertone of gravity that resort to animated discussion or descent to pleasantry did not suffice to dispel. Something of embarrassment in Frame's bearing emphasized the significance of the situation. To him the intensity of pleasure he had experienced during his visit, undergoing retrospection at the moment, by contrast served to lend poignancy to his feeling as he faced the parting soon to occur. Even thoughts of Flissey's remarkable success in disabusing his mind of embarrassment as they entered the house that day, failed to bring reassurance when applied to what now seemed the ordeal confronting him.

Indeed, Frame's attitude for the time being was unique: In part it was the resultant of the vivid luring picture of genius which the accentuated comments of the Loors had projected upon his imagination of the personality of Miss Brodein—made more indelible in that it confirmed and enlarged his own previous convictions of her worth in art; in part the mingled feelings of delight over the real pleasures of the day and of discomfiture from the still lingering sense of his ingratitude in having ever so misjudged Miss Loor as he had done; and finally, the impression of a growing consciousness that he himself was becoming master of the situation, in the sense of comprehending it in higher degree than did Miss Loor! This last thought was somewhat irritating—for it hinted at a certain brutality in psychical dominance over her consciousness of the situation itself, while—and *this* is what nursed the irritation—it served to lessen the burden of the ordeal of the approaching leavetaking! Paradoxical as it was, this posture of the situation was to him real.

That is to say: Frame, in all that had passed between himself and Miss Loor and the parents, since he had called and during the dinner hour, realized through the dual faculty of consciousness and subconsciousness, that he was becoming able to analyze *her* mental and soulful perceptions of the facts pertaining to their personal relations, as those facts were emanating from the storehouse of her memory.

And this analysis was telling him that she was innately bur-

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dened with one thought: Could she make him understand at parting that no reason existed for his feeling ill at ease?

With this realization came the mental query: Why then does this matter so burden me?—rather, it was more in the nature of an ejaculation! This at first puzzled him—the discomfiture!

In searching for a solution of this still persisting heaviness, came the thought: But if only I could convey to her that I have perceived the nature of this burden of *her* thought, so that she would *know* that I know what she desires—that it has already been communicated to me—what a relief from concern this would be to both of us!

But now recurred to mind what he had realized when the mutual soul-searching process had gone on at their meeting by the bower—that each fully understood the other! Nothing had since occurred to change *that* situation. Why, then, the present concern of both?

In the further analysis came another clarity: It was, that inevitably the uncertainty as to being clearly understood by the other when he should take his leave, must bring concern to each; and that in the consciousness of each was a third personality—*Miss Brodein!*

He found that a hint of this had come to his consciousness in the virtual revelation he had experienced. Then: had she remotely connected that personality with the "obstacle" in the letters—and yet had found such peace of mind in the thought!

He had almost insensibly undergone this process of apperception through a mental undercurrent that had attended his participation in the conversation at the dinner table.

Just before the party rose to leave the dining room Grampion had reverted to the subject of Frame's future accession to the bar. Something had already been said near the beginning of the meal that had elicited from him some expressions of his special aims in the profession.

"Your friends naturally expect you to become an honored and, I may say, a leading member of the profession," Grampion was saying.

Thanking him for so encouraging a suggestion, Frame declared his belief to be that only experience could determine one's real place in any profession; and continued:

"But, as I have conceived the plan of action which my inclination has suggested should be my guide in life, I apprehend that my professional experience, whatever it may be, is more likely to

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become of special value as an aid in endeavoring to accomplish certain ulterior ends that lie mostly outside the scope of the lawyer's strictly professional ambition." He did not proceed to specification of ends; but contented himself with observing:

"I believe that no lawyer nowadays should do less than resolve that his life shall be devoted to the betterment of his community and the state. And there are many ways in which that aim may be furthered through expanding one's faculties into fields that are kindred to that of the practicing attorney, though not generally regarded as within the line of professional action."

"Your motive in life is evidently a highminded one, Mr. Frame," said Mrs. Loor. "Not all lawyers are impelled by like thoughts."

"Oh, no, I merit no such distinction," Frame declared deprecatingly. "The curriculum of law study itself is such as to rigorously enforce this principle of ethical conception and action."

The dinner being now ended, all parties repaired to the parlor; where Grampion soon excused himself, saying that matters about the farm demanded his attention. As he shook hands with Frame, he heartily declared himself pleased that he had called, and trusted that, now that the "ice was broken," he would not fail to repeat his visit. He would like to show him over the farm some day, declaring:

"I think I have some livestock that is about as fine as any in this part of the country; and I don't mind saying I would like to have you take a look at them some day." Frame thanked him, adding:

"I have heard about those cattle of which you so justly boast, and shall be glad to go with you and see them at some future time."

Then Mrs. Loor took her leave of Frame; assuring him of the extreme pleasure that had come to all members of the family from his visit, and from the afternoon outing with him as guest.

He declared to Flissey that he must now be going; and added with genuine warmth:

"Miss Loor, I have of course felt that to meet you again would be a pleasure beyond words to express; but I must again confess that I had also become so burdened with the thoughts I have to-day endeavored to explain to you, that I could not anticipate the extreme pleasure that I have enjoyed in making this call——"

"And I have been so delighted with your visit, and so have my parents," Flissey interposed. "As friends and neighbors I

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shall hope—in fact I feel certain that we shall find some things in common that will continue to make your future visits—may I hope it will be a mutual pleasure?—and we shall always be deeply interested in hearing more of your plans——"

"Thank you sincerely; and I shall try to appreciate in some fair measure your interest in my welfare," he rejoined. "I need not add that it will be a delight to repeat at some time, this call."

They passed into the hall. Flissey handed Frame his hat and cane, saying: "We will go out to the plot."

As the two were about to turn toward the plot at the junction of the two walks, a plane came driving up and slowed down at the front gate; George Selton stepped out, a young lady remaining seated.

It may be explained that Selton, after so surreptitiously taking leave of Flissey at the bower, had resolved as he departed that he would make a demonstration that would "bring her to time, so that she'll know where she stands, and where I stand"—meaning that he would maintain his attitude of independence of her, and would go with other lady friends at will and without deference to her pleasure; he would "show up here" with Rhoda Files some day, "and defy her in her own home." And while at heart he could not justify this resolve, in that he had believed she loved him; and while he mentally declared: "and she is such a sweet girl!" yet he fell back upon:

"But this jealousy! She must get used to my flirting occasionally—and nothing but a little discipline will accomplish that!" In this connection prudence rather than conscience brought reflection that perhaps it was just as well that she did not know of some of his social connections in the east!

He had not told Miss Files when inviting her to ride with him on this occasion, that he intended calling at the Loors. She had become convinced, through his emphatic denial of the truth of a report Rhoda had told him she had heard to the effect that he was engaged to Miss Loor, that such was not the case. As they now drew near the Loor homestead, Selton had said to her he would like to have her meet Miss Loor, "and we will call there for a short time if you like"; to which she had assented. But as he observed the pair walking down from the house he remarked that perhaps Miss Loor had company, that with her (Rhoda's) consent he would get out and speak to Miss Loor and ascertain. Frame was but slightly acquainted with Selton; having casually met him once upon a public occasion. He knew nothing of Miss Files.

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As Selton walked toward the gate Flissey took in the situation at a glance. She said to Frame:

"Mr. Frame, pardon me if I ask you to kindly wait for a moment—this gentleman is coming in—it is Mr. Selton"—the two had halted.

Selton came through the gate and, doffing his hat, greeted Flissey, and bowed to Frame, each calling the other by name.

The real situation was of course known only to Selton and Flissey. His audacity was in effect reënforced by Frame's presence—for to him this incident would offset any claim Flissey might make of his inconsistency toward her in appearing with Miss Files! His visage reflected this line of thought, in sarcasm and irony, as he glanced from Flissey to Frame and said—addressing her:

"I see *you* have company, Miss Loor. Perhaps we will defer our call until another occasion—it is Miss Files that is with me," he ended in a tone and with a look whose joint effect was a composite of poorly veiled defiance, of reproach and disdain;—an attitude which impressed Frame as something assumed for a purpose —he knew not what. Before Flissey had spoken in response he quickly remarked, addressing Selton:

"I am about to return home, Mr. Selton, do not hesitate to bring the lady right in,"—then, addressing Flissey:

"Miss Loor, I will bid you good-evening, and will be going, now," extending his hand in final greeting; she responding as their eyes met: "It has been a pleasure to us, Mr. Frame. Kindly remember me to your brother; good-bye." Then, turning to Selton, she extended a cordial invitation to him to "come right in with Miss Files"; beaming her old-time smile upon him.

But Selton had caught Frame's lingering gaze upon Flissey at their final greeting, and it was to him indicative of a desire on his part to say something more to her. His attitude instantly changed as he withdrew his eyes from Frame and listened to what Flissey was saying. In response he said in tone and with emphasis that carried their own significance:

"No, Fliss, I guess we won't come in. Your present company is so agreeable that I don't feel like breaking in. And I see you aren't as jealous of me as you were when those tears were flowing not very long ago." As he turned upon his heel to return to the highway, Flissey exclaimed pleadingly:

"Why, George, what does this mean? You must know that I very much desire you and Miss Files to come in. Do come in

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now, and let's have a nice visit." But Selton was defiant as he swung his arm with the implication of a stern negative; and with a high-browed, disdainful look he walked away.

Flissey, dismayed, stood despairingly struggling—to know what to do to make Selton understand; her eyes cast upon the ground. Quickly raising her head she plead, loud enough to be heard by him and by Miss Files: "Oh, George, come back—and bring Miss Files with you!" He neither halted nor gave other responsive sign of compliance; but, reëntering the plane, he started power and, without saying a word to Rhoda, half deferentially, half defiantly lifted his hat to Flissey, and started on.

Torn by conflicting thoughts and emotions, she gazed abjectedly upon the departing car as it flew into distance—then suddenly her thoughts reverted to Mr. Frame. She saw him standing in the air-plot facing toward her, his head inclined downward, as were his eyes. Observing her movement, he walked back toward her, she advancing to meet him.

"Miss Loor," he began with some trepidation, "I can not but feel a certain regret that it occurred that I was at your home at a time when Mr. Selton and his friend were coming to call upon you—and somehow I feel——"

"Now, Mr. Frame," interposed Flissey, anxious to disabuse his mind of such a thought, "I pray you not to allow yourself to be concerned with such an idea for a moment. Doubtless there were reasons for their not caring particularly to make a call this evening—it looks like another dash of rain too, over there in the west," she added, looking in the direction indicated, "and perhaps they wisely concluded to go on so as to return to Miss Files' home before another storm rises—she lives over south and west here a ways—though I am not acquainted with the lady." He thanked her for the assurance her words had conveyed.

They had walked together to the plot. No further conversation had occurred until Frame had adjusted his airal and was about to take his departure. Then he turned to Flissey, and in a pensiveness she at once noted, addressed her with a certain resolution not unmixed with trepidation:

"Miss Loor, I feel impelled by a sense of justice to yourself, and that I may upon my part conduce to more fully relieving your mind—and also my own—concerning what has passed between us to-day in connection with the letters—to declare to you that I believe I discovered during our conversations at the dinner table, that this was on your mind: That you wished me to know when

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we parted to-night that you felt that there is no occasion for me to feel concerned as to your own feelings and disposition in the premises——"

"That was precisely what I was *hoping* I might do, Mr. Frame!" exclaimed Flissey in a growing wonderment that had followed his revelation, and in ecstasy over this remarkable and unexpected discovery of his consciousness of her own mentality. Her aspect of extreme delight was taking on a certain amazement from what his eyes were telling her, as he proceeded:

"And I wanted to tell you this, that we both might realize that we know one another's mind at this moment—and more than all else, because I trust that this revealment will set *your* mind entirely at ease upon that subject!"

The two were experiencing another and more transcendent merging of mutual consciousness than they had known before. To her, it was perception of and wonderment at his faculty—and satisfaction that brought ineffable happiness! To him, corresponding gladness in that she believed him! Both felt that words would be inexpressible. Hands were clasping in an adieu—this touch and the language of eyes interpreted fullness of truth.

Then hands were released; he returned to his airal, applied power, raised his hat, heads bowed in parting salute—and he was gone.

Flissey sat down on the plot-bench and watched the airal until it was out of sight.

"And where have you been, Bernie?" inquired his mother when Frame entered the sitting room upon his return and had remarked that his prolonged absence had probably caused her to wonder how far he had been airing.

"I have been over to the Loors, Mother," he replied, "and I have spent a most pleasurable afternoon." This announcement was expressed without reserve, and was accompanied by a smile which, while noticeably subdued, was genuine and significant of much.

"To the Loors?" There was less of surprise in this reception of his response than he had anticipated; but the quiet beaming that lit her countenance grew into radiance as his mother continued:

"I am so pleased, Bernie, and we'll all be, too, that you've visited the Loors. I have wondered for years why you hadn't gone there and become better acquainted with them—almost near neighbors as they are—and why you hadn't become really well acquainted with Flissey——"

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She was looking earnestly into Bernard's eyes as these fervent utterances came forth—and she now beheld him almost bereft of his smile, gazing steadily back into her eyes with a look more of firm, exalted resignation than of pleasure; yet beneath all a tremendous satisfaction dominated his face. The look puzzled his mother.

"She's so blithesomely attractive; and she's so noble——"

He was speaking more in soliloquy than to his mother, some thoughts reflected in his countenance——

"And she understands me!" he ended, with a look now so strange that the mother was returning it with one in which the smile was mingled with querulousness. But she instantly found words to commend and supplement what he had expressed of Flissey Loor:

"Bernie, she's all that and more:—she's one of the sweetest, dearest girls that ever lived!"

"That's what I have just said, Mother. But her sweetness is different—it is more beguiling because it is centered in spirituality that appeals to something higher than mere love of the sexes—for that is what it means," he ended; then relapsed into detachment.

"Mother!" he said in sudden return to the subject in hand, "what have I been saying to you!—but it would come out—to you. But it's sacredly to you alone, Mother. And there's so much more to it than I can tell—it's all so strange that I feel that you will have a wrong impression of what I meant. We are drawn together—but we're so far apart!—it's for your ears alone, Mother," he repeated—and instantly rose from his chair and walked out of the room.

For a long time as he lay upon his couch that evening in reverie over the day's experience, he was engrossed by what Miss Loor had been—was now—to him.

She had discovered his manhood—through persuading the music-strings of his soul into vibration. She had re-awakened his ambition to strive for worthy ends in life—to feel this ambition in a new sense—by declaring that such was his destiny!

And finally: After all his forebodings of what might come from his verbal explanation of the letters, she had really understood—and was happy in the realization! And he was especially grateful over the outcome, in that his discovery of her desire to reassure him had been made clear to her. So profoundly convinced was he of her willing resignation to the implications of the

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"obstacle," that she seemed to have a permanent swaying power in the firmament of his being.

That is to say: Bernard Frame understood that the passion instilled in him by this latest experience was, and ought to be a passion for a purpose—that the entrancement of Flissey Loor was a special visitation of providence, for great ends that might affect millions of other souls!

Then thought turned to Henrietta Brodein: Of her wonderful personality; of the depth of her being. How *she* had sounded him in a different way. How she could live in others' personalities. How she had conversed with him—unknowingly wrought upon him—through some psychology. Had awakened in him a peculiarly longing love!

For there was something in the strain of her being that held him so peculiarly in its grasp that he believed it was good for him, that he ought to allow the passion to flow unrestrained. Many resolves he had made to sometime, somehow—in God's good time—make this known to her.

And was not *she* lovely?

Yet not all the marvelous elements of her personality—of eyes, voice, form; features of strange radiance that yet told of tragedy—of dazzling lights and dark shadows of life; that unspeakable grace of bearing—not all these combined, but something more, made for him this Henrietta!

Mrs. Loor had faintly sounded what it was—but only faintly.

She had not mentioned that other element that fashioned all the rest—that *made* that being—a boundless love, that shone in all her work—that characterized, dominated, all her living in other personages—that love that seemed to other observers a passion of her profession, but which *he* knew was love of mankind—that was innate, and which accounted for the impersonator she was, and was promise of the great actress she was to be!

Then came thought of all that Miss Loor had said out of the abundance of her enthusiasm for Miss Brodein—out of her very love for her!

Moreover, his impressions, borne out by some current reports that had come to him of her growing reputation, were that this was the logical as well as unique feature of Miss Brodein's affections: that the love her personality awakened knew not sex or estate. Some of the poor with whom she had come in contact had grown to love her, so he had heard. It was even said that the criminals loved her. She had recited in a penitentiary; and one

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of the inmates had said: "How mighty she makes the wicked!" One of the foulest felons among them had exclaimed: "She is a Hugo in disguise!"

There was something in all this he was now mentally reviewing, that seemed to bear relation to his life purpose. Two guardian angels seemed lighting the way: one luring him on as her purpose, the other wandering alone—and by her loneliness compelling him!

Late in the evening he rose from his couch, descended the stairway, and passed out and into the highway for a brief walk in the starlit night. Peace seemed written in the firmament; and to say to him that he should feel at peace. As he returned to his room and retired, he felt that unexpected, providential relief had come to his concern of the morning.

In the evening, after he had gone to his room from the sitting room, Mrs. Frame had made known to Julius and Horace—who had entered the house soon after—that Bernard had been calling at the Loors. Significant exchanges had followed this announcement. Horace declared that he had suspected from Bernard's unusual manner when he had returned from the law school that something "was in the wind."

"And now he's made a break," he added, "for I guess we know who he wanted to see in particular over there." But Horace could not understand a certain reserve in his mother's approval of his suggestion. He continued to observe her countenance as he inquired:

"Of course that's what it means—he's called on Flissey?"

"Yes, I suppose that must be what took him over there, of course," she replied guardedly. "But perhaps we shouldn't assume that—that he went there to make a profession—well."

"Oh, we needn't discuss it, Mother, but then I know," declared Horace, as he still regarded his mother's manner of reception of his own expressions as somewhat mystical. Julius simply remarked:

"Well, for my part, it's natural enough to suppose that he's at last found an attraction there that might well mean just what Horace has indicated; and I hope it's so."

While the mother had been mystified by Bernard's expression about being "drawn together, but so far apart," she gladly assented to Julius' version, by quickly remarking: "Yes; so do we all, Julius. We couldn't be more pleased than to feel that their relations might grow closer."

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CHAPTER X

AT Tromple Shades the general rehearsals for the annuals were proceeding.

The political phase of the civics department of the local social-civics was in charge of what were known as township monitors—appointees of the township boards, selected, according to a legislative act authorizing this system, from among leading citizens who were by experience and political training fitted for the duties in hand. They received no compensation; and held office for life, subject to being deposed for specified causes. The party majority in this board when formed, was in harmony with that of the dominant party at the last preceding state election; but each of at least three political parties was represented by membership. Upon a party change of state administration, one of the former majority members (by agreement or by lot) resigned; his successor being chosen from the now dominant party. Minors at least twelve years of age voted their choice for a board of monitors, or for a new member; their votes being merely advisory. The moral effect was such, however, that such vote usually determined the appointment.

Joseph Cotsworth and Anthony Budlong had for some years been the dominant forces among the Tromple Shades monitors. Schooled in the tactics of former days when political bossism prevailed in the Republican and Democratic parties (Cotsworth of the former, Budlong of the latter party), they had experienced a change of heart and had jointly dedicated the remainder of their lives to the task of teaching and guiding the young in what Cotsworth had termed "the high art of true self-government." Both had become convinced that only through elimination of pernicious practices that had grown up under the old parties, and by keeping the young constantly in contact with semi-official responsibility with government itself, could true self-government be realized and perpetuated.

The competition for the prize in civics this year involved excellence in mastery of tactics in conducting a hypothetical nominating campaign; the supposed case being that of an aspirant for a

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legislative nomination, who was reputed to have appropriated moneys belonging to his former employee. Budlong was presiding at a rehearsal of the class competitors for this prize, in a schoolroom at Tromple Shades; the exercise consisting of discussing the probable outcome of a line of campaign tactics in which an alleged confession of embezzlement by the supposed candidate was investigated through the board of monitors. Among other citizens present toward the end of the exercise was Frame; who, being called upon by Budlong to quiz one of the prospective contestants, drew forth this response to his inquiry as to the ethical reason why a drastic and summary process of investigating charges against a candidate during the nominating campaign was authorized by statute law:

"It is because public policy regards the right of the public to look closely into the past record of a candidate, as greater than the right of any person to become a candidate, or to become a public officer, sir. And every candidate is supposed to accept the challenge of the public—an implied challenge, they call it—of his whole record as a citizen, as well as his competency."

The second and last day of the annuals at Tromple Shades had come. In the forenoon exercises there had been dialogues, declamations, recitals, athletics; also posing by the girls, including some delicious fairy-dancing—an exceptionally entertaining program. Interspersed with these parts had been furnished some telemuse entertainments, wirelessed from St. Louis and Chicago.

In the afternoon the attendance at the auditorium had swollen to almost a jam. There were groups from Wiltsburg, Bellville and other surrounding towns; while some were present from remoter parts, including several who were timing their visits to dwellers in and near the township, with the annuals, who were present from distant states. To crown all, there were present several specialists in dramatic criticism who had come from Chicago—one of whom was in the pay of Boehm—to observe Miss Brodein in her rôle of "Princess of Ashantee" in Lodrowski's "Black Idol of Dahomey." Scarcely less notable would be the music phase, forming the accompaniment to the drama. Miss Loor was to perform a supplemental part—that of harpist in the Princess' train.

The choruses were furnished by the girl vocalists, representing the Princesses and the Amazons; and by male voices—the warriors; all residents of the township, as were the members of the orchestra.

The music set to the production was intensely dramatic; now

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inspiring, now reflecting the various moods and motives of the opera—over which dominated Love, the ever present advocate and final victor over savagery.

As initial themes: Kiama, his Dahomeyan warriors and Amazons, assembled at Abomey, were about to depart on their campaign against the Wawas. They had previously captured from the Cameroons a famed black idol. Victory had been prophesied under sway of the god it represented, and all were sworn by it. The Amazons, jealous of their male competitors, had vowed to the king that they would outdo them.

The Ashanteans to the west had heard of this movement. There had risen among those moon-worshipers a Princess whose intellect and personality towered above all others on the Gold Coast, and dominated even her king. From Christian missionaries she had learned of the one great God, and of Jesus, His Son; of His love of evildoers, His death and resurrection, and of His saving power; that He had died to teach to love, not slay, one's enemies. She was converted. She with her retinue had gone from Kumasi to Abomey to exhort Kiama and his warriors, in the name of the Prince of Peace, to leave their enemy untouched —and to forswear the Black Idol! Such was Wazioni's mission.

This was the rôle of Henrietta Brodein. The forthcoming occasion had acquired a celebrity in advance. In accounting for the throng in attendance, it had come to this: "It is Miss Brodein!"

Near the stage sat the Frame family; the elder Loors near by. The curtain was rising upon Kiama's camp; in the background groups of tropical flowers and shrubbery, and groves of palm-trees and mangroves.

Kiama, seated on a throne, his chief retainers near, faces the idol in the foreground. Trumpets announce the warriors' coming.

Strident ominous shouts characterize the opening chorus, as the cavalcade, in fantastic headgear and girdles, and bearing spears and shields, enters; the attendant musicians varying their rhythmic discourses by wild pantomime. The warriors approach, bow to the king and, more mysteriously, to the idol as they pass by and come to a halt in rear of the throne.

Then appear the Amazons, armed with "razor" swords, bows and poisoned arrows; voices in contrasted fanatical pitches. Following them the dancers, whose swaying plumes, flaring skirtlets and graceful maneuvers is poetry of movement. Raising their weapons on high, the Amazons challenge an imaginary foe as they pass on.

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A grand chorus follows; interpreted by the orchestral parts.

Now in procession headed by Kiama, all deferentially march round the Black Idol.

The troops are moving; Kiama is about to head the retiring procession. Suddenly from the jungle opposite emerges a beauteous maiden and her retinue. Dark and luminous of eye; bedecked with coronet of gold and drapery of splendid fabric; her head upturned, she beckons from heaven a dominant spirit.

The startled king peers savagely—recognizes the Princess of Ashantee. Still gazing upward, she approaches him and the idol.

Instantly an Amazon advances with drawn bow, aiming an arrow straight at the Princess' heart. It is Laloa, their leader—fired by a new and intenser jealousy. Kiama's sword is lifted in protest—his gaze fixed upon the Princess.

But look!—a warrior is flying to intercept and receive the arrow and save the unsuspecting Princess—Sumosa of the Mountains! He too is halted, arms extended; glowering in scorn at Laloa, whose eyes blaze envy and rage for vengeance foiled—then looks concernedly upon the Princess.

Kiama, sword still aloft, peers skyward, soliloquizing:

"Her god—in combat with my Idol!"—and the Princess, having halted, serenely meets his diverted gaze—he now staring in contemplation of her singular power. She replies:

"My God combats all idols—but with weapons of Love!"

Warriors and Amazons, beholding the king thus moved, stand amazed—this Princess would bind him to her God!

Now Princess and retinue are kneeling in silent prayer. Orchestral tones lend impressiveness. Kiama seems spellbound. In terror, warriors shout:

"Slay them! Break the bonds that tie our king!"—and Laloa: "And slay the false Princess!"—but Kiama, awakened to reality, as the supplicants rise, commands the moving warriors:

"Halt! We will defend our Idol—when it is attacked." Then, to Wazioni:

"What mission this, of Princess of Ashantee?"

"To move Kiama by our God, who slays not His enemies."

"Dares he to show his head? Dares he to war?"

"He's seen with spirit eyes—not as an idol's seen. His sword's of Love—but mightier than gods of Afric kings!"

In colloquy: She informs Kiama that this power is "good-will to men"; means not harm to him:

"By Love we'll overcome your Idol! yet not touch——"

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"Advance! Slay this retinue! The Princess seize unharmed."

Several military retainers are slain. Wazioni's arm is wounded by Laloa—Sumosa rescues her. Her bleeding arm, seen by Kiama, is cause for death sentence upon Laloa; who, blindfolded, awaits execution.

The king to Wazioni: "Beware this Idol's power!"—but the Princess has rushed between the headsman and Laloa:

"Spare her, O King!—I her forgive. My God's holy Son was crucified—to save such erring ones."

"A powerless god, who could not save his son!" Warriors, Amazons, echo: "Her Idol's dead!" The Princess:

"From death He rose—foretold of kings; He came on clouds of Heaven!"

Warriors, awed. King, amazed:

"Summon that Spirit hence—and this huntress shall live!"

" 'Tis in me now—that Love—the Will to save."

"Who, then, has greater power?—I am not bended yet."

"The greater Will, in highest power, can bend to lowest! Then, bend your power from Law; be merciful! This is greater Will."

Kiama looks on warriors; on Idol; wavers; soliloquizes:

"Laloa spared—'twill dwarf my state, at 'Love's' behest——"

"Nay, O king!—exalt your state; mightiest, curbing itself!"

Warriors: "Spare her!" "Execute Laloa!" Amazons: "Strange is Wazioni!" The Princess:

"Thus exalted, your state would strengthened be, in good-will to your crown; your Idol's spirit changed to symbol of our God."

"Our Idol dear—to kinsman of your God!"

"What is this Idol's power? Whence came it?" The King:

"I see its form, feel its resistless power! It comes, not from earth—some fearsome place afar! Fed by this fear; placated with blood—somewhat, of this your retinue!" Wazioni:

"Despite this bloodshed, our goodwill yet remains. Thirsts still your Idol for more blood?"

"Not of your kinsmen; but of our foemen in Niger Vale."

Wazioni urges Kiama to send an embassy of good-will, and thus to overcome the Wawas:

"So shape your will; 'twill turn their hearts to Love!"

Warriors, impressed, yet confused:

"What embassy is this!" "Our swords shall arbitrate!" Kiama declares that messengers sent "with such word as Love," would be held as hostages. The Princess offers to go with them:

"And my followers, dead and living—Laloa too——"

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"Your dead retainers take!—what use of them?"

"To prove Love's embassy a power o'er Death! Sight of my dead—of rash Laloa saved; to know that your good-will was moved by these to send such embassy—will stifle war. Jeopardy of my seizure—that I'll risk. My surviving men, pall-bearers, yet bearing good-will, will more prevail. Laloa, ambassadress,—she too will plead——"

Laloa, agonizedly: "Oh, spare me, King! This Princess' merciful plea turns hate to love! Together, we could face and overcome with this sweet will the Wawas obstinate." Warriors demur:

"A woman's embassy!" The Amazons: "Foul Laloa, an agent of king she has defied!" "Let's *fight* our foe!"

Kiama: "You hear unwilling words. What say you now?"

"Chiefly of warrior men, the embassy, as suits your gracious will—them, Laloa and I, if't may be."

"For ambush of my men, Wawas must yield land, indemnity."

"For these I'd plead your good-will, stronger than fear."

Kiama, further moved: "Laloa's life and liberty I spare."

Wazioni: "O'er self you've won—for greater power!"

The king appoints an embassy, of sub-chiefs; two Dahomeyan Princesses; Laloa, and Wazioni, who "shall head the embassy"; to demand ten thousand macutas as indemnity, and cession of border lands "e'en to the Yellow Mount, thence to the sea."

Act one ends with the embassy departing; in the wake some musicians of Wazioni's retinue, with marimbas; and the harp, borne by retainers, fingered by the gifted Huela.

The opening scene in the second act is a grove upon the border. Intervening flowered lawns vie with water-lilies in a meandering stream.

Omitsha, chief of the Wawas, heads a war council. Subdued music inspires ecstatic dancing peculiar to the Nigerians.

A herald announces the Dahomeyan embassy. They enter.

Wazioni and Laloa, leading, look inspiredly to heaven. Biers of Ashantean dead in rear seem victims of Omitsha's warrior-bandit raid upon the Dahomeyans—yet borne by Ashantean men! Omitsha and warriors are bewildered—but now he sees more clearly:—the famed Ashantean Princess, led by her God—and this a grievance committee!

Omitsha, in anger: "An embassy to this court! Then speak to me, not to the idle air!" She now in obeisance; the king is mollified.

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Princess: "Empowered by Dahomeyan king, we come in his and my good-will. These chiefs shall speak our mission." Their spokesman:

"Payment we demand, for lives taken by your bandit-trespassers——"

"What lives?—some vaunted grievance shown by these dead forms!"

"They're of the Princess' train—slain by Kiama——"

"Then why insult me, with sham vouchers of my wrong!"

Spokesman: "Wazioni, head of our embassy, will explain."

Wazioni: "I, moved by good-will—my Christian faith—came to Abomey t' appease Kiama's quest 'gainst your domains; urged him that Christian God, acting through Love, not Hate, has power o'er idols that personate War. For this, he my retainers slew—these dead; ordering me seized unhurt. This Amazon, Laloa, wounded me—for which, death sentence came. But I, through this good-will, forgave her, and prevailed to save her life—turning her hate to love! Further: I urged Kiama that Black Idol, curbing its will for blood to will to love, would greater power possess; that he appoint an embassy, I to conduct it hence—bringing these dead to show how Love, though persecuted, triumphs o'er Death. And I am come in Love, not Hate, and at my risk of danger from your power."

Omitsha, in perplexity, to the spokesman: "Tell me, specifically, Kiama's plaint—and what the penalty he claims?"

Spokesman: "'Tis this: Trespassing his domain, your clansmen ambushed and slew his men, in time of peace——"

"False! What proof of this?—and with my cognizance!"

"We found them in the Gulch, filled with Wawaian pikes and arrows—of your outlaw band——"

"But who were the aggressors?—and what forfeit is demanded?"

"Our men were hunting—yours pretended game was near; lured them in. The penalty: ten thousand macutas; lands this side the Mount, south to the Sea——"

"Sooner, I'll summon my men to his domains invade! But, prove the substance of your claim; then I'll do right 'tween king and king, to rectify a wrong—but by no forfeit of a foot of land, nor by such penalty in funds!"

Spokesman: "To Kiama your response will go. We cannot vouch 'gainst instant war, land seizure——"

"So be it! Well will I the frontier fend!"

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The mission-men retire. Wazioni advances:

"Though your valor, King, as Kiama's ere I persuaded him, is wont to war, may I not hope to bend, as I did his, to prowess of good-will?"

"Your 'God of Love'! Good-will, avail in such extremes?"

" 'Tis stronger than war-will! 'Tis power of Christ, Son of our God, who died, that through regret of wrong-will, Evil is changed to Good. And Christ arose from Death; is throned on high. Your cause He'll shield, if you believe; and through good-will you parley with Kiama."

Laloa: "Oh King! Stay your roused will by drinking of this Love—that stayed the headsman's sword! Then will you rise in mightier, though gentler, power, as did Kiama."

Omitsha, to Princess: "What is your plan? How arbitrate?"

"Send you an embassy. Do this; and if Kiama strikes while parley's on, my life I'll yield to you!"

"This good-will you boast, fair Princess, bears fruitage in your headship here. If Kiama's moved by 'Love,' proof as demanded he'll essay. Till two suns rise, I'll not attack—if he strikes not. No embassy shall jeopard your fair head!"

Princess: "Great Niger King! You've pledged your greater power!"

"Your 'good-will' waits the test—your embassy's success?"

" 'Tis guaranteed: Kiama will abide. Adieu, Omitsha, till we return."

The embassy and train depart. Omitsha, marveling, soliloquizes:

"These victims! 'Power o'er Death'! She, purpled in Spirit-Power!"

The curtain drops.

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CHAPTER XI

THE first scene of the concluding act reveals the returned embassy reporting, through the chief of the mission-men, to Kiama; who is visibly angered over the outcome:

"So, naught but loss of war's prompt vantage comes from embassy implored! Proofs! He'll have them in his teeth! Warriors, advance!"

The Princess, Laloa beside her, approaches Kiama. The Princess:

"Oh King! Withhold this act of war, till I be heard: By zealous urging—these bodies stark and this new friend in sight —Omitsha I persuaded to wait your proofs, staying his warriors' hands, provided you stay yours. Will you, Dahomeyan King, undo this act, thus forfeiting my vouchment to your foe, that you'd reciprocate in parley sane?"

Kiama, to his sub-chief: "Recall the clans!" To Wazioni:

"Fair Princess of Ashantee: In that you, chief of the mission I did appoint, have such 'surance given to Niger King, who hostile acts postpones; and thus we both are pledged to this 'goodwill'; your plea for mediation I endorse, this far: If, when stout evidence of his own shafts, drawn from my huntsmen dead, is placed before his eyes, Omitsha makes amends for bandit raid, by some meet forfeit in funds, and further, cedes the fastness where lurk his lawless bands; then peace abides. If he refuse, war to the hilt shall that domain reduce!"

"Most gracious and considerate King! The Spirit I invoked, when you, unwitting of my version of that Power, did fend Black Idol by taking these lives——"

"For which rashness, wise Princess, I've repented, and now crave pardon."

"Oh King! Sweet repentance mends all scores of erring deeds, or small or great. Absolution I freely grant;—and now there's 'surance new that th' Spirit Divine adorns your crown! If you, Oh King, another mission head, and urge Omitsha to count'nance your demands, I'll intercede with all my soul, if license given, to end this sad dispute."

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"A mission new I will create; you my second strong!"

The curtain falls; the recalled chiefs rejoining Kiama; who, heading the new embassy, invites the Princess to his side. . . .

The succeeding scene of the drama is in front of Omitsha's palace, in the Niger Valley; gigantic baobab, mangroves and cocoa-palms surrounding; a rice-field in the distance.

The king, sitting in state amid his courtiers. The second embassy is announced; enters, Kiama and the Princess leading.

Kiama: "Hail to Nigerian King; and my good-will to you!" Salutes.

Omitsha: "Greetings to King of Dahomey, and fair ambassadress!"

Omitsha listens to Kiama's clansmen, who recount circumstances of the Nigerian attack. Weapons of Clan of Yellow Mount are produced.

Omitsha: "Know you who chieftain was of those strolling men?"

Dahomeyan chief: "Hunlaba the name, to which they rallied, King."

"An outlaw in my realm!—known as such the country round."

Kiama: "But plea of helplessness to stay their hands, will not condone. 'Demnity's demanded. More: That stronghold they infest."

"I own a formal trespass, King; some penance for these lives. But your behests outrun reason and 'good-will'—the Princess' plea. No land will I release!"

"If, King, I five thousand macutas accept, will you by force subdue those clans, where lawlessness, not sovereignty, presides—and thus from new trespass fend my state?—else I must enter your domain, t' attack and punish them?"

"Whence your right, in council here, to spurn my sovereignty!"

"Outlawry's not sovereignty! And 'demnity's no safeguard 'gainst renewed wrong; nor honor, 'pology."

"Then, bond I'll give 'gainst fresh incursions from the Mount."

"And, t' insure reprisals for more raids, you'll mortgage the Peak?"

"Never! That stronghold's seat of my ancestral rights!"

"Its offspring, Mutiny! Trouncing the bandits would pacify your state?"

"What king would brook another minister his state!"

"Then, outlawry's essence of your reign! My arms will force you back on brigands—could you quell them, then?"

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"I defy your arms, Kiama! The Mount you'll ne'er reduce!"

Kiama: "Chiefs, to your commands! The border now we'll cross!—but hold! Wazioni shall speak, if she this difference deems she can reduce."

Princess, addressing both kings: "Your Majesties: Deserving 'tis to fend sweet sovereignty! But th' outstanding point is now so slight, no thought of war should baffle that good-will you both have shown, when hearkening to my voice, that told of greater power than Force. If either of you Upper Guinean kings should triumph under lure of Power of Hate—of which Black Idol's the sign—he in such barren victory would forfeit that good-will! Think on my plight, O Kings, in such a pass! For I, a confidante of both courts, author of these embassies, protagonist of Christian Love, in whose cause divine my dead are monuments—I must believe at last, that spleen of disputing kings o'ertops good-will, reverses mediation—and what I've done is vain!"

Kiama: "Fair Princess of the West, my heart is touched! Such spirit, mounted on beauteous wings of Love, so deeply stirs my soul, I'm forced, facing Omitsha, again to doubt strife's power. But how appeal to this my foeman, who, confessing trespass, declines to bar another?"

Omitsha: "I'm not so stern for rights, but that I'm moved by this strange hint of love of enemies."

Princess: "Oh, just Guinean Kings! Your wills thus overcome, how richer both, in power! This I propose: That you, Omitsha, pay stipulated sum. Then, as allies war-equipped, you both repair to Yellow Mount, by parle Hunlaba to disarm; if not, end risk to Dahomey by crushing him. Then, if my urgent prayer for your success is heard—as 'twill be if you chide stern, yet Christianly—we'll set high on that Mount our Cross of Christ; the stronghold dedicate to Love of Enemies!—and thus throw down—but still in Love—Black Idol of Dahomey."

The kings, conferring, agree as to indemnity, and for a joint campaign. Kings and courtiers hail the Princess.

Kiama: "Let music sound, set dancers round, good Nigerian King!"

Omitsha: "Bid warriors praises shout to Christian God!" Acclaims.

Kiama: "If it please you, King, we'll celebrate, within your palace fit, Peace Stronger than War."

Omitsha: "Most graciously proposed! Thence I'll escort your embassy."

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Kiama to Wazioni: "Sweet Princess, accept with me to lead it hence?"

The Princess, acquiescing, to Omitsha: "Since 'tis good-will we jubilate, may't please your Majesty to grant Laloa sweet your co-attendant be, as symbol of Love that conquers Hate?"

Omitsha: "Your pert'nent hint, fair Princess, waives formality. 'Tis meet that she thus typify your Faith." Beckons Laloa to his side.

The curtain falls; rises, revealing the King and Laloa in the throneroom, welcoming the incoming procession, heralded by musicians; Kiama and Wazioni leading the train.

As preliminary to the finale, came the ode "Love's Conciliation;" members of both parties joining in the choral, while the grand march around the central area of the court proceeds; the kings, arm-in-arm, leading, the Princess and Laloa at their respective sides.

Voices, music, dancing, cease; the procession ends. Kiama, facing the Princess, speaks:

"Sweet Princess Wazioni! Thrice have you sponsored good-will 'tween periled kings! Naught but Christian Faith averted war—strengthened our realms in peace. That Faith converts my yearning heart! Vastly enriched in statehood by your deeds, I yet am beggar outcast, without state, domains, in realm of Bridal Love—lacking your heart as priceless diadem! Consent to be my bride, crowning my majesty! Then shall that Cross on summit reconciled, be joint sign of Christ and of my consort dear. Come, Regent of Love, be Princess of Dahomey?"

The Princess in modesty beams on Kiama; then blushes aside.

Laloa: "Sweet sister! Your mercy plea our gracious King did reck—spared me! As arbiter, you've won. Faith weds you twain. In winning you, the Idol's slain—and oh! to know you as my Christian Queen!"

Omitsha: "King! No buttress to our permanent peace so strong, as Wazioni, joint regnant on your throne. My ardent hope it is, that she does yield!"

Kiama: "What does your heart decree?—oh, dearest of Princesses, deny me not!"

Wazioni lifts her eyes; their souls commune. Her head sinks upon his breast, as Kiama, transported, clasps the Princess to his heart.

The curtain falls; the drama ends.

An ovation awaited the players at the redrawing of the curtain—the concluding applause outran all preceding demonstra-

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tions. Then John Grott, Miss Dean, Ralph Redding and Archibald Bloom (*Kiama, Laloa, Omitsha* and *Sumosa,* in the play) retired; Henrietta alone remaining.

The throng she now faced became strangely silent—a new spell pervaded all. Collective consciousness was fealty to that Higher Will she in the drama had lived.

From chords of the harp and orchestral strings came a subdued reverential cadence—ears seemed attuned to the voice of Omniscience!

Henrietta slowly raised her arms in adoration, as her head turned heavenward; the audience rising in reverential response. As Miss Loor, now at the organ, began the prelude to a selection from Gradothian's oratorio, "Soul's Homing,"—orchestra in concert—the actress' posture changed to that of devout inclination. The assembly became the chorus, led by voices of those heard in the drama.

From devotion, the themes developed into restrained soulful emotion. Toward the close there became distinguished a baritone voice, the quality and power of whose swelling resonance gave it supremacy among the male contributors. But few persons in the auditorium—aside from members of his own family—unmistakably recognized it. One of these was Flissey Loor.

For this baritone had developed from the personality of Bernard Frame.

This unique after-drama ended, the audience began to disperse.

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CHAPTER XII

IMPRESSIVE congratulations were being showered upon Miss Brodein, as she stood receiving her friends near the stage.

"It was a genuine surprise to them," Flissey was relating to her mother and Mrs. Wadsworth, in a nearby group, in response to Mrs. Loor's inquiry as to what the Boehm critiques thought of Henrietta's performance. "They agree that she's bound to become famous;—and this remarkable event following the play amazed them," she continued. " 'That psychical spell of Omniscience,' as they define it."

"Another surprising incident," remarked Cotsworth, who was listening, "was the part taken by Bernard Frame, in leading that chorus."

"I knew he could sing," said Flissey with a significant air.

Frame soon found an opportunity to pay his compliments:

"You have richly earned these praises," he told Henrietta. "It was an inspiration not to be measured in words." Returning thanks, she expressed the belief that success was due principally to her supports; mentioning the four students; he in turn according her credit for her recent training of them. Then he diverted to the incident following the end of the drama:

"I believe, Miss Brodein, that the influence which led to that silent demonstration, and of which you was undoubtedly the immediate inspiration, was occult in character."

"To me," replied Henrietta, "the silence denoted recognition of Deity as the innate mastery in the play. My individuality was merged in the multitude. In the universal soul-conception of the moment, all were actors."

"But everybody accounted for it by your presence?"

"No; it was that Higher Power; we its instruments. And you, Mr. Frame: There was something oracular in your voice. You seemed obeying a divine command. Your voice and personality interpreted the choral recognition of that Power." Frame was contemplating:

"As the oratorio proceeded, I did experience unerring evidence that all were in that Presence; and that truth, through Him, can

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reconcile all human differences. But there *you* stood: the *personification* of Deity!" . . . He diverted:

"Are you really going to leave us, Miss Brodein? Have you accepted an offer from Boehms, as reported?"

"No; I am considering a proposition they have submitted."

"While your great talents surely invite wider fields of action, all will regret your leaving home."

"My own regrets would be deep. I am devoted to development of a dramatic center here at the Shades."

Flissey, who had discovered that Frame was conversing with Henrietta, had returned just as the actress was expressing her interest in local dramatics. She exclaimed yearningly:

"I should feel so sorry!—but I realize that fate lures you to brighter prospects in higher spheres!"

"My dear, I intend to assist somewhat at the next annuals, if the board shall so desire."

"Oh, I'm so glad!"

"You have already conferred upon Tromple Shades the premiership in dramatics, in all the country hereabouts, judging from many expressions I have heard to-day," said Frame. Again Henrietta gave credit to her assistants.

Flissey reverted to the purpose of her coming into Frame's presence:

"Mr. Frame, I felt that your voice, in that sublime experience of the chorus, was a kind of special adoration in honor of Miss Brodein—whose wonderful impersonation had so exalted every one." Then, turning to Henrietta: "But I knew he was capable of elevated choral expression. He has sung divinely at my home!" Frame responded to this last allusion—addressing Henrietta:

"I was impelled by Miss Loor's urgency, to *try* to sing a little and found myself under the seductive sway of her piano accompaniment—this after she had piloted me through by way of preliminary." Then, turning to Flissey: "And your masterful organ playing to-day was even more inspiring!"

Bowing her thanks, Flissey hastened to declare:

"It was Miss Brodein—she inspired me to go to the organ;" and, her congratulatory mission to Frame ended, she returned to where her mother stood; glad that Frame and Henrietta were still conversing.

Her mother having come into their presence, Frame was introduced. She, too, referred to the part he had taken in the after-chorus.

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"It was a spontaneous tribute, awakened by your daughter's marvelous acting—and by her presence at the moment," replied Frame, feeling that his connection with the demonstration had been sufficiently commented upon.

Somehow, the presence of her mother emboldened Frame to act upon the motive that had prolonged his conversation with the actress—he requested the privilege of calling upon her at her home:

"Some time before you are called away, if you shall be, to Chicago?"

"Certainly; I will be glad to have you come, Mr. Frame." Henrietta's slight flush of diffidence gave way under a steady kindling of her eyes which grew intenser as she ended. Her mother hastened to assure him that he would be very welcome.

It was arranged that he would call on the following Wednesday afternoon. With expressions of delight, he took leave of them.

As he was about to rejoin the other members of the family to return home, his eyes fell upon George Selton, who was standing beside a young lady he at once recognized as the person with whom Selton had been in company, when he so abruptly called upon Miss Loor and then departed, upon the occasion of his own visit at the Loors.

As soon as Selton saw Frame, he excused himself and walked boldly into his presence, exclaiming, as he extended his hand:

"Why, I'm so glad to meet you again, Mr. Frame;" and, with a patronizing smirk: "Hah, hah!—I hope you didn't feel offended over my somewhat intrusive dropping in on Miss Loor when you were visiting there the other day; but I didn't know"—and he hesitated, looking into Frame's face as if mentally inquiring for a facial response to his remark; when Frame replied, as he returned the look unmoved:

"There was certainly no reason within my knowledge why you were not entirely free to call upon Miss Loor upon that occasion, Mr. Selton; and I recall that I was about taking my leave at the time——"

"But it was my cutting matters short and leaving Fliss with a sort of snub—maybe it looked so to you, sir, is what I meant—and getting into my plane and darting away—with this young lady, Miss Files"—gesturing toward that lady—"you of course couldn't understand, Mr. Frame, the circumstances; and I'll say no more about it; but I desired to let you know that, if you did feel that way, I wanted to apologize, that's all."

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"Being without the slightest knowledge of the matters to which you refer, I, of course, am not disposed to assume that anything by way of apology is due from you to myself, Mr. Selton," said Frame in reply.

"To change the subject, then," Selton went on, "I want to say that while I myself wasn't precisely a victim of the 'spell' which, as they're saying, came over the crowd just at the close, I did nevertheless find myself 'joining in,' as they say, so far as going through the movements was concerned—when you're in Rome do as the Romans do, you know," he ended, with a grin that carried an obvious implication of irreverence.

"To me," observed Frame in response to this flippant reference to the closing event of the day, "the occasion to which you refer had a different meaning. It was something profoundly sacred, Mr. Selton."

"Oh, of course it was profound," said Selton. "No one could have been present and not have felt that!—and what a hypnotist this young woman who was the chief Princess proved to be! It reminded me of a certain vaudeville specialist I once heard in New Haven, by Jove it did!—there she stands now,"—and Selton pointed to where Miss Brodein stood; then he continued abruptly:

"Well, I must join Miss Files again, and so I'll say good day to you, Mr. Frame;" and somewhat too rudely to be duly ceremonious, he pressed Frame's hand, and hurried away to where Miss Files was waiting in evident displeasure.

Under the impressions made by this unexpected intrusiveness, Frame stood thinking. Beneath the coarseness of expression and the vicious standard of thought and action manifest from his remarks, appeared as the crowning condemnation of it all, Selton's heartlessness toward Miss Loor! Tender sympathy toward her was mingled with a certain indignation as he reflected that this man had been linked in repute with the heart of her whose rare womanhood and spiritual aspirations were so in contrast to the qualities he had just now seen revealed!

As he rejoined his brother and aired home that evening, one thought sank deep in his mind: That the inspiration he had felt lifting him into realm of celestial concourse in rendition of the oratorio, was invoked by two personalities acting in unison; that this inspiration was special—distinguished from that to which the audience at large had been moved by the incomparable genius of the actress and the extraordinary facility of the musician. It

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seemed to him that in that elevation himself had comprehended—analyzed—the composite consciousness of the multitude. He felt himself revealed in a new and higher function! . . .

The next morning after the annuals ended, the Loors were lingering at the breakfast table, in reminiscence of the concluding program.

"You are quite right, Grampion," assented Mrs. Loor to a remark made by him to the effect that "elbow grease" rather than talent brings success to mortal effort. "These young people have simply worked it out by themselves. They *can* do it anywhere if they've the will."

"And Chicago come down to see us!" exclaimed Flissey in tone more of sprightly song than of ordinary speech.

"Which means," said Grampion, "that Chicago will take the chief jewel from the crown of our country talent, for they say this Brodein wonder-girl is going up there——"

"Oh, don't mention it, Papa!" sighed Flissey, now in real pain over the thought thus aroused. Mrs. Loor, as if to cheer the daughter by the suggestion, rejoined:

"Well, if she is called there to take a higher place in her profession, it will be paying another tribute to country life. And we know that the leading actresses, and many other great artists who have charmed the world have nearly all been drawn from the country. For country life discovers and develops genius of the highest order."

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CHAPTER XIII

WHEN on the following Wednesday Frame aired over to the corner of the township to call upon Miss Brodein, his sensibilities were in sharp contrast to the pent-up feelings of doubt and mystery that had preceded and, in some degree accompanied, his late visit to Miss Loor.

Yet, in conning the variant circumstances connecting himself with each of these friends, he had felt that his first and the succeeding impressions of Miss Brodein had undergone a modification he could neither define nor account for. Secretly and deeply he loved her, though the attraction was very different from that of Miss Loor. Moreover, the strange allurement which so strongly characterized her personality, whether from the stage or in private converse, was precisely as in the first instance. But he was now conscious of this beguilement in its seeming inevitable relation to Miss Loor! Had the attraction to the young actress become more potent because of her new friend's super-devotion to her? Then, had Miss Loor herself become more dear to him through her interposition that had encouraged his closer relations to Miss Brodein?

However this might be, he felt on the present occasion that the way was clear. His heart was untrammeled, and glad!

The really cordial reception accorded him as Henrietta ushered him into the sitting room where was her mother, seemed attended by a certain want of warmth and familiarity that was momentarily disappointing. He afterwards realized that this impression was by contrast to the more unrestrained and congenial atmosphere of the Loor household he had so recently visited.

After exchange of greetings, Frame alluded to the markedly warm reception given Miss Brodein the preceding day by the Wadsworths and their lady friends, in Wiltsburg, of which he had read. Her mother, who had accompanied her, explained that while they could not but be gratified, yet that Henrietta by nature shunned publicity; and that they had not desired that the reception should take on that phase.

"When I read that it was really an ovation, it was precisely

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what I would expect to have occurred, in view of the reputation Miss Brodein has achieved in her art," observed Frame with warmth.

Conversation turned upon Henrietta's plans. She would leave on the following Saturday. If she closed with the Chicago people, it would be for a season's work commencing early in the autumn. Only part of her summer vacation would be spent at home, as she was planning for a trip to the east in midsummer. It was quite probable that she would be at home a month or so during the summer.

"And if she goes with Boehm," said Mrs. Brodein, "I feel that I must be with her, most of the time at any rate, for several months. And here's my little boy; I think I shall take him along too, and shut up the house for a time."

Mrs. Brodein was a widow; her husband, Louis Brodein, having died quite suddenly, some two years before the present time. He had been a man of taciturn character, and of acquisitiveness. A first sight of him made a remarkable impression: attractiveness combined with an air of aloofness. He was devoted to his family, and had laid by a competency that left his heirs a substantial inheritance.

The mother's remark conveyed to Frame the impression of deep maternal affection and of prudential oversight of one who was to meet the world's temptations; it awakened thought of ambition in life's scale.

"Her father didn't want her to be an actress," she went on. "He used to say, 'I hope your love of the drama won't turn your head to the idea of becoming an actress, Retta'—and she doesn't really desire to be one, either, Mr. Frame. That is, she naturally shrinks from publicity, as I said before. But she fairly lives in her art, and this trait seemed to absorb her whole life, even in young girlhood."

"The thought of leaving home is really distasteful to me," Henrietta remarked. "Were it not for that I think I would have said 'yes' to Boehm's agents last week, if mother was willing."

Then, with pardonable maternal pride, Mrs. Brodein stepped toward the ample alcove at one side of the large sitting room, and pointed to Henrietta's "little library of the drama," as she termed it:

"Mr. Frame, pardon me for this weakness, but it is an evidence of her devotion to the subject, and I thought you might like to look in upon it," she ended. Frame came and stood, gazing

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with a peculiar interest upon the collection of books, ancient and modern, that composed the unique library. Henrietta had followed. Then the mother drew attention to a center-table near the end of the series of book-cases, saying:

"Here are her picture-albums, which may be said to belong to the library, since they are filled almost entirely with photographs of celebrities of the stage and drama." Henrietta protested that her mother was making too much of these collections; that she feared Mr. Frame would get a wrong impression of their importance to her; and she took a sweeping glance indicative of disparagement, at the library and the center-table; then meeting Frame's look of surprise and demur with one of sincere depreciation of the mother's inferential praise of the library miscellany. Frame declared with warmth:

"Indeed, it would not be easy to over-estimate the value of such a library depository as you have here; for I readily recognize, from a hasty glance at some of the titles, that these volumes deal with the lives and works of some of the world's greatest histrionic artists; and doubtless the same may be said of your albums, Miss Brodein."

"Well," rejoined Henrietta, "I must say I have at times derived much pleasure as well as instruction from their perusal; but——"

"The truth is, Mr. Frame," interposed the mother, "they are part and parcel of her life, though she may realize it less, now that she is beginning to get a glimpse of the world." Henrietta was in reverie.

"I have been trying to think how much they must mean to you," remarked Frame inquiringly.

"Yes; some of them, Mr. Frame," she replied, "but many of them I have instinctively spurned as I read them. There is so much hollowness and insincerity in the lives, and the actions too, of many of those who have gone down in history as among the great. And then, these pictures: there's so much that is obvious in self-consciousness, and even in bold posing, with so many of these people who seem to delight in exhibiting themselves in photographs." Then, her eyes contemplatively fixed in immeasurable distance, she added: "Yet with some of them—books and pictures—I have seemed to live at times." Frame instantly responded in warmth of earnestness:

"Indeed, I must say I have believed since I first observed your performance in dramatics at Ives Waters, Miss Brodein, that you are in close kinship of feeling with the real classics in the drama." Again she looked away:

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"It is such a means of disclosing truth!" in low even voice.

As guest and hostesses repaired to their seats, Frame remarked to Henrietta:

"I have repeatedly asked myself: 'Which has the greater influence upon humanity, literature, or the drama?' and I am not sure how the question should be answered."

"Mr. Frame, my belief is, that it can never be answered at all save from the standpoint of one's individual standard of judgment of relative values in influence," replied Henrietta; for which significant response he thanked her; then continued:

"But I am reminded of a practical test. For instance: When and how has a great truth—the elemental truth of all existence, as we believe—been more certainly and forcefully revealed to man than at the end of—or as the psychic outcome of—the drama 'The Black Idol of Dahomey' at Tromple Shades last week?"

"In the Bible!" responded Henrietta, with a promptness and reverence that startled Frame.

Here there came romping into the hall an excited boy, puffing from a siege of running. As his head came through the hall door he sang out:

"I caught him, yep!"—and before his mother had exclaimed, "Why, Cecil, what is it you've caught—and look around and see who's here," he beheld Frame; his face flushed with embarrassment, his mouth puckered, his eyes bulged. Then he uttered a guttural accompaniment to a frank, low laugh; mischievously eyed the stranger, then tittered. Frame was becoming wonderfully interested.

"If it were a bear, Mother, he wouldn't tell you, until you had guessed a dozen other species of game," observed Henrietta with a quaint smile. Another titter—and a suppressed blurt by way of checking another laugh.

"Well, now," suddenly declared Frame, full of the spirit of the boy's pose, "I'm going to venture a guess as to what this animal you've trapped is, Cecil——"

"Cecil, this is Mr. Frame," interposed Henrietta. A manly bow of recognition in response to one from Frame followed; then the latter continued: "It's a raccoon!" Cecil, undisturbed by this venture, simply responded in a quiet chuckling treble:

"No!"—then another merry titter. Frame looked rather crestfallen—more so than he actually felt. Said the mother:

"Well, my son, I shall let this secret out pretty soon if you don't tell us. I remember that those bunnies were frisking around that brush-pile in the orchard——"

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"Nope!"—then in tone of a faint tinkling bell came another titter; eyes interpreting the bell, as the note ascended with wonderful speed into high G. Then he looked toward the hall door, partly faced about in attitude of readiness to spring, and as he scuttled toward the door, ejaculated:

"It's a bug!"—and broke into a hilarious hysterical guffaw as he disappeared.

"Oh!—just like him!" ejaculated the mother, as a bubble of something romantic in her consciousness seemed evaporating in thin air. Henrietta serenely remarked: "I thought he had something up his sleeve. Couldn't you see it in his eye?"—addressing her mother. Frame, recovering from side-splitting merriment, declared:

"It looks to me now as if the game Cecil had caught was still in the catching when he sprang the trap in his hasty exit! It really was fine. The little youngster certainly has a fine sense of humor—and a self-control in emergency that is admirable!"

Frame's thoughts recurred to Henrietta's reference to the Bible. He drew her on; explaining that he had understood her as meaning its faculty of picturing the Deity face to face with mankind, and revealing His power. She responded:

"Yes. I feel that the Bible is more than a literary message. When I am dwelling upon some of the Old Testament revelations, it seems as if they come direct from the Deity. The most forcible and lasting impressions I have received, in this sense of a revelation from God to mankind, are such, for instance, as have come through the conception of God's presence on Sinai; when Moses stood facing Him in His glory above 'the paved work of stone,' and over Him the 'heaven of clearness,' and the light like a devouring fire in the cloud on the Mount! To me, there was a revelation to a collective assembly of souls, more potent than any experience that has come to humanity from any theatrical stage in any period of history."

Frame was silent in thought for a moment. Then, his face lighted as in a vision, he spoke, more in confirmation than of inquiry:

"And you believed that God was there in the auditorium inspiring the audience to realize spiritually His Law—that of love of one's enemies?"

"Yes," she replied. "I believe we were all being moved by the growing presence of His spirit, as thoughts of such love engrossed the soul of the assembly—stage and audience combined."

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"And that, I feel, must mean that you, interpreting that truth to the audience, felt that you were inspired of God?"

"I felt that I was living in His spirit," was her response. "I felt then—after the last act closed—that I was in communion with God in a closer relation than before." To Frame's remark in tone of wonderment, that the occurrence seemed a marvel, she replied:

"What was revealed seemed to me natural, inevitable. I saw Him, as I had seen Him many times before."

Their eyes met. Frame looked into a being that seemed part of the soul of Infinity. In that clarifying glimpse he saw that she belonged, not to man, but to Humanity. That not genius alone inspired her, but that to her Divinity was immanent.

Henrietta's invitation to ascend to the rookery having been accepted by Frame with delight, she stepped out of the room; presently returning with her mother—who had absented herself—and the brother. Frame desired to know of Cecil how he had trapped the bug.

"With my new air-net, sir," he explained. Further questioning elicited details of the implement:

"It works closer than the old kind; it measures the wing-flutters just right; and then the opening works closer. It'll catch a June-bug but it won't catch another kind of bug the same size. The humming of the wings starts the electric current in the net, and that tells how big the hole must open to let in the bug—he's looking at the dim light in there. The net's kept up in the air by the captive balloon—and that's invisible; and it stays up or down, just as the bugs fly high or low——"

"Ah, yes, I see," said Frame. "That's on the barometric principle, as they term it, I believe?"

"I don't know, sir, but I think it is," replied Cecil.

"And you didn't discover that you'd caught it till this afternoon?" queried the mother. "I forgot it this morning," promptly responded the boy.

Far above the tall trees at its base the party were seated in the rookery, beneath the overspreading canopy. The surrounding country lay a teeming panorama of varied beauty and restfulness in agricultural and woodland scenery. Herds of cattle wandered here and there. An indescribable murmur rose from the depths of this vast undulating sea, whose far and uneven horizon, here and there immersed in nebulous haze, seemed higher than the rookery. Irregular cattle-paths scarped the landscape here and

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there; roadsteads and lanes divided the whole into checker-board figures whose squares diminished as distance increased; waving grains vied with even greener cornfields here, with forests there. Sections of a far tiny stream rose to vision in shimmering silvery striplets in one direction, its course marked by straggling timber on its banks; while nearby at another angle gently flowed a seemingly broader waterway, in which stood mild-eyed cows, whose placid chewing of the cud was fitfully interrupted by imperative demands upon head and tail in warfare with insects, now emboldening their attacks with increasing heat of summer. Anon—to and from all directions—came into view from all but imperceptible horizon-specks growing with astounding swiftness into form and bulk the air-denizens, as rapidly diminishing and disappearing over the opposite verge of the landscape—unless mayhap some proprietor wishing to request or to impart information slowed up and quickly communicated by wireless with the observers below. The cool refreshing air at this altitude was in strong contrast to that of the ground surface, which on this day was somewhat fatiguing.

After exchange of some passing remarks upon the scenery that lay before them, the subject of Frame's law studies was broached by Henrietta. This led on to some observations by him concerning the present tendency, under the simplified law codes of the day, toward a growing practice among lawyers of mastering and applying the fundamentals as applied to the masses in active life; the depreciation of judicial "precedents"—which he explained as composed of court decisions and the authority of text-writers upon the law—as guides in determining legal rights; and the adoption of greater brevity in modes of trial of causes. Then Henrietta inquired:

"But as to individual initiative, of which you have spoken: Doubtless you have formed an idea as to the course you would prefer to follow in discharging your personal responsibility, in bringing about developments in these newer aspects of the profession?"

Frame fell into semi-abstraction, then slowly responded: "I can say I have gone this far: That as a citizen—for I conceive that a lawyer can not fulfill his trust as a professional without counting as part of his trusteeship the duties of active and aspiring citizenship—I shall aim to aid in making clearer to the citizen what government really is as related to *his* initiative; and as a lawyer, I feel that I shall become especially interested not only

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in the simplification of legal procedure in general, but in making an exceptionally close study of the cause of my client's adversary——"

"That certainly seems a different conception of a lawyer's duty than that which, I conceive, has been the rule—we've heard so much about his 'standing by his client' to the bitter end and so forth," interposed Mrs. Brodein.

Frame proceeded: "Yes; but I have conceived of the possibility—and the practicability too, as it occurs to me—of doing one's full duty to his client by adopting a very different principle of action in dealing with the parties to a legal controversy."

"Won't you explain this to us, Mr. Frame; for we are really interested," said Henrietta; her mother nodding assent to the suggestion.

"With pleasure, since you have made the request," replied Frame; who continued: "My thought is: to hear my client's statement of the facts of his case; then to hear that of his adversary apart; and finally, to reveal in their joint presence my conception of them; this version being the result of my psychic analysis of the facts after having come in contact with the minds and the awakened memories of both parties. My belief is that such a process may work out substantial unanimity of belief of both parties, regarding the facts; so that the controversy itself will thereby come to an end—that is, the disputants will perceive an identical state of facts in substance, and will perceive this in the same sense, as conclusive of their mutual rights under the law as it would be interpreted by me to them. I use the term 'mutual' rather than 'respective', since I conceive of a transaction involving relative rights as being innately devoid of controversial aspect—a family affair, so to speak."

Mother and daughter exchanged glances. It was evident that something akin to a revelation concerning controversies had been outlined to them. However, Henrietta saw her way to this query:

"What you have related is truly profound. But if I correctly comprehend, the 'case,' as it is termed, would be ended without coming into court?" to which Frame replied affirmatively. Mother and daughter joined in thanking him for the explanation he had given of his theory. Mrs. Brodein excused herself, taking Cecil with her; and Frame and Henrietta were left sole occupants of the rookery.

"This is a most delightful place for pleasurable afternoon hours,

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Miss Brodein, and I have enjoyed immensely being up here with all of you," said Frame; Henrietta expressing gladness that he had found it enjoyable. Then he reverted:

"I wish to say I have had in mind asking you to show me some of the precious keepsakes you have in those albums; I am really deeply interested in them."

"I will be pleased to have you see them," she responded with animation. "Let us go down, Mr. Frame."

As the two stood waiting for the elevator to ascend, Henrietta said: "Didn't you think Miss Loor's conducting at the organ at the Shades was excellent?" Frame declared with enthusiasm that she certainly excelled at the organ.

"Have you heard her play the harp?" she asked.

"No; but I have heard much concerning her facility with that instrument," he replied. "In fine, she seems to be a born leader in musical instruction, and an exceptionally apt performer; and I imagine her forte is that of organ leadership in chorus work."

"Yes; her whole soul is centered in music. And her enthusiasm joined to her talent gives her part in a music-drama program special value."

"She thinks a great deal of you, Miss Brodein; and is sure you have a high mission in life," he declared.

"She has impressed me greatly, upon so brief an acquaintance-ship, as a close, affectionate friend. She is a noble woman," was Henrietta's response.

They were now seated by the center table. Henrietta was turning to photographs of Dusé, Bernhardt, Salvini, Edwin Booth and others; Frame having inquired as to who among the stage celebrities of the past had most impressed her. Many comments had passed as Frame studied faces and attitudes. She prefaced her response to his inquiry by indicating a preference for expression of thought, rather than of feeling:

"And that I may not mislead here, I wish to refer to thought as the harbinger or handmaid of feeling. And since, to think upon a theme is to fall into a soulful consciousness of its relations, the feeling resulting from a study in dramatics partakes of that consciousness."

Frame was now regarding Henrietta with expectancy; she having suddenly turned to him as if by way of apology, as she added: "But I am falling into a spirit of pedantic reflection, Mr. Frame, and I ask your forgiveness——"

"Oh, no," he protested, "I am much taken by your train of

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thought; there is not the slightest occasion for apology." She proceeded:

"As this new or super-consciousness develops with contemplation of the theme, one realizes that there is far more involved than human passion." Frame was fast losing self-consciousness in his fixedness upon the personality of Henrietta; as she continued:

"Then comes revelation of the basic truth—of the vast immutable verities underlying the theme. One then sees that the stream of the order of things in human existence is such an irresistible current of conviction, that mere passion is but the eddy that indicates the temporary obstruction in its shallower waters." Frame was beginning to realize what this startling analysis of life meant. She then declared: "And so, to me, Mr. Frame, the most impressive actors of whom I have any special information are those who have seemed to reveal truth with least outward expression. And I believe the passions never have and never can afford the best medium of ultimate histrionic expression."

"A sublime deduction!" declared Frame.

"Not that I intend to disparage passion as an element of life," she went on, unmoved. "It is so important a part of the life-current that it alone, in its intenser phases, can indicate the impediments that would otherwise lie hidden in the bed of the stream."

"Surface-voices," assented Frame.

"And the deep all-resounding roar—it is such even if to the soul's ear it be but a murmur—the roar of the whole tremendous volume of life, indicative of the friction of the torrent itself with the earth-bed and the embracing banks, and with the air-forces above, is so much more significant of what life is, that these gurgles of the eddies are but lisping suggestions of the grand whole of life's harmonies."

"Of its harmonies!—yes!" ejaculated Frame, as he strove to realize the marvelous truth in her pronouncement of the word.

"And, Mr. Frame, my conclusion may appear in form a paradox: This murmur of the verities of life is the sublimated passion of existence!"

Frame was staring into her face—then drew back as though meeting a deeper counter-current, as Henrietta's eyes pierced his soul—an exchange he never forgot! For an instant each existed as part of the other. She seemed sounding existence itself:

"We have been considering life as a great river. But what of

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the ocean? Has any human soul so far used the plumb-line of histrionic genius as to sound its depths, or the ear of soul-inspiration as to compass its voice?"

"No!" ejaculated Frame in a weak voice that seemed to confess the staggering onslaught to which his comprehension had been opposed.

"There is but one Personage who ever did!" she declared.

Frame, catching from Henrietta's eye a gleam of spiritual revelation that seemed to climax all she had previously expressed, asked in tone little above a hoarse whisper:

"Who!"

"Jesus Christ!" she responded in strange voice that was triumph of the marvelous.

"Oh!" exclaimed Frame, with a look of amazed exaltation.

"And—so far as I can comprehend it—He acted the part by *living* it!" she ended.

Frame was in a realm of whose vastness he never before had received such revealment. His experience in the assembly at Tromple Shades was of presence of the Deity. Now a drama seemed presenting His Son. He said in amazed inquiry:

"In other words, He was the great Actor of the ages!"

"Yes; in the rôle of revealing as Regent of Jehovah the truth, to assembled worldliness, from the stage of Spiritual Life!" said Henrietta responsively, and in serenity that added to his wonderment.

Frame, after another brief interval of contemplation, recurred to thought of his own previous impressions he had intended to express—that passion had most impressed him as being the arch vehicle of theatrical interpretation. He said:

"If I may be permitted to descend to the modest level of my own conception in the past—that of passion as the main vehicle of power in dramatic interpretation—let me ask, Miss Brodein: Had not the passions much to do with your so sublime revelation of Truth when you were the 'Princess'?"

"Yes"; she replied, "they always do, in many relations, in depicting life. But in that play in particular, they were but stepping-stones in the ascent to Spiritual Truth—the sublimated passion of which I spoke." Then—Frame having suggested Forrest, Booth and Salvini as among his ideals in the tragic drama—Henrietta gladly joined in their praise; declaring them among the greatest names of the acted drama.

"And who are the greatest, in your view?" he asked.

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"In their interpretations most dissociated from depiction of passion, I have thought most often of such actresses as Dusé and Bernhardt; and of Borne in the present generation," Henrietta replied contemplatively. Frame, confessing his ignorance, observed that he had connected Bernhardt with emotional dramatics. She replied:

"We know she excelled in that field; and in a refined sense of the art. But it has seemed to me that she shone most impressively in rôles in which psychological detachment marked the action; and that she was never really herself in evolving her genius except in spiritual revelation, and when she was least demonstrative."

Frame, changing the subject, inquired: "What do you think of the European War as a refining influence in the drama?" To which Henrietta replied with unusual emphasis:

"It has had much to do with the new revelation that is dawning upon the stage." And she explained her use of the word revelation: "The world is seeing itself in a new light; face to face with primary principles of life, into contact with which it was forced by the unparalleled tragedies of that great upheaval in civilization. And the drama is reflecting—I may say is militant —in the cause of promoting this truth."

The summons came to repair to the dining room.

Soon after the repast was over, as Frame was about to depart for home, he assured Miss Brodein that he expected her to achieve great success in the larger field he believed she was about to enter. Thanking him, she added:

"I have misgivings, Mr. Frame, as to whether on the whole the atmosphere in such a great center as Chicago will be more conducive to growth in dramatic effort than here in the country, where one is more in daily contact with nature. If I find further on, that my misgivings continue to exist, I feel that I shall resolve to prosecute my life-work from rural centers rather than the large cities." Frame declared that such a resolution would mean much to her many friends, and to the communities in which she would move; and bade her adieu.

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CHAPTER XIV

AS he aired homeward, Frame felt that he had come closer to Miss Brodein to-day. His vision of what she was destined to do and to be in life was quickened and broadened. Her obvious preference for the social and scenic phases of rural existence as inspirational sources impressed him in a new sense. To his veneration of her genius, he now felt the added impress of even profounder regard for her sincerity and her womanhood. Moreover, her markedly cordial expressions concerning Miss Loor and her friendship had deepened his appreciation of the actress. As he lay thinking of her after retiring that night, repeatedly came the inquiry: "Do I love her more than before?" He could not determine.

Frame was scanning the newspaper headlines one morning in July of his present vacation; those most prominent announcing: "Ganges River in Insurgent Hands," "Calcutta Fallen." In the great air-battle over Bombay the British had been worsted, the lines by land were closing in; the main auxiliary fleet was approaching the city.

Horace, who was about to leave the veranda and go into the field, engaged in an exchange of comment concerning the fact that the wireless had virtually superseded ocean cables; Bernard observing that the Indian Rebellion was reputed to have already acquired excellent facilities for sending and receiving information to and from all parts of the world.

"But the really difficult feat nowadays," he continued, "is to baffle the effects of the almost human automatic adjustments of the wireless service. One army or fleet discovers and reports the locality and course of another, without the touching of a key or button by any person on either side."

"And the submarine sound-bells," suggested Horace. "And as to scouting and guarding, the triple functions of air-water-and submarine navigation make it impossible to predict whether an air-fleet will be a submarine or a water-surface force in a few moments' time."

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"Yes," rejoined Bernard, who seemed engrossed with some incidental thought, "and there is the rising tide of nationalism and of internationalism in the long-pending and now realizable awakening in the Orient. What does it mean to Europe—and to America? If some of our statesmen's views are correct, it means that both Europe and America will be requisitioned to hold the balance of world-empire and economy as against Asia; especially with Russia throwing her main influence with Asia," he ended sententiously.

"Bernard, you're wanted at the phone," said a voice at the hall door. His mother had spoken.

It was the cheery and vivacious voice of Miss Loor. She was very cordially inviting him to call at their home that afternoon, as Miss Brodein, who had returned home, would make her a visit to-day.

For a mere instant, after having expressed his thanks, and his pleasure upon learning that Miss Brodein had returned, Frame, suddenly confronted with the thought of being about to meet them both together—and at Miss Loor's home—hesitated before responding directly to the invitation. But the idea so filled him with longing delight as his mind swept over the recent past, that he was prompted to respond with evident pleasure:

"Yes; thanking you again, Miss Loor, I shall be delighted to call."

Something in the voice that had summoned him to the phone had led him to rightly divine the source of the signal. Later, and while he was dressing preparatory to making the call, came the subconscious inquiry: "Why was it that that call to the phone suddenly lighted up my heart!" And among the many pleasurable anticipations he felt while airing toward the Loor home in the early afternoon, there came this reflection that was differentiated by a certain fatefulness: that neither of these two ladies, so strangely yet variantly linked to him in friendship, knew aught of his heart-relations to the other!

Instantly upon the heels of this thought there rushed to consciousness as his mind dwelt upon Miss Brodein, a sense of self-reproach:

"Heart-relations!" he repeated audibly, and with a tinge of irony bordering on self-ridicule. "What have I been saying! What does *she* know of my affection for her! . . ."

As regards Flissey Loor: Her primary thought in extending the invitation was of being and of making all hands happy—

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happier—through Mr. Frame's presence. But there was a further motive—to make him better acquainted with her dear Henrietta!

But never had she imagined that her experience with Mr. Frame and his letters to her, was even remotely connected with any impression that might have been made upon him by the personality of Henrietta Brodein; while yet, as we have seen, she had imagined that *some* woman had come to have a place in his heart—that such inference was justified by his cryptic reference to his inner consciousness, in the letters.

When he over the phone accepted her invitation, she bounced down the hallway, reëntered the sitting room and, rushing up to her mother, exclaimed in tone of ecstasy:

"Oh, Mother, Mr. Frame's coming! I'm so glad!" Mrs. Loor's pleasure was manifest in the deep sympathetic look which recognized the intenser pleasure of the daughter.

After greetings and some incidental exchanges concerning her absence and return, and certain social topics, had passed between Flissey and Henrietta—who arrived an hour or so later—Flissey announced with a peculiarly delightsome smile that Mr. Frame would call in the afternoon. "Won't it be delightful!" she cried. Henrietta responded:

"We shall experience much pleasure, I am sure." Then she added, as Flissey listened, smiling an even sisterly solicitude: "Mr. Frame is more than an ordinary caller; more than an ordinary man." This was said reflectively and without apparent emotion.

"Miss Brodein," spoke Flissey responsively and with deep sincerity, "Mr. Frame is destined for something large in life! He is a perfect man!"—Flissey suddenly turned her head away.

All unannounced a tear of sadness had come to her eye. She could not have told just why—but it was from a far depth that had been sounded in the phone-booth.

But she was too ingenuous to dissemble. Quickly brushing away the tear, and leaving Henrietta to place such significance as she saw fit upon this observed incident, she continued: "And he is so manly in facing what he believes to be his life-work, that he is resolved to sacrifice all else to that end, I believe."

"Only in so doing can any of us perform our life-work aright," was Henrietta's response, spoken as if what had been ascribed to Mr. Frame was inevitable. Then she continued: "It seems that the more one is devoted to a treasured end in life, the more one is found groping, sometimes desperately, for a right expedient

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to meet exigencies that will arise. I am thinking now, Miss Loor, of occasions such as form something like crises in life; when we are face to face with a real difficulty—as I am at present," she ended, fixing her eyes upon Flissey, but exhibiting no sense of perplexity.

"Why!" exclaimed Flissey in mingled surprise and admiration, "who would suppose you were facing a difficulty—or anything of that kind, Miss Brodein?" Henrietta's eyes were earnestly fixed upon the carpet as she rejoined:

"It is a question of returning to the city, where life is feigned rather than lived; or of remaining where environment points to Nature, and where life is *lived*—in the country." Flissey impulsively exclaimed:

"Oh, I do hope you'll decide to remain in the country—most of the time, I mean!" Then she sought to correct herself by this explanatory: "But I must confess that I've spoken without due appreciation of what you have in mind, in expressing my selfish bias on behalf of our community, Miss Brodein." Henrietta, bowing in recognition of these deferential words, continued:

"There is an alternative to becoming absorbed in the killing stagnation of the large cities, my dear. Throughout Christendom country life is becoming more cosmopolitan; more life's center in spirit. There alone, I believe, may sane ambition realize itself through the appeal from the stage."

"I am so pleased to hear you declare your preference for the country!" said Flissey with fervency. Then conversation turned to recent social happenings in the community.

In answering the ring which announced Frame's arrival in the afternoon, Flissey's cordial handshake and her hearty greeting——

"We're so glad you've come, Mr. Frame,"—were so genuine that he could not have defined a certain impression of placid reserve noticeable in her bearing.

Initial greetings having passed between himself and Miss Brodein as well, he noted an intenser aloofness on her part accompanied—somewhat strangely, he thought—by a tendency to closer intimacy with himself. He found himself mentally saying: "Miss Brodein the actress!"

Conversation advanced concerning her experience with Boehm's. She had enjoyed it keenly. After closing with them for a season's service, the previous brief probationary period had been followed by preparatory and rehearsal work that was closely confining. She had had no real vacation since leaving home, although she

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had made a flying trip to Ohio to see her aunt immediately preceding her term of service. No, the Boehm system of dramatic production could not be denominated a school of art, she declared in response to Frame's inquiry:

"But, regarding their system," she explained, "too much stress is placed upon meeting the public demand—or taste, as they courteously term it. Upon final analysis it has seemed to reduce itself to slavery of fadism," she declared. Frame expressed surprise—he had understood that the Athenian's management stood for dramatic art in the classical sense. She replied:

"That is their profession, Mr. Frame—the classic form and spirit. Nevertheless, they actually continue catering to this popular trend for the so-called classical in form. As you know, this popular idea has taken on the vogue of the Greeks. Everything is Greek nowadays, from the fashions in dress to the 'classics' in drama. Not that I would decry Greek genius in dramatic art; far from it. But American insistence upon whatever becomes a vogue reduces any classic idea to a degrading level—and to a mere passing phase. The present 'vogue' has reached that stage; it is becoming decadent, lifeless."

Frame, deeply interested in Henrietta's reference to the classical in dramatics, sought to elicit further expression as to wherein the popular form of the art was at fault. Flissey, who had heard some previous criticism of the "vogue" by the actress before he had arrived, encouraged his suggestion. Henrietta continued:

"For instance: In presenting a revival of some Greek drama, the atmosphere is so stuffed with obvious effort to reproduce the Grecian habit in staging, and to affect the mannerisms of those ancients, that the soul of the play is lost in these immaterial exteriors. The writer, the impresario, the stage director, measurably forget that the actor's function is to live the part, that inner consciousness of that life is the sum and substance of dramatic talent. There is Bullfinch, with Boehm: One sees in his acting the life he reveals. He can so act the Greek or the Roman that the merest suggestion of nationality in dress suffices; and scenery becomes altogether secondary and relatively useless. When stress is placed upon these unessentials, so that interest is dissipated in observation of dress or scenery, then such accessories become obstructions in the drama. But there is, I believe, a still more glaring fault."

"And what may that be, Miss Brodein?" inquired Frame with eagerness.

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"It is, that novelty in the handling must dominate the idea developed in the play; this in spite of the great truth that the principles of dramatic art are eternal, and therefore immutable —transcending the faculty of the new and the sensational. For life—humanity in action—is the same in all ages. And what we long to realize in the drama is life—lived on the stage," she explained.

"But does not life itself, in much of human experience, reflect the artificial, and sensational?" queried Frame ponderingly.

"No! They are mockeries of life!"—came instantly from Henrietta, as a certain fire in her gaze told of experience words could not convey. Her soul seemed fathoming human existence. But as quickly she apologized for her "really rude exclamatory response." Frame protested:

"It was a lightning stroke of a tremendous truth!—and *that* was all of which I was conscious. I never before realized that the true drama incidentally flings aside life's falsities in revealing the *only* life—the inner consciousness!"

"Pardon me; not quite that, Mr. Frame," said Henrietta. "Some plays most powerful for good are analyses of these falsities. But, as you have aptly expressed it, they are in effect spurned as being but mockeries; truth being vindicated in the play. But truth can not be impressed from the stage save through a conscious feeling of solicitude for humanity in error. Love of humanity combined with revelation of truth for its own sake! This consciousness can be attained to only through daily living the truths involved. One must feel what one is acting, as part of one's own life, before the histrionic faculty can operate normally. What reason, then, for imposing upon the participant, in rehearsal, this or that alien cult or fadism in impersonation! What right has a director to insist upon one's stepping outside of one's self to present a truth?" Then, turning to Flissey, she reverted:

"Now you know, my dear, what I meant when I referred to the difficulty that confronts me." Frame, craving pardon, interposed:

"But is not this invasion of which you speak, a phase of the inevitable conflict between error and truth?"

"Yes," came the response, "the conflict is inevitable; as is the invasion upon one's life—as things are in the sphere of dramatic training."

"But can there be a remedy for this difficulty?"

"In the midst of my own doubts, Mr. Frame, I can but sug-

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gest these thoughts: That there is over-training for the stage. I conceive that most training comes from the wrong source. To illustrate: A group of players who by affinity select a given play as being nearest their heart and life, should live in one another's atmosphere and in that of the play. They alone should be responsible for its production. And the scene of preparation and rehearsal should embody rural life as its controlling feature and influence."

Frame appreciatively thanked her for her fine discourse; then inquired how far her plans for the future were likely to be affected by the views she had expressed. She replied:

"I shall continue with Boehm until next season; but I have been strenuously endeavoring to bring about a change in their methods of production and of stage rehearsal; and most of all, concerning the necessity of rural environment."

Flissey had by a gesture excused herself from the immediate presence of the callers; and as she thrummed her harp in tuning it by the piano, she remarked as Henrietta was ending her remarks:

"She has kindly consented to present for us something splendid, Mr. Frame. It is a version of Solencia's 'Ode to Hermes'; and she has requested me to accompany with the harp, which, as you know, is part of the production." Frame was declaring that to listen would be a great delight, as Flissey disappeared to return presently with her parents. After greetings had been exchanged between them and Frame, Flissey announced that Miss Brodein would step into the retiring room for a moment, after which she would favor the company with the recital; and the two ladies passed into the wing room of the parlor; presently returning, Flissey conducting Henrietta, habited for impersonation of a Grecian goddess.

"Now we will listen to Miss Brodein," she announced, as she stepped to her chair by the piano, took up her harp, and began playing the prelude.

Flissey was so at home with her harp! Her being was in harmony with its pure clear notes so capable of expressing riches of mind and heart. The music of this part was appropriately set to laudation of the mythical creator of this immortal instrument. The notes floated from her fingers as if from some reservoir of the harmonies in far distant shimmering air. Frame instantly felt a quickening enchantment.

Then, the prelude ended, came a change of key; the tones be-

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came stronger, the movement more active. Something martial in measure and rhythm was suggested as Henrietta began the rendition in tone-recital, which revived in most essentials the remote hymnal dramatics of the Greeks; Flissey's inspiring interpretation leading the way:

"Sound we the lyre in praises of Zeus' bright son with his message,
Full of the rhythm of Melody heralding muses Olympian,"—

ran on the proclamation in successive hexameters; soon developing into recurrences of strophe and counter-strophe, as in narrative some of the chief traits of the Hermenian mythology were recounted.

The listeners were spellbound. The symphony of thought in converse with woman's voice and harp's undying strains urged on the soul to celestial heights, where the entertained existed as enchanted mortals—now reclining in air and sustained by voices of the spheres that lured and soothed, now momentarily awakened from reverie by ominous reminder. Sometimes her voice was the oracle of divination; then thunder from Olympia; now lightning strides through space; anon the pastoral call to herds; again the richness of the embassy;—and now as voice and strings are one in dwindling harmony, the murmur of Arcadian forest stillness.

Frame, entranced, in subconsciousness lived back to boyhood; resurveyed the vista that brought memories of these entertainers; then verged into reverie, completely oblivious in normal consciousness to all that two consummate artists were doing to entertain him—save that through a psychology no mortal could interpret he knew he was being beguiled by something so ineffably sweet—it could be forgotten in what it was creating! Yet he was not insensible to every phase of the inimitable impersonations, or to those softest harmonies in the harpist's gift. These were wings that bore him to another sphere of existence and set him dreaming of himself!—and of the performers in wholly detached connections. What did it mean to his future!

For the strangely luring hymnal wellings from the depths of Henrietta's soul, beautiful by the drapery which in fancy floated from the lute-strings and festooned the vast arches and the symmetrical columns of the creation he beheld, inspired in his transport a remoter vision of the divine actress seated on a celestial throne, exalted and aloof—to all but Miss Loor; whom he beheld at its foot, her heart upon her fingers' ends, thrumming forth the sacri-

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fice of a life in fealty, as she bowed in homage!—then the throne took wings and swept along a far vista—had it passed up higher? —but there floated the harpist with far extended arms, clasping the instrument as a symbol—as in beseechment! . . . What had this meant to them—and to *him!* * * *

Voice-and-lute tones are dying down into the finale; telling of Hermes silently threading between Grecian chariots in which slumber the enemies of old Priam, as our hero-god reins the Trojan steeds toward the Xanthian ford, safely bearing the king of Troy; where he leaves his charge to journey to the city's walls with the corse of his valiant son, Hector, for the funeral rites to come; and the Grecian goddess, and the nymph who has wandered with her, lute in hand, mingle their farewells to Hermes as he wings homeward to the Olympian height

"and Morn in saffron robes o'erspread the Earth with light." *

As for Flissey: She had been rejoicing in delight of aiding Henrietta—who to her was entertainer to Mr. Frame. This thought had been her ambition—her utmost devotion!

Her part in the entertainment haunted him afterward as proof of supreme worthiness in her—and of her inevitable connection with the fate of Miss Brodein!

Among the professions of delight that were bestowed upon the entertainers, was one from Grampion:

"Would you call it something different, or something more, than music, Mr. Frame?"

"It was something more—something above any music I ever heard!"—was his instant response, in tone and accompanied by look of wonderment.

"Now, Mr. Frame," said Flissey, after she and Henrietta had acknowledged the compliments paid them, "it is your turn to entertain. We want to hear you sing." In surprise and a certain confusion, he declared:

"It would be not only irrelevant, but the height of impudence if I were to allow myself to consent to sing, after what we've been listening to!"

"That's in line with what you've said to me once before, when I knew it would be—as it was, splendid!" persisted Flissey.

"If you knew the conditions upon which I consented to do this little recitative, Mr. Frame," interposed Henrietta, "when Miss

* Bryant's Iliad.

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Loor requested me to give it, you would perhaps realize the obligations we feel you are under to delight us by singing for us"——

"Why, what does all this mean? Has Miss Loor had such audacity"—

"Yes, I have!" exclaimed Flissey in gleeful spirit, "and I'm willing to take all responsibility upon myself, for promising Miss Brodein that if we entertained, you'd sing for us. So come now," she ended, springing to her feet and floating across to the piano and taking up a piece of music. As she began thrumming the keys she continued:

"Here it is: 'Troubadour's Swan-Song'; and we know you can sing it." She beckoned him to come. Frame was disconcerted; his face turned crimson in the contemplation.

"You certainly will not disappoint us," said Henrietta appealingly.

With a reluctance he himself but imperfectly understood, Frame slowly rose and half-hesitatingly moved toward the piano as he protested:

"Ladies, this is little less than downright imposition upon you!—but I'll try."

"Good! I knew you would, Mr. Frame," gushed exultingly from Flissey's raptured spirit, thankfully adjusting herself to the task of accompaniment. Then, as he observed Miss Brodein approaching, Flissey, in a kind of mirthful apology, explained that certain passages of the piece were set for female voices in solo; that she herself would carry part of this and Miss Brodein had consented to take certain phases of the chantings. Frame became elated:

"Capital!" he ejaculated. "Now I know I'll be carried right along on the tide of your voices, ladies!"

The song was, in fine, an ode to Chivalry; its lyrics interpreting stages of the birth, reign and decline of the Troubadours; exalting its excellencies; lamenting its excesses and hapless failures. Its climax celebrated the chivalry of all time. The elder Loors were eager listeners.

Frame's rich penetrating baritone interpreted the poetic feeling of the Latin climes, when the picturesque was vying with gallantry in appeal to kingly praise and evoking royal approval; when titled ladies were now recipients of extravagant professions and confessions, now objects of felicitous satire or frivolous raillery. The scene shifts, competition in versification, adjudged by royal ladies, became the theme; and here Flissey took her vocal part, in depicting

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pronouncement of judgment upon the merits of the versifiers. Back to the Crusaders of Toulouse and of England ran the intensified song-narrative; now Frame was at once relieved and enlivened by the serio-tragic intonations of Henrietta, who in mellowness of her contralto chanted of gallantries of devotees of faith in expedition of Crusaders to the East. Then a madrigal by Frame contrasted poetic gift of priest with abandon of low minstrelsy of those days. Then commiseration for decline of the Troubadours; in which Frame and Flissey alternated in presenting the swan-song phase. The finale, in which the three voices mingled, marked the ascent from despair to triumph of that human quality which is romance of chivalry.

The unique feature of this ending—felt by him and recognized by all present—was that through psychology there came a merging of the personalities, through which Frame became interpreter of the soul-music of the trio,—the arch-analyzer of the underlying Truth!

As the singers resumed their seats, Flissey gazed steadily at Henrietta, evidently awaiting an expression from her. She was not disappointed.

"Mr. Frame," she said calmly, her eyes lighting up, "it is as I had anticipated. You are capable of living and of psychic revelation of truth, as leader in the music-drama." As Frame's surprised eyes met her own, she continued: "And what you have just performed is in principle but a repetition of your participation in the choral at the auditorium."

"That it is!" exclaimed Flissey rapturously. "We both realized it!" Frame responded demurringly:

"All of which I was capable, and all that I knew, ladies, was that I realized the exaltation of being impelled by the influence of others—yourselves!" But Henrietta gravely declared he had been inspirer and guide.

"With all deference to the parts carried by the ladies," interposed Grampion, as he looked the deference he spoke, "I realized something like this: He is the master Troubadour"—then he said to the ladies in a burst of pleasantry: "You mustn't take me to task for placing Mr. Frame first in this song—you can't be master Troubadours!"—and he broke into the inevitable laugh that rang so true to his teeming life. Mrs. Loor remarked that to her they were all masters of their parts; to which Grampion rejoined that that was precisely what he had meant—he had not

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thought of counting out the ladies. Then, turning again to Frame deferentially:

"But you led that procession in emphasizing the chivalry of Richard the Lion, sir."

"What would that procession have been without the presence of the objective of all chivalry—the ladies, Mr. Loor?" declared Frame triumphantly. Grampion ejaculated with characteristic vim:

"Sure enough!—I'm hoist on my own petard—and, ladies, I crave pardon!—and I promise, if you'll forgive me, never again to confer the master's degree upon gentlemen when ladies are present." He was instantly forgiven by the smiling Henrietta.

The Loors and their guests had repaired to the tea-table; that repast was finished, and Frame was about to take his departure for home.

The fact had transpired that Miss Brodein was soon to return to Chicago to take up her professional engagement with Boehm. Frame realized that he probably would not see her again before she left home.

As adieus were being exchanged, he wished her all of success that her talents merited:

"But that means more than I feel I can convey in words," he declared. His look of intelligent conviction told of sincerity in his expression.

"Yes," Flissey confirmed in tone and expression of longing affection and regard, "all the world that is privileged to hear you will be at your feet, Miss Brodein!"

"If I fail, I shall have the great comfort of such friendships and solicitations as are proven in these kindly expressions," she responded, regarding her friends with grateful smiles.

"I am doubly thankful for the exceptional pleasures of this day," said Frame, as hands were extended in the parting greetings. . . .

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CHAPTER XV

FRAME'S vacation was nearing its close when, one day in September, Horace was importuning him to air with him over to the state fair for at least one day—it would be fine recreation. Bernard, at first indifferent to the idea of getting into "such a crowd," finally consented.

"Which day, brother?" Horace submitted. The selection being left to the latter, Thursday was chosen—the day after to-morrow. Horace had explained that the management was going to outdo last year's performances in the races and in some air-stunts; but that the finals in the latter would occur on Friday.

The brothers, en route to the fair, had swiftly passed the elevated air-lane-posts until, nearing the town, patrols appeared in the policed area. Horace had wirelessed ahead for light refreshments to be automatically hoisted at an advance air-post. As he placed a coin in the slot that released the package, his eye caught sight of a card-placard which as a bonus was attached thereto. It read: "Insurgents still hold Bombay. Airal Kissing Match Postponed till To-morrow." As they were planing upward to fly on, Horace gleefully remarked that the latter was intended for Bernard; who dryly acknowledged the jest by observing:

"I guess we'll have to stay over." Then Horace dropped a distant hint that might imply that Miss Loor's presence at the fair was within probabilities. Bernard's interest was aroused; and while Horace was studiedly evading inquiry for his reasons, attention was diverted from the steerage.

"Hello there!—you *men!*—Whoa!—*don't* you see 'em slowing *up!*—Smash!—there they go!"—shot in stentorian and terrified tones from the throat of an air-guard just ahead, as the Frame plane crashed into one in its lead. Some warning in front had halted parties on ahead, but a general crush had been averted. However, both the Frame plane and the one with which it had collided were disabled—the former by being struck by an airal to rearward, putting its motor partially out of commission; there was nothing to do but drop to earth. Similar fate came to

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the car ahead. The guard shouted down to Horace as he sank:

"Name and number!—this may cost you something!" and himself descended; taking Horace's address as the brothers, having landed without mentionable incident, were inspecting their plane. Horace acknowledged his fault, and would adjust the matter with the proprietor of the car they had injured—which had landed with a jolt caused by the grinding of a corner of the framework into the soil.

"All right," said the officer, stepping along with the Frames to the other near-by car, whose occupants were now trying to assess the extent of its injury; the officer announcing:

"These are the men you have to deal with; is there anything further you desire of me?"

"No, sir," responded him who headed the other party, as he surveyed the Frames. "It's all right." Explanations and apologies from the Frames followed; Horace taking the whole blame upon himself.

"Grady is the name, sir," responded the stranger in jocular vein, to Horace's inquiry. "We're right glad 'twas no worse—nobody hurt and everybody near the goal at that.—Crete, I guess you're more scared than hurt, you look all right and sound now," he continued, addressing the lady who was evidently his wife.

"Ger-razh, chentlemens! Righd ogross de r-roadways! R-run em in to de ger-razh, chentlemens? Sheeb und gwicg r-repaus—eh?" rolled in deep gutturals alternated with high squeaky climaxes from the broad chest of a sturdy German, as he hastened from a suburban establishment across the highway. Horace explained that this depended upon Mr. Grady's pleasure as regarded his car; that his own might be taken in charge, and that he would bear the expense of repairs of both planes. It was arranged accordingly, Grady saying:

"Yes; you may take charge of ours too." The German was delighted:

"Goot! Ve haf de ominyblanes vix in no dime, chentlemens," and he called "Yacoob!" to his man across the street.

"Mother, you and the girls take the tram downtown to the Temps House, and I'll join you there soon," said Grady to the ladies of his party. Then, after inquiring the names of the Frame party, he introduced them to his family. Lavish apologies for causing the accident followed from the Frames, all of which were waived aside; the eldest daughter, addressing Horace, protesting:

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"Don't mention it, sir, we're all thinking of our fortunate escape from injury in the drop-down—we know it was a perfectly innocent happening." The ladies started on, the Frames wishing them much enjoyment of the fair; the three men crossing over to the garage, where through incidental conversation it transpired that Grady lived but ten miles from the Frames; and he recalled that he had in fact met Julius Frame at one of the civics meetings at which he, Grady, had represented his township.

Inspection of the damaged planes resulted in assurance from the German: "Sh!—dound menzion how long vill it dake. Ve vix em urrighd avay—veneffer yoo gum back ve haf em ur-r-*ra*dy!" Grady declared to the German and to Horace that he himself would insist upon bearing the expense of repairs to his plane. A friendly altercation ensued—Horace would have none of it!—would not be guilty of permitting such an adjustment. Said the German:

"Vell, den, chentlemens, I gollect zee money ven he gome vor zee ominyblane!—un ver-rus gome vur-rus zer-ruv—eh?" Grady smilingly assented, declaring he would return before the Frames did, and wishing the Frames "a hot day of it," he departed for down-town.

Horace, stepping back to his airal, was suddenly reminded that the refreshments were still unpacked.

"We've been cheated out of our swash and buns," he declared to Bernard; who began to chuckle over the incident. Facetious passages in protest and recrimination were exchanged; Bernard's rallying point being that the accident resulted from Horace's failure to promptly inform him as to why he had suggested the possible presence of Miss Loor at the fair; Horace, in parrying, having observed with mysterious delight:

"Stranger things have happened than that this getting acquainted with a family by force of arms might prove a boon to the steersman who challenges fate, knowing it not"—

"Right there I land on you, with both feet!" exclaimed Bernard, advancing with extended finger as if driving home his thrust, "for I've no occasion to resort to guessing as to why you made *that* assertion—I was not asleep when those exchanges between you and that eldest daughter occurred over there!"

The German—whose name had just now been revealed to Horace as Schwitz—and who saw this colloquy from a distance and felt certain of a quarrel between the brothers over the accident, came hurrying up with a look of mingled commiseration and pro-

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test, his eyes abjectly upon the floor. Suddenly elevating his eyebrows, his head coming up with a jerk, he commiserated:

"*Vot* a piddy! *Mine* vrendts! *Do*-an git mad un vighdt!—un brud-derdts!—un on de day off de shtade fy-ur! Vot vill de modder zay ven yoo goes ome mit de bleck ey-us yoo git in vidun! Yoo zhould tank de Lo-r-rdt to git zhut off dot egsedendt zo *vell*!" Then, lowering his voice to a coaxing tone as when an adult would work reconciliation between two little boys after a scrap, he continued:

"*Shage* von annudder's ans no-uw!—be goodt!" Suddenly changing to aspect of sternness of authority, he ended with: "Un yoo haf dis gwarrul in my ger-razh, chentlemens!—I vill nud *haf* it! Now yoo vill be gwiedt, eh?"—mellowing down until the last word was as soft and soothing as a mamma's lullaby to a half-sleeping child.

Not until the "un vighdt!" was heard did the brothers comprehend Schwitz's conception of what was transpiring between them. Then Horace—resisting the impulse to explode with laughter—looked across at Bernard with knowing look and a wink; the latter, taking the cue, now assuming an attitude of fierce belligerency. To the German war seemed imminent. The ludicrousness of the situation however rendered further dissemblance out of the question; suppressed titters led to an outburst of laughter which to Schwitz seemed derisive of his well-meant interference, on the part of Horace; while Bernard's head was turned aside to hide his risibilities. In reproachful disgust Schwitz ejaculated:

"Hm! Make *vun* off me!—not unnerschtandt vot dem-ish I shtob ven I pawted em!" Resolutely facing about, Horace now assumed an air of contrition; professed regret that they had not duly recognized his interception; Bernard now joining in thanking him for putting a stop to their "nonsense." Then Horace lightheartedly beckoned the German over to the airal and started to open the lane-post luncheon, saying:

"We're going to make up for good now, sir; and we want you to have a sip of wine with us." Schwitz, melting in full fellowship, sat to:

"Mine goot leedle fellerse! Zo mush bedder dot ish vrom *vi*-dun!" he grinned gratefully. "I vill dhringk mit yoo!"—and after swaying his paper cup of wine in acknowledgment: "Goot zheer do mens vrom de goundhrey!" After gulping it at a draught and as he rose to go, he ended:

"I vill zay do mine vrau 'vot goot tings I dun dish bhr-ridt

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shtade fy-ur da-y!' Un ven zhe deezshes dem leedle leedle vellerse in de Zunday zgool de goot tings vrom Got in hafen, zhe dells em nod do pe *bade* boy-is un git *vi*dun!!—gootpy, chentlemens." Even before he had disappeared the brothers broke out into unrestrained and convulsive merriment over the incredible incident, Bernard remarking between recurrent fits:

"We're getting our money's worth before we've seen the fair, Hod!"

Then, the buns having been consumed, Horace, startled that it was a quarter of ten o'clock, proposed that they "pike for downtown—and then for the fairgrounds." In bantering allusion Bernard declared the reason for the brother's desire to go via the Temps House was transparent. After parrying, Horace exclaimed in animation:

"But say, brother; I knew that girl the minute I set eyes on her! Large blue eyes; clear blonde complexion! Superb girl, that!—saw her at last year's annuals at the Shades—with her parents—same people! I've thought of those eyes ever since!"

Arrived by tram at the Temps House, Horace led the way to the lobby counter and began to search the hotel register—his professed quest being the Grady family; Bernard standing by, curiously watching him. He had neared the end of the spaces covered by signatures, and was mentally concluding that the Gradys were not registered, when suddenly he came upon the names "Miss Loor" and "Miss Kiteler" from "Tromple Shades." As he straightened up his face told Bernard of mild surprise and perplexity. He remarked:

"If they've registered here, I don't seem to find their sigs."

"If you haven't found them, that's proof positive that they haven't registered,"—was Bernard's rally accompanied by a significant smile. This response seemed to suggest an idea. With the faintest tinge of testiness Horace replied in seeming retort:

"Well, now, I'm not so dead gone on the Grady family as you imagine. Look it through yourself, and maybe you'll find some signatures that I've overlooked." Something indefinable in Horace's eyes caused Bernard to wonder what might be lurking beneath the surface of this remark. He turned to the counter, ran his eyes quickly over the day's registry, and as they came upon the Tromple Shades signatures, he raised his head and in mingled surprise and pleasure exclaimed:

"You knew this all the time!—you rascal."

"Didn't know a thing about it, sir—till I saw those sigs there,"

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declared Horace in apparent sincerity. Then he explained: He had met those ladies two days ago while planing toward Tromple's; had learned from them that they were planning upon attending the fair. Miss Kiteler had remarked that there was to be a kissing match on for Thursday, and that they had been thinking of going that day:

"And she laughed like fun. I said I didn't know how that would appeal to the ladies, but that I could speak by the book for the gentlemen, and that I'd made it a point to urge my brother to go over there Thursday because of that feature of the program, and that I thought I'd succeeded."—

"You villain!—well, what did she say to—to that fool break?"

"She didn't say a word. But she bit her lip as she looked at Flissey, and Flissey bit hers—or looked the other way; and I says to myself 'this is a good time to take my leave,' and did so, bidding them good day and hoping we'd see them over here on Thursday—"

"You did!"

"But sure's I stand here, Bernie, I didn't expect to find *them* registered here." Bernard's searching look reflected doubt. Horace went on:

"If I were in your place, Bernie, I'd send up my card; and if they ask you into the sitting room—as they'll do sure, if they haven't gone out to the fair—and if you'll inquire of them, they'll substantiate——"

"Go to!—and have you forgotten that quest of the Grady family——"

"No, sir; I was just going to shake you, after giving you some good advice—hello, there they are now!" exclaimed Horace as from looking about the lobby as he was speaking, he espied some ladies on the sidewalk at the side entrance. They were Misses Loor and Kiteler, and were about to take an elevator for the tram.

The brothers hastened thence, Horace in the lead. Stepping up to the ladies he doffed his hat with the exclamation:

"Oh, ladies, don't be in such a hurry to see that kissing match"—

"Why, Horace!" ejaculated Miss Kiteler, the first to speak in response, as she and Flissey extended hands for the greetings; and Bernard, now upon the scene, likewise hailed them and received their reciprocations. Horace went on:

"I am very regretful, for your sakes, to have to announce that the kissing match is postponed till to-morrow." Miss Kiteler shrieked: "How shall we ever survive the shock!" Flissey,

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glancing at the grinning brothers, supplemented in sprightly vein:

"We'll have to console ourselves with those automatic sprinters, Miss Kiteler, though they're for the special amusement of the men." The brothers smiled; and Horace explained that they had just now discovered the registries:

"And we were discussing taking the liberty of sending our compliments to you by our cards, when I chanced to catch sight of you here," he ended. Flissey replied that that was very thoughtful. Horace, seemingly suddenly reminded, bowed to the ladies and asked to be excused, explaining that he wished to look up "some other people here from the country"; and, wishing them much pleasure at the fair, and expressing the hope that himself and Bernard would see more of them before the day ended, he turned and walked briskly into the lobby; leaving the ladies with Bernard —an incidental purpose of his from the moment he had discovered them on the walk.

Bernard briefly told them of the accident.

"How very fortunate that no one was hurt," said Flissey. Then, her eyes flashing love of adventure: "I rather envy that Grady family—for 'twas a romantic beginning for a fair-day outing!"

As the ladies were about to ascend, Bernard begged to ask if it would be agreeable to them to lunch with himself and Horace on the fair-grounds at some convenient hour. They expressed their delight; and it was arranged that they should meet at the Empire Roost at one o'clock. He raised his hat as the two friends stepped into the elevator.

Bernard had mentally commented upon the liberty he had taken in including Horace in the proposed lunching party. However, he reflected: "If he finds Miss Grady and makes an appointment with her, we'll find a way out for him."

After making inquiry and some searching about the hotel in quest of the Gradys, without locating them, Horace, in despair of making headway, had turned down the entry-area toward the sidewalk, when he ran upon Joe Cotsworth. The latter was explaining that it was principally committee business that had brought him to the fair, when Bernard, who had turned back into the hotel to find Horace, came upon the two. After greetings between him and Cotsworth, the committeeman continued:

"By the way, we have an interesting meet at the social-civics headquarters on the grounds at two o'clock. Can't you boys be there?" This was possible, the brothers thankingly conceded.

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Horace, repressing a slight shade of color that came to his face, inquired if Cotsworth chanced to know a man named Grady who was in the civics circle.

"Why, Ambrose Grady, do you mean, from over near Ives Waters?" replied Cotsworth. Yes, he was the man; had Cotsworth chanced to run across him in town.

"No; but he's here, and he'll be at that meeting," was the reply. Horace, in explanation, hastily sketched the accident.

"And Hod's here trying to find them—they came down here to brush up before going to the grounds, I presume," interposed Bernard, "and he's awfully anxious to pay the bill, Joe." Something in this remark suggested to Cotsworth the feminine members of the Grady family. He blurted out:

"And—yes, I forgot to mention that—his girls will be there too; there's to be some report or other on the social side;" and he appraised Horace's countenance in weighing the result of this announcement. A faint blush told that seed had not been sown on fallow ground.

As the three were chatting in normal tone while the tram to the fairgrounds noiselessly glided through air, the faint murmur of urban industry and sociality set Cotsworth to musing. Suddenly he turned from contemplation of things in the streets below, and remarked to Bernard reminiscently:

"How different is all this from times when I was a young man." He continued: "Rattlety bang! gouge, whang, grind, shriek, moan-horrors! How people stood it as long as they did is a mystery." He was depicting street-car noises of a generation ago.

"Then they began to talk of noiseless things—'we must conquer this calliope-gasp into quietude,' said the proponents of this particular reform—and this is the result." Noiseless autos and trucks seemed to barely touch the comparatively soft resilient paving, as, equipped with front-and-rear automatic repellents whose principle of inter-action was magnetic influence, they dodged and threaded between one another as they flew back and forth on respective missions.

The overhead wheels were slowing down on the tram-rail for the stop at the entrance gate; and as the Frames and Cotsworth emerged from the foot of the elevator the first prominent sound that caught their ears as they crossed the boulevard was the megaphone voice of an automaton standing in front of a tent upon whose side appeared the legend:

"Dummy Ball-Players!!"

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"Ba-a-al match between Blue Caps and Athe-e-enians! Ever-ry man . . . a dum-my! Ever-ry move; twirl; strike; run, in yest'dy's game in Phil-del-fy, *re*-produced egsactly *as* played there! By the *ar*-tists-of-the-Electro-Magnetic Players con-*cern*!" Dropping its voice to the concluding key, it did its peroration:

"P-l-a-y-e-d in nineteen-an-a-hawf minutes-*and* only a quar*ta*! Two-*en*-ty-fi-cents! Cr-*ack* teams o' th' Western Hemisphea! C'm au-u-un *in*! *Get* y'r insp'ration for the hoss races; for th' *fa*-e-ry donce th' nicht!—and-bring-along-the-*pup*pies! We've-non-sonorous *ca*-a-anine dens in-*side*! C-a-i-n-t hear-one-another *bark*!—'n fetch y'v umber-*rel*-lers 'n y'r para*sol*-sois! They'll-come *alive* with the *game!*"

This identical recital was going on at a dozen or more places on the grounds—with the variation by the others that the entertainment was near the entrance, etc. But there was novelty and freshness of variation in each individual automaton's recital.

And the crowds that were entering this super-mammoth tent!

All through the grounds these automatic senechals stood about like real men; occasionally joked with a closer passer-by; and so on.

The game inside the tent was a triumph of science in adapting the real ball-game, through tele-photoplay as initial process, to local reproduction through automatons electro-magnetized, synchronized and "set" each to do its part.

As Cotsworth—who with the Frames had stood listening—was about to leave them, he remarked:

"Something of a talker, isn't he?—and a suggestion, too, of what's going on inside."

"No," said Bernard to Horace's inquiry as to whether he cared to go inside, "let's go on down to the press-club rooms—but here!" he suddenly checked himself, "you needn't consider yourself tied up to me in any way, Hod; you just go where you like; and we'll meet over there—by the way!"—he again diverted in a real exclamatory. "I haven't even informed you of the appointment I've made with those ladies, and I'm ashamed of myself for such density." Bernard looked a trifle abashed. He explained details.

"Assuredly, brother; that's the copper; I'll be glad to go along; and—yes, I'll go with you to the club-room, and then we'll take stock for something further. By the way, I want you to see the exhibition tussle between the California pacer and the dummy sprinter, Bernie. This horse Rondeau has but one rival in the world. Besides, he's as jealous, they say, of that crack sprinter, as all get out. He kicked and struck at it at Chicago the other day

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as they came back to the stand after a heat." Bernard chuckled:

"Yes, I'd like to witness that performance, Hod—at what hour?"

"Three o'clock—and you know that means we must be in the stand by half-past two, or be without seats."

"Agreed," rejoined Bernard.

"One thing more, Bernie. Glad as I'll be to be with you and Flissey and Eleanor, if I *should* run upon the Gradys I might"—

"Oh, yes, the calculation didn't omit that contingency. I said to myself, *if* he don't find her"—and the pleasantry was dramatized in significant exchange of glances.

At the entrance of the club-room quarters, Bernard suggested to Horace that, as he presumed he would not care to linger there while he himself was looking up a party he desired to confer with, the two could each best spend the time until the appointed lunch-hour by pursuing his own bent for pleasure; to which Horace assented; and as he started for another part of the grounds, Bernard entered the club-room, proceeded to the office and inquired for one "Trot" Maynard, of the St. Louis *Courant*. It happened that the office man had seen him go into an adjoining room a moment before. Frame was conducted thence, where Maynard was found, and an introduction followed. Producing a formal letter of introduction from a newspaper attaché whom he had met at the university, Frame explained that the law course he was pursuing embraced the subject of diplomacy; that before returning to his class he much desired to obtain some reliable information regarding the undercurrent of diplomatic relations and policy, as between Russia and Germany, respectively, and the belligerents in the Asiatic War; that he had been referred to him, Maynard, as one who would be able, if willing, to enlighten him in the premises. Maynard, declaring himself agreeable to compliance, proceeded:

"On behalf of the *Courant's* management and, to some extent, its editorial staff, I have had something to do in sifting the news within reach concerning the Eastern War; have been in contact with many press men on the Pacific Coast who are more or less in touch with the people of consequence from Asia. Some of them are here—you know these fairs annually draw many of us together to 'swap lies,' as they say; and in the exchange we receive from them vital news and opinions from the inner sanctum, as it were, of the news-service relating to war issues and international relations growing out of the war.

"This war," he continued, "is becoming portentous—first, of

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course, to Asia; but next in consequence, to all Americas. England, resolved to let her last ship go down rather than lose Hong Kong, refuses to credit persistent predictions that India may slip from her through diplomacy in aid of arms. Speaking of Russia, reliable information credits her with having assured China that, before her government will see the Chinese subjected to what in Petrograd is termed European 'oppression,' Russia will step in—and that she is indifferent as to whether it be British or German oppression—by which they of course mean overrunning, or the partition of, China."

"This is very interesting, sir," said Frame. "But how about our own country?" Maynard's voice dropped low:

"Oh, we're into this war; that's in the eye of fate—as things now look. England—and Germany's believed to be in the background—refuses to give our government specific assurances in response to our virtual demand, based upon our traditional policy and reënforced by the League Declarations, that Chinese integrity must not be overthrown either by a belligerent or through political connivance growing out of belligerency. Moreover, our 'modified suzerainty' over the Philippines is, as you know, threatened by presence in her waters of British troopships. Of course, when independence was accorded the Philippines, our obligation under that suzerainty meant defense against foreign encroachment. Add to all this that warships of various neutrals, including Japan, are in the China Sea, the purport of which is not clear to the public, and the present concern of our government over the situation is naturally great. In the general connection, however, Canada's influence may, in the end, serve to obviate war between us and England."

"Yes," observed Frame, "we know that ever since the European War the Dominion's sentiment has tended toward regarding the United States as a guardian of her rights and liberties. Then again, she is part of that solidarity of conviction, abroad in the Western Hemisphere, that all America is jeopardized when Europe seeks to dominate the Orient." He then inquired as to what was the understood motive of Japan in assembling a fleet in the China Sea. Maynard replied:

"She is naturally jealous of England's prestige in the Orient. And then we know she stands for the principle of 'Asia for the Asiatics.'" Said Frame:

"But in view of England's right to wage war against China, an ally of rebellious India, I am not quite clear as to why our government should regard the situation as such that war between

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this country and England may result unless she gives certain assurances regarding her ultimate military operations in China." Maynard replied:

"The fact is, that question is uppermost in the daily discussion in diplomatic quarters—I can't go further into particulars." He declared that the Pacific Coast press-agents felt that "some spark might be lighted at any moment—League or no League." That as to the state of opinion on the west South American coast:

"I met some press men in New Orleans a few days ago; one from Lima, the other from Santiago de Chile. They agreed that sentiment there is strongly with our government on the question of standing together for all Americas. But opinion there is divided on the necessity for war. German and English interests down there are so connected with the tying up of shipping in a long Oriental struggle, you see. These men are seeking more light as to the diplomatic situation in North America. And while they spoke of the strengthening material as well as political ties between South and North America, they both admitted that European pressure on the Latin Coast is very marked concerning overseas commerce."

Frame, in taking leave of Maynard, expressed warm appreciation of the privilege he had enjoyed in listening to the foregoing disclosures. He sat down in the office and memorandized some heads of this conversation. He then trammed to the music hall, where an assembly were witnessing a tele-film production of an Italian opera that had been presented the previous night in Rome; the instrument being that of a leading manufacturer. Between two acts in the opera he overheard a lady saying to a friend:

"They're to have a special preliminary to the play at the fair-ground theater this evening. Three bands—the Imperial in Berlin, the Garde Republicaine of Paris, and the Royal Grenadiers of London—joining in playing 'America.'"

"And then," said a bystander who had heard this statement, "they're going to fire some guns from Europe—one from Paris wrested from the Germans at Mons, another from London taken from the Turks, another from Rome captured from the Austrians, and so on."

A quaint farmer sitting near by threw up his hands and tittered, then exclaimed: "Yes; you bet!—there won't be a nation, great or small, that had anything to do with the European War, that won't 'celebrate' to-night when the powder begins to burn!"

Frame passed on to the machinery hall. Here a series of inter-related machines were seen, each doing its separate part in the

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process of perfecting and assembling the pieces entering into a variety of products in the output of an iron manufacturing concern; some half-dozen sub-units, devoted to as many different departments of manufacturing, covered other floor spaces; each and all started, stopped and regulated automatically, even to a demand for more power here, less there, an impending breakdown yonder, and so on.

At one of these units the "Bakery Factory" of a prominent exhibitor was established. As Frame passed by the crowd assembled in front of a restaurant whose supplies came from this "factory," and where orders were being taken from both men and women by automatons, one of the latter who appeared to be a kind of sentinel exercising general oversight of the audience, called out:

"Ladies and gentlemen, there's a little too much congestion here for comfort, please to pass on,"—pointing in a direction in which the spaces were freer from congestion. Thus was the presence of electricity in the bodies of the assembled mass put to social service.

Frame stepped along to where another interested gathering was being entertained by an agent of a concern whose product was a device for detecting housebreakers without mistaking such intruder for a member of the family, and for effecting his arrest; the process of "registering in" to the police the marauder, and electrically "holding him in suspense" pending the arrival of the officer, being explained by him.

"It won't kill or seriously injure him," he explained. "But when the cop arrives his man is handed over to him bound hand-and-foot, as it were, since he couldn't fire a shot. Then the officer touches this button and turns off part of the current, disarms the burglar, then touches this one—the 'influence' is wholly withdrawn, and the cop bags his game!" A sinister looking individual in the crowd remarked:

"I'd like to see him arrest or disarm me with his 'device'; I'd 'bag' it with one I'd have with me! We'd see who'd 'neutralize'!"

From the moment when Frame had begun to contemplate the train of mechanisms alluded to, the question of the center of control in this system of automatic inter-action engaged his mind. He now found himself seated opposite a part of one of the sub-units in question. From that of center of control, subconsciousness was now employed in dealing with the subject of the immediate, then of the ultimate, *source* of control. The question thus became refined to one of relative sources of power in the

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power-plant that impelled this whole system of machinery, and in the elements of air and earth. He mused:

"By some imperceptible diversion or waste of power from this plant, air-and-earth forces may be awakened which, in turn, might become a controlling force in opening or closing one of these delicately operating valves that starts or stops this unit—which means the whole series of units! Where, then, is the ultimate source of the potential power thus involved?"

Whether or not this train of inquiry had been started through subconscious awakening of memory to some incident of which Frame had heard or read, is unknowable. Yet this very question of air-and-earth forces, first as a disturbing factor, and later as an element of *control* of electrically driven power plants, was one that was now perplexing electrical engineers and scientists the world over. Frame's consciousness now brought him to this ejaculation:

"If that seat of control is not in the power-plant, it is in the *sun*!"—and an instant later: "it is in—Infinity!"

Frame, suddenly reminded of lapse of time, consulted his time-piece and exclaimed: "By heavens!—nearly one o'clock!"

As he passed the nearest exit en route to the Empire Roost, he recalled that he had seen but two persons in the great hall who seemed to be in superintendency of the machinery, and that neither had been observed to have laid hand to a regulatory appurtenant to the plant.

In crossing the thoroughfare he was attracted to an assembly whose eyes were evidently centered upon something in the center of an incipient ring. Voices were crying:

"Don't let them fight!" "Let 'em alone!" "Police!"

In the circle two combatants stood squared off as if for a determined fisticuff. Heated words were passing:

"I never said I'd wiger ten to one on Rondow agin the iron sprinter"—

"Ye ded!"

"I sayd I'd lay me money again yourn that the pacer don't better one forty three——"

"Ye niver! Tin te wan ye say-ed, on Rondue te win again th' tommyton! I say-ed 'I'll tack ye,' an' thin ye back do-an——"

"S-i-l-e-n-c-e!"—came in an avalanche of tone from a near-by elevated police megaphone station. "Keep back!" Voices were hushed. All eyes turned to the station as there arose therefrom in clear, rich and penetrating tenor notes the opening bar:

"Tim-Finnegan-lived-on-Walker-Sthrate—" and as the refrain

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proceeded the informal auditorium gradually became a hilarious crowd, as the evident purport of this stroke of expediency in police administration dawned upon its consciousness.

The combatants were sparring for an opening as a sequel to a vicious jab at the Englishman by him who was thus following his rejoinder. Moved by the fact that onlookers had ceased to regard the encounter as holding the center of the stage, and feeling the impulse of the familiar song playing upon his sensibilities, the Irishman's head was slightly inclined toward the station while his calm determined gaze was still stolidly upon his adversary.

As the chorus was about to begin, hands at the ringside were patting in unison and feet were tromping earth, keeping time. Some one in the crowd bawled out merrily:

"All hands round! All join in!"—the cue being instantly acted upon by the inner ranks of the congregation. The mass became a jigging bouncing resonance, as they joined in the singing. When the chorus reached

"*Welt*-the-floor-your-trotters-shake!"

—the Irishman had involuntarily, and with that abrupt rising swaying shrug of the shoulders and kink of the neck, body and legs which only a true Hibernian could conceive or execute—become part of the general performance; suddenly letting drop his hands and nodding to the Englishman in recognition of the supervening mirthfulness. The two had now joined hands; and, each putting down an initial foot-pat, they turned and executed a vis-à-vis chassé down the center of the ring; then, letting go of hands, they reversed and chasséd back; each executing special cuts, swings and poses which in turn became the general center of attraction. As the two now faced each other to begin another evolution, Patrick in raillery cried out:

"Tin te wan, Chairley, th' *shindig* bates wan forty t'ree!"—

"Me eye on it, Patsy!" returned "Charley" in like spirit; and the two saluted amid a thunder of shouts from the encircling multitude, as the phonograph now rose high in an orchestral to the tune——

"We won't go home till morning!" to which sentiment Patrick responded by:

"We'll not, Chairley!"—and, in undertone: "but ye'll c'm un-dher th' the-ater an' tack a swally wid me—tin te *wan* ye will!"

"I *tike* y'er wiger, Patsy!" mellowly responded the other, as the two strode merrily away arm-in-arm.

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CHAPTER XVI

FRAME hurried on toward the Roost, chuckling over the quaint scene on the thoroughfare, and soon entered the gentlemen's waiting room at the base. A brief search brought him in contact with Horace, who was waiting. Said Horace banteringly:

"What will these women say of a young man who forgets them till the last minute——"

"You found the Gradys?" interrupted Bernard, as the two strode across the lobby to the washroom.

"How'd you know?" demanded Horace.

"By your looks—and by that air of banter," was the reply.

As they were now proceeding toward the ladies' waiting room across the hallway, Horace spoke:

"Better let me out of this early in the game, Bernie. After we've had a nice round of something, I'll suddenly remember that there's a bill to settle with a German." A smirk and a nod from Bernard met Horace's eye as the brothers entered the feminine quarters. The two ladies, who were seated on the opposite side of the room, at once espied the men; and Miss Kiteler sprang to her feet, waved her handkerchief and exclaimed to Flissey:

"Here they come—and they're right on time!" The two parties met and were saluting, when Bernard remarked:

"Pardon us, ladies, for being a little late, but I was suddenly drafted into the local police force in arresting two would-be pugilists over on the boulevard a moment ago;"—and he briefly narrated the circumstances. As merriment over this incident was waning, Horace suddenly became the center of interest as he began to narrate something of which he had learned that was "more sensational than that scrap," he declared:

"A sneak thief over on 'The Avalanche' was caught pilfering from a till; in the same instant he was 'caught' by a flash-photo; an air-cop swings down in response to an automatic signal to nab him, but the thief flings a 'current' at him just as he himself was becoming affected by some automatic charge. This 'current' throws the cop out of his car and releases the thief from the 'charge'; the

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thief jumps in and shoots into the air—but another cop from below flashes to a 'sky-scraper' higher up, who flashes a heavier current down to stop the flight of the thief; this causes the car to drop down with the thief, who is nabbed by the ground-cop, who says 'See yourself,' pointing out to the thief his self-mounted photo that was staring its original in the face. Thief says 'That's me all right, and here's your money'; and as he waves his hand to the crowd while the two policemen are grabbing him, he sings out in the courteous air of the troubadour:

"'My start in life was low,
My soar was quick and high,
My collapse was not slow,
My fate it is to sigh!'—

and the crowd went wild in spite of themselves!" ended the narrator.

"That *is* a better story than your brother told, its ending is so poetic!" exclaimed Flissey hilariously! and Horace was unanimously accorded the palm.

The party now ascended. As they were seated at a lunch table in the great elevated restaurant studying bills of fare, some one cried out:

"See them. Here they come!" The Roost Orchestra had ceased playing.

Far over the western horizon appeared a nebulous mass of specks against the sky. As it rapidly grew larger and its units became more distinct, it loomed big toward the upper sky as what was now seen to be an aërial procession came sweeping over the head of the Roost; while the canopy stretched above its head suddenly collapsed around the tall central standard—and the big umbrella had closed.

Now emerged from this towering masthead a maze of white yet subdued light, that spread far around a halo of softest brilliance. The outer world seemed twilight. The aërial visitors were now seen circling above. The orchestral band-master, from the end of whose baton sparkled a diminutive ball of intense electric light, began to beat time, as there came from the throats and strings of the instruments an acclaim that awakened, inspired and charmed the ears of the now increased throng on the Roost—and upon the grounds far below.

Listen! From far above, and in response to the strains of welcome from the orchestra, came in seeming celestial notes from

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the long slender trumpets sounded by the encircling sprites, the succeeding measure of the symphony.

Thus were the Midday Hours ushered in through flight hence of the Spirits of the Western Wind! It was a private function of the Empire Roost. Now, as these symphonic alternations continued, the leader of the aërial band was seen soaring at the outside of the circle; now with reversal of the movement she would be conducting the threading file into the interior; from which point in turn she would rise and the whole concourse be wafted upward in a constantly elongating spiral—from whose apex she would suddenly dart downward through the center and initiate a new maneuver of the procession.

Then at the finale the aërials sank into and encircled the plane of the Roost floor. As the attenuated circle became complete, Euterpe as leader began the reverse movement ended in resumption of the upper area; from whence the cavalcade headed homeward and disappeared in the remote somewhere from which it had come to enchant the earth-dwellers, to the farewell strains of the orchestra; the illuminant at the masthead died out, and midday now seemed a strange degree of relative darkness—a cast of canny spirituality that hinted of the Arabian Nights! The white wings of the canopy again lifted their protecting shades, the orchestra resumed its normal program, and the delighted party from Tromple Shades betook themselves to the pleasures of inner refreshment.

"Ladies," said Horace, after the initial phase of the lunching was ended, "I find it necessary to beg to be excused at this time—much to my regret, I assure you; for, to remain in your company to the end of the luncheon would be extremely delightful; but I should explain that circumstances have arisen since we met this morning, that I had not anticipated——"

The ladies readily deferred, expressing their great enjoyment of his presence thus far; and as he bowed himself out of the company's presence Bernard acquiesced, remarking in matter-of-fact tone that he presumed his brother's departure might have some relation to the accident of the morning—and there was another exchange of glances between them, the purport of which was not clear to the ladies. Bernard at once diverted to the subject of their forenoon's experience; and this brought from Flissey an enthusiastic reference to an ejoyable feature of her and Miss Kiteler's visit to the chorus room of the music hall at noon:

"Madame Kratowski in Moscow sang to a beautiful cornet accompaniment one of Russia's patriotic airs."

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"Yes," said Miss Kiteler, "and after it was received by wireless in Chicago, our own nightingale, Miss Oliphant, sang back to her at Moscow 'The Air Zouaves' by way of return compliment."

"And you should have heard the applause, Mr. Frame," said Flissey. "Of course you know this piece was composed in honor of the Twelfth Zouaves of Oregon, who made that daring air-descent upon Tokio after rising from the deck of the *Kansas* before she had reached the harbor——"

"Yes," replied Frame, "in the little brush we had with the Japs when we made our 'demonstration' to enforce our attitude upon the Chinese question. But this applause from Moscow, of which you speak, is interesting indeed. Yet, we're on such good terms with Russia that I suppose they, in their appreciation of music from any source and upon any theme, are apt to conveniently forget that international complications may be wrapped up in patriotic airs."

"And that reminds me," rejoined Flissey, "of the remarkable development of Russia toward becoming the musical center of the Old World. It's so often remarked nowadays that Berlin and Vienna are becoming less popular in that respect, in comparison with Moscow."

"Oh, Russia has the passion!" exclaimed Miss Kiteler in ardent spirit. "How I'd like to join that annual air-tour from Seattle to Russia next year! I do so want to see Russia."

As Frame was escorting the ladies to the elevator for a descent to the Roost base, he replied to Flissey's inquiry as to when he expected to return to the University:

"I shall go next week. I wish to meet and confer with two or three classmates concerning some special work in which we are associated, before the law term opens."

After the party had emerged into the waiting room, Miss Kiteler, after cordially thanking Frame for the pleasure she had experienced, extended her hand for a parting salute, remarking that she must now go and meet a lady friend who was waiting for her in the rest-room, and who would soon go with Miss Loor and herself to the social-civics quarters; and bidding him good-by, she left him and Flissey standing together.

Miss Kiteler was wholly oblivious of the circumstances that had supervened between them after their first real acquaintance-ship had begun in the orchard. But she had learned of his having visited the Loor home during the present summer. And she had to-day observed certain subtle manifestations that remotely ap-

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prised her of a mutual regard between these friends which, she thought, might be of more than ordinary significance. On his part a certain reticence combined with solicitude, toward Flissey; and an indefinable reserve on her part in his presence—these had not been without effect in instinctively leading her to leave her friends by themselves in the waiting room.

Expressions of mutual pleasure in connection with the lunching were being exchanged; the fact that this would probably be their last meeting prior to Frame's return to his law course being mentioned as rendering the present experience more privileged.

Flissey had cast her eyes upon the floor. To each came consciousness of some subtle intelligence common to both. She was again contemplating his future—his life's mission. She seemed quietly rejoiced.

Suddenly Frame turned his head away. A welling internal struggle was being held in check. To him it seemed some insistent force seeking to undermine resolve. He turned again to Flissey, extending his hand somewhat abruptly, before their eyes met, and said with an air of bravery that revealed to her now uplifted gaze a restraint victor over—something!

"Good-by, Miss Loor."

Eyes again searched souls; telling what words could not—and somehow, explaining worlds!

"Good-by." A spiritual calmness shone in her eyes; yet a deeper light—of submissiveness. He raised his hat; clasped hands relaxed—and he was gone.

As he caught a tram and sped on to the racecourse, his present quest seemed mockery. He still lived in her presence; longed to again search her soul!

As he neared the main ticket booth—the appointed place of his meeting with Horace—after alighting, the latter, who saw and hurried up to him, said:

"Bernie, I'm sorry—for your sake, I mean—that I must ask you to let me off on this racing program—for I've other matters——" Bernard, with a mild grin, interposed:

"Oh, you're excused—and she's waiting, so go right along—I'll enjoy this racing, by myself—in *one* way more than if you were present—understand?" Horace understood; and as he was turning to go Bernard remindingly inquired when and where they should meet when ready to leave the grounds.

"Why—*on* the grounds, did you say?—we'll meet out there at that garage, your royal density——" Bernard's hands were

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up as if in surprise at his own want of comprehension, as he exclaimed:

"Of course!—and—about when?"

"Oh—when we arrive—say half-past six o'clock——" and Horace was off. Bernard purchased a ticket and hurried into the grand stand, where he with difficulty found a seat well back. They were scoring up for the three-year-old trotting race—remnant of yesterday's program; there being four entries.

Under the rules, uneven scoring with the pole nag—meaning that the latter must not forge ahead—resulted in displacement penalties. No jockeying there to upset a contestant's temperament, or to gain time in toning down to temperament one's own entry—a summary rule, and infringement meant being ruled out. A "shadow" auto went round inside of the track to observe behavior of drivers and to report infractions of other rules. The four contestants were coming for the second score—the first one observed by Frame. The sulkeys seemed to him some fancy soil pulverizer trailing far behind four motive powers.

A one-wheeled rig: so hung that manipulation of wheel on its curved axle was effected partly by impulse toward a lateral swing, partly by skillful movements of the driver in shifting his body upon one, then another of two levers extending respectively from outer edges of the seat downward to corresponding ends of the wheel-hub; thus sliding the hub on to the curved part of the axle; the bearing-points of the hub being confined to contact of the ball-bearings at its extremities. Enlargement of the intervening core of the hub to its center permitted free revolution upon the curved axle; the general conformity of wheel to axle being preserved by extension-and-contraction guide-bars extending from the hub-ends upward to the sulkey frame, where they terminated in ball-and-socket joints. The purpose of this arrangement was to lessen friction, and to insure that, in rounding curves and threading between contestants on either side, the wheel should describe such a curve as that the weight of the driver always impinged directly upon the wheel and in line with its plane; thus preventing lateral swerving. This sulkey could not be upset; and collisions were theoretically impossible; while long shafts placed the wheel beyond reach of the backswing of the animal's hoofs.

But woe to the driver who had not duly "trained" his wheel!

The horses were without bridle-bits; being guided by reins ending in strong nose-pieces fitted to the animal's muzzle and passing through rings some two feet apart attached to the saddle. Nor

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were whips carried. In the jockey parlance of the day, drivers "took the bits in their own mouths"; which meant that what they lacked from discard of the old bitting plan—now regarded as a cruel appliance—they must make up through superior will-and-tone-power in "conversing" with their entries. The racers' shoes—a patented material—combined endurance with reactive resilience; were adjusted without nails; all resulting in prolonged turf-endurance and increased speed.

The filly "Margaret" having won this race in two straight heats, the turf event of the entire fair-week was now announced in the appearance of Rondeau, the unrivaled pacer, and the "Iron Chancellor"; the manipulator of this famous automaton having facetiously proclaimed that his imperial chancellorship was "in good form" to-day.

Waiving details of internal mechanism, the process of motive power in this automatic competitor was simply that of ethereal transmission of electric energy from a given base, applied in steering and balancing the mechanical sprinter.

A "habit" of the automaton, practiced on several previous occasions, of stepping up and patting its competitor's nose at the judges' stand, had been forbidden exercise in future; since annoyance of the horse as well as strangely "hoodooing" private betting, were among the grounds of objection. But the pacer's owner had vigorously protested upon another ground—it had, he averred, through its touch, measurably unnerved the animal for the coming contest; this claim being resisted by the "Chancellor's" proprietor, who insisted that in this magnetic exchange the automaton had gotten the worst of it—that the animal's magnetism, thus communicated, had caused a degree of erratic "behavior" of the machine. So by mutual agreement the practice was ended. But a resulting mystery developed through the claim, advanced by favorites of the "live" racers, that the automaton's manipulator could charge his implement with surplus energy which could in turn be transmitted from it, through the same source of manipulation, to the "live" racing competitor, to his or her nerve-detriment. Hence the rule that it must not, even on curves, approach to within less than twenty-five feet of the animal.

The real difficulty in controlling the machine, lay in so applying and modifying energy, acting upon inertia and momentum, as to "keep it on its feet"—a skill developed through long, persistent and patient practice.

Rondeau was mincing along near the pole for the turn to score-

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up. The "Chancellor" saluted the judges and the grand stand, turned a handspring as it headed for the stretch, jogged up opposite the pacer; and as the two came down the "go" was given—the unique race, witnessed by seventy-five thousand people, was on.

The manipulator's base was in an airal circling within a certain central area while constantly facing the "Chancellor."

Until the competitors were well toward the end of the back stretch the iron champion was some distance behind the pacer—a tactical mechanical expedient. Occasionally it super-swayed forward; then—as if some counterbalancing principle were operative—it would seem to incline too far rearward; at times again, a marked lateral swaying. Thus it was the top seeking counterpoise between head and foot—only we realize there were two members to its "point," rendering the process of counterpoise more difficult; so ran popular comment. However, arm-action tended greatly to overcome this difficulty; its almost human instinct seeming to now and again thrust out one or both arms just in the nick of time.

Rondeau's driver urged on the pacer to increase the lead—knowing that if the manipulator brought his sprinter round the turn without loss of time, to "square itself" for the final spurt down home stretch, the chances of the pacer winning the heat would be lessened; since it usually transpired that the "behavior" over the final spin climaxed its heat performance. In fine: two crises, one in rounding the first, another and crucial at the second, turn, were involved; that is: The climax in dominance of manipulator over phases of "behavior" came at the home stretch—*provided,* that no material misstep had occurred meanwhile. *There* was the rub!

In a word: The racer was he who spun the top. He *was* the top! Could *he* run—balance himself? And at heat's end, he was the only "tired" factor!

Now appeared the white nose of Rondeau around the back turn. The animal had as yet made but one slight "skip." He seemed under perfect control—his speed justifying the now rising roar of voices in acclaim.

The automaton, twenty paces behind, was describing a beautiful enlarged curve as it strode round the turn—the airal had quietly "dropped anchor" near the judges' stand and was "settling down" to urge the "Chancellor" home! How it obeys!—it forges ahead—those strange staccato tattoos on resounding turf; head rising, breast fronting out as stalwart athlete winging to goal—arms in fury of action matching the striding legs—it careens not, leans not——

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"Good God!"—from pacer's driver, looking back, "it's right on me!"—again that low, now imperative voice—order and warning—to Rondeau!—his herculean response is pedigree backed by resolve!—he flies along unheard—engulfed in thunderings from benches and packed banks now lost in delirium of surprise—for the wire is here—and "Chancellor" rushes by flinging up its arms as in victory—and victor by a foot!

Retracing its course to the judges' stand after slowing down, the puffing pacer alongside, it makes no demonstration—save that of obvious enormous, innate, unused power! The manipulator, whose assistant enters the grounded airal as he emerges, steps out upon the track; the automaton grasps the hand of its master in congratulation; the two walk arm-in-arm amid ever-deepening deafening and renewed applause, by the grand stand—judges' bell jangling for order out of chaos! Finally the announcer points to the time-placard—such tremendous deepening of pandemonium as is now sensed as the figures "strike in!" He nerves himself for the megaphone recital:

*"I-i-i-*ron *Chan*cell*or"*—another terrific uproar—he imperatively waves silence; there comes a lull:

*"C-h-a-n*cell*or* w-i-n-s the *heat!* Time: One forty-one and a *half!"*—he has heralded the fastest heat ever paced upon the American turf! For long since turf authorities had acknowledged that an automaton that could sprint a mile in contest with a very fast pacer or trotter, should hold the time record thus made, and the money thereby won.

The second heat—following an air-battle between two war-planes, which filled a brief interim—was won by Rondeau; whose time was not complimentary. The "Chancellor" too had performed erratically at the second turn, nearly placing it beyond masterful control; it being then neck-and-neck with the pacer.

The new time-record made in the first heat had resulted in so increasing the masses at the race-track, that the police were overtaxed in keeping the crowd within limits and in patrolling the air-lanes to prevent disturbance of the "Chancellor's" manipulator during what might prove to be the last heat; for thousands were swarming in from downtown and the country round.

As this heat was being called, an excited controversy before the judges' stand was proceeding. It transpired that the disputants were Rondeau's owner and the proprietor of the automaton.

"I won't leave this track until this matter is settled!" declared the pacer's owner in response to an order from the stand to "clear the race-track"; and he appealed to the judges. "I am

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agreeable to that," responded "Chancellor's" representative. This was the point—developed from the "contact theory":

In order to induce "Chancellor's" proprietor to enter into the contract for these racings, the pacer's owner had agreed that the sprinter's heat-time should become a binding record for Rondeau, in heats in which the former was winner. But the question whether an automaton could thus "make" a record for a "live" competitor, even under such a contract as this, had not been determined by the courts. Moreover, Rondeau's owner was secretly concerned lest the automaton would make still better time in the coming heat; while his driver believed that the theoretical "influence," already alluded to, had been exercised during the second heat—thus, it was averred, putting the horse out of proper form. Rondeau's owner therefore insisted that the sprinter be kept not less than thirty feet away from the pacer. In response the machine's proprietor declared there was no "manipulation":

"And it isn't provable. My belief is that it will be far easier to prove that my implement is unfavorably sensitized by coming into proximity to a 'live' racer." He would stand upon his contract. Cries of "Baby, baby," "Take your medicine, Rondeau," were heard. The announcing judge declared there would be no new rule imposed; and the contestants went on for the score-up.

The remarkable burst of speed following the send-off, which sent the sprinter into the back stretch at a pace that left the horse some fifty paces in the rear at the turn into home stretch, was more astonishing in that Rondeau too was doing himself credit, and seemed well in hand.

On came the automaton—slightly increasing its already long lead. Then came a sensation.

The "Chancellor" had suddenly slowed down—and stopped!—*it stood still,* save from slightly swinging its arms!—a kind of chill of horror starked the staring multitudes. What could it mean!

On came Rondeau at his speediest pace of the race. "It's a walkover now for the pacer!" was the common thought—he closes on the still stationary implement!—but it inclines forward—is off again—the pacer leaps ahead—still gains—but now that loud staccato again thrills hearts of onlookers—wide-eyed they gape and gasp, as they behold the incredible!—it forges up even—they are neck-and-neck!—*such* a spurt by "Chancellor"—its lead lengthens! —but heavens!—*it turns about,* looks across to Rondeau—throws up its hands and *backs under the wire* at full speed!

Pandemonium, unknowing of what has happened, is bewildered

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by doubt, fear of chicanery—anything credible to account for the impossible!—while the sprinter, forging backward at its pace, quickly curves forward, teeters spring-like on its legs, crouches low—and throwing its arms upward as with a mighty spring skyward it turns a back somersault and lands safely—there it stands!—arms and legs extended in counter-balance.

Attitude of Ajax! Members rigid, head inclined to earth as in obedience to some colossal will whose utmost decree it has dutifully obeyed!

And fury of noise!—increased by contributions from every available instrument in frantic hands, as placard and megaphone made known that the first heat had been bettered!—it seemed that every noise that ever was at beck of man was reawakened, as the fact that after stopping still on the stretch for the pacer to come up, "Iron Chancellor" had bested him by backing under the wire in one forty-one flat was heralded to eighty thousand souls within megaphone-sound, and to a waiting audience of hundreds of millions in both Americas and over seas!

Soon after this announcement the judges came upon the track, jointly held aloft their arms in an effort to attract the vast concourse, as the big phonograph on the grand stand shouted:

"S-i-i-i-ilence! . . . The *world* is holding its breath! H-a-r-k! *America* wants to f-i-r-e a *volley* in h-o-n-o-r of I-i-iron *Chan*cel-lor! T-h-r-e-e *shots* from H-a-m-p-t-o-n *Roads!* T-h-r-e-e from S-e-e-e*at*tle! T-h-r-e-e from *P-a-a-anama! H-a-a-ark,* while the *judges* flash the *signals* for e-e-each dis*charge!*"

Hearkening ears attest silence more eloquent of portent than all air-rending—the instant tribute of Nation to local feat of Science!

Down goes the electric ball blazing at the end of the judge's baton at his stand:

"Hampton Roads!"—Boom—boom—boom! Up again—down:

"Seattle!"—Boom—boom—boom! Again:

"Panama!"—Boom—boom—boom!

Wand is flourished in farewell to the enmassed thousands—and Thursday's racing program is ended.

And Frame, borne on by the surging mass now descending from the grand stand amid enlivening strains of "America" played by the band, is bewildered in maze of ideas of country, of law, of science—and of love!

Slowly moving with the crowd out into a near-by thoroughfare, he made his way to an elevator to catch a down-town tram—it was

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so crowded that he ascended to the airal-roost, where he took a public air-bus.

As the bus floated from its mooring, Frame caught sight of the "Sunset Circle" careering slowly in the upper air, in a garland of angelic forms gradually soaring westward, crowning the waning day. In succession, as the member of the encircling procession reached the western rim of the circuit, she swayed slightly out of line, bowing majestically to the solar disk, paying tribute to the Sunset Hour, then gently veering back into line; each holding a silken flag; garments and flags presenting variant types. Fealty and Gratitude were characteristics of this demonstration. At seven-thirty would appear the "Harbingers of Night"; when sable garbs and electric-bejeweled coronets would supplement the dazzling whiteness of the "Circle" raiment, and Majesty and Silence would preside.

As the leader of this now far procession was spiraling downward in formation of the cornucopia soon to symbolize the vanishment of this function, Frame's imagination was spiritually picturing Miss Loor—"just as she would speak—and look," were she present. Then he thought:

"And Miss Brodein: would she make any comment?"—he seemed to see her speechless—just as *she* would look—into an eternity!

As Frame descended to the walk from a down-town bus-roost and stepped up to a news stand, casting his eyes upon the news-tablet, he saw flashing the headlines:

"Continental Powers in Conference. England's Hands being Forced. Uncle Sam Anxious."

A group of people stood by canvassing the "situation."

"Forcing England's hands!" ejaculated a bystander. "How are they going to force her to keep out of China? She's got to invade the country."

"Yes; or make terms with India," replied another. "*That's* the real purpose of this conference. In substance it means: 'Grant independence to India'—or 'quasi-independence,' as they term it, if they will accept it. Her arms favored by world-sentiment will ultimately prevail, why keep all Asia under fire and sword for years to come?"

"And as for Uncle Sam," said a third, "the nowadays faint cry of 'entangling alliances' will not avail. We'll have to take a hand in helping to 'untangle alliances' that are jeopardizing America more and more in the Orient."

Frame, who had eagerly listened to this colloquy at the news

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stand, was now taking a tram out to "the Dutchman's," as he mentally termed the suburban garage. A man at his elbow remarked:

"Seems to me—begging your pardon, sir—seems to me I saw you out there on the racing stand——" Bernard was scanning the stranger——

"Some one—and he looked just like you—jumped up right in front of me and said 'Oh!' just as this 'Chancellor' dummy went head over heels at the end of that last heat——"

"Well, maybe I am the man—I recall distinctly that I was beside myself—didn't at all comprehend what had happened——"

"I saw you didn't—yes, you're the fellow sure enough—I had to laugh at you, too; but you see, I've followed this attraction all over the country, and so was expecting something erratic——"

"Why, I'm glad to meet a man who has had such an opportunity to study this automaton—and its manipulator, too," rejoined Frame with increasing interest. "What do you think of this 'contact theory,' that I heard discussed——"

"Well, I know nothing more about it than anybody else in the crowd," replied the stranger. "But I've heard said, that this manipulator is what they used to call a 'psychrometer'—a sort of 'medium' between mortals; and that he's gone farther; that he can and does commune with the sub-conscious ego of this pacer Rondeau, ascertains how much nervous energy he 'manifests' while they are scoring up, and that he deliberately 'feeds' both the dummy and the live racer with electro-magnetic dope—the dummy in the strictly mechanical way, and the pacer in some process of 'doctoring' him *through* the dummy;—and there you have it!" He went on to relate that, through experts who were daily watching this manipulator, Rondeau's owner was said to be laying the basis for an injunction against "handling" of the dummy by this manipulator on a certain day; that they hoped to prove that Rondeau had been "sensitized," to the advantage of the "Chancellor."

"But, who's going to take this man's place in the airal in such an event?" queried Frame. The stranger was waving a good-by as he responded:

"A substitute who's up there much of the time 'taking lessons,' they say—another 'horse-reader,' "—and he was gone.

"Suppose," Frame was musing as he neared destination, "he turns out to be able to 'handle' the dummy as well or better than his tutor—where will this land the controversy?"

As he came down from the tram station opposite the garage, I

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watch registered just past six o'clock. He sat down upon a waiting bench to collect his thoughts after the day's experience; but soon fell to scanning the newspaper.

At the other end of the bench sat a little woman holding a wailing child. She looked nervous and worn. The child was feverishly fretful and seemed incorrigibly averse to being comforted. In spite of its mother's half-soothing, half-impatient pleading, the little one was angrily sobbing—at times its cries became mournful, almost agonizing. Frame had edged about and was regarding the lady as she now paced back and forth in front of the bench, swaying her body as a rocker as she murmured low into the child's ear. As she approached Frame she in explanation and apology remarked:

"My child I think is sick, sir—she never acts this way when she's well; of course she's tired; but——"

Frame had risen from the seat as she began to speak. Sudden solicitude for mother and child.

"Let me see if I can soothe her, madam," he said, extending his hands toward the child and looking into the mother's eyes assuringly. "I fancy she'll let me try to assist in quieting her, and incidentally it will relieve yourself a trifle while I'm waiting."

The woman gave Frame a searching look; then came over her countenance a wan but grateful smile. She thanked him—was almost ashamed to trouble him in such a way, but if he thought——

Frame had now gently laid hands upon the babe, his eyes lighting up in studied attempt to assure it of his friendship; the mother soothingly handing her over to him, exclaiming:

"See the nice man!—he wants to take you!" Frame's voice and look was reassuring; the child readily submitted; while the mother sank back upon the bench and lovingly looked up into her babe's eyes as she seemed to fall under the charm of her strange keeper of the moment.

He was gently treading the walk, the child's head resting upon his shoulder. Into her ear he began to whisper of the birdies up in the tree-tops—of the little fishes in the tiny brook, and so on; alternating these fairy glints with a low musical hum; all to the mollification of the really unwell wardlet. The mother was assuring him of his success in quieting the child, as he was suddenly attracted by some one crossing near by. The lady had ceased speaking and had turned her head in the direction in which he was looking. As she did so the German—for it was Schwitz—was throwing up his hands as he veered from his course toward the garage and vigorously stepped toward Frame, exclaiming:

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"V-e-e-ell, I neffer!—yoo god a ba-e-by—und a vrau! I taudt voo voz a leedle young veller mit *no* vrau, und no chi-uldt!——" he had now come up to Frame——

"Vell, I gon-gred-gelade mine young vrendt—und ees vrau do," he continued, eagerly reaching for Frame's hand, as he at the same time looked over at the woman, giving her a grinning broad smile accompanied by a bow in recognition of the honor he imagined he had in greeting Frame's wife. Then, suddenly recalling the events of the morning—and taken aback by Frame's sudden withdrawal of his hand, he ejaculated, his eyes widening and rolling in bewildering surprise:

"I nud onnershtandt—vere *vos* ze ba-e-by, und ze vrau, ven ze omminyblane vos hid by ze odder von dis morun-in—I em zo gla-id zhe vos nud in dod omminyblane—zo zhe nud gid zmesh onder eem!—und ze ba-e-by, dod ba-e-by, he ezhgape vrom ze egzedendt, do——!"

"He's not my husband, sir," hastily yet timidly interposed the lady——

"I'm as much a stranger to this lady as you are, sir," as hastily fell from Frame's lips. "I'm waiting here for my brother to arrive, and I'm trying to quiet this sick child for her—*her* child."

"O-o-o-o-oh!" ejaculated Schwitz, lifting and spreading his hands as his eyes again bulged, his voice gliding from a low to a squeaky high note and reverse. Then he melted into a low chuckling gleesomeness as his bulky body became tremulous with mirth—then as suddenly he broke into violent laughter; his contorted face a reflex of joy mingled with shamefacedness, his slightly wagging head thrown down as if to hide his face from view, while he again elevated his hands:

"He—he!—I vos *zo* gla-id I didun shpeag *oud*—he—he!—I yusdt vos pe-*gin* do zay dod chi-uldt vavored ze *vad*-der!—he—he!—I—egs-*guze,* me vrendts, I zhould a known *bed*der, bud I yusdt——" and down went his hands again as he shut his eyes to exclude unwelcome possibilities.

The ridiculousness of the situation had dawned upon both parties at the bench. Frame, who had stood facing this exhibition—the babe's face fronting over his shoulder toward her mother, so that the German could not have seen its countenance—now turned about and was walking toward the mother to return to her the child; each smiling significantly into the other's face as the exchange was made; while thankfulness beamed over that of the mother.

"Vell, I *nef*fer!" Schwitz was again heard ejaculating; and

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as Frame suddenly reversed himself to face the speaker—and so was seen standing by the now erect lady—the child upon her arm and between the two, as the trio faced the German——

"Oh, *vod* a mish-*da*-ek voz dod I voz ma-eg ven I pe-*gin* do zay dod chi-uldt voz *va*-vored *ze vad*-der!—egs-*guze* me, vrendts, ze ba-e-by, he loog no mo-er like *ze vad*-der zan he loog—like von bolony *zaw*-sazh—he—he!"—then, after recovering from another paroxysm:

"Dod chi-uldt voz—he loog yusthd *li*-eg *ze mod*-der. I can *neffer* know *ze dif*-verundt!"

Both lady and Frame were snickering; the child gazing wild-eyed at the dark apparition who was executing a pantomime—could it be a mighty black doll that could talk and wiggle every which way!

"Vell, agen yoo vill egs-guze me—I vos grossin ofer ze ro-ud do mine ger-r-razh—gootpy-e, venefer yoo gome ofer vor ze omminyblane, I um ur-reddy."

The lady sank upon the bench like a shot and, covering her eyes with her hand, gave vent to a suppressed scream of laughter; then dodged Frame's eyes and shied her head, belching forth again; he was quietly shaking with unrestrained mirth—all sense of delicacy being swallowed up in that of the grotesquely absurd exhibition itself. Then he sat down and briefly related to her the incidents of the morning with which the "Dutchman" had been connected, concluding with:

"So you see I was not wholly unprepared for this second part of the entertainment!" The lady—who had been waiting for a suburban cross-country tram—now hurriedly exchanged parting greetings with Frame, adding in high glee:

"I would almost feel like coming out here again if your 'Dutchman' would happen along and give us another turn at vaudeville, sir"—and her joyous laugh rang out as she disappeared. . . .

Frame had crossed to the garage, ascertained that both airals were in fact repaired; had returned to the tram station, had waited again for Horace's arrival, and now was again in the little office in the garage, where Schwitz was at last resting and himself awaiting the coming of those who would settle for repairs. The latter saw that Frame was becoming somewhat concerned over the non-arrival of his brother. In short the German showed signs of doubt as to whether "ze odder brodder" would or not shortly appear and close the transactions.

"Mebbe ee meed mid annodder egzedendt?" Frame thought not—that something else had delayed him; his response seemed

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to the German to convey a slight vexation of spirit, and some undefined doubt. Moreover, Frame's eyes had shifted from Schwitz to the street and vice versa, several times while they were conversing. In truth: Schwitz was becoming convinced of a disposition on Frame's part to prevaricate concerning his brother's domestic status, as also regarding his belief as to the cause of the brother's continued absence, while Frame had really become rather surfeited with the Dutchman's incredible morning and evening performances as sources of merriment, and was inwardly hoping that he and those who were to arrive had seen the last of such antics.

"He vos *nod* mar-rit—no-u?" Oh no; his brother was, like himself, single. These suggestions in turn brought to Frame's countenance some ludicrous smiles, dominated by inspiriting anticipation of narration on his part to Horace when the two again should meet; to the observing German this meant half-confession by Frame that something *had* happened to the brother, or that the latter was indeed a married man and that Frame was facetiously seeking to deceive him—an impression emphasized by a still lingering delusion that Bernard was a husband, denials notwithstanding. Then, Frame's face suddenly becoming more serious, this aspect was taken as a filibuster to mask previous deceit.

Frame was now rising from his seat and proceeding toward the doorway in response to what he believed to be Horace's voice—it was Horace, and beside him a girl; while just behind came the Grady family at large. Frame raised his hat, and Horace was just about to introduce him to Miss Grady when the German, who had followed close upon Bernard's heels, broke forth with:

"V-e-e-e-ell, I neffer!"—then, looking sidewise at Bernard, as surprise and sense of monstrous deceit brought indignation into his face——

"Him *haf* von vrau!—yoo dells me von pad ly-e—oh mine"—shaking his head in protest. Then, suddenly realizing that it should not concern himself if the brother was married, and that apologies and felicitations were now due from him, he stammered out in confrontation of a trio of forbidding frowns:

"Oh, egz-guse me, vrendts—zhe vos a *bu-u-u-u-u*-devul *vife*—oh mine Got zhe vos!" The brothers "tumbled," and burst into laughter—and everybody else followed suit! Almost instantly Horace was saying:

"Miss Grady, this is my brother,"—and as she in utter confusion was shaking hands with Bernard, the German became re-absorbed in a trice. He now "backed water" again:

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"Oh—mine *Got!*—egz-guse me *nud*-der dime, mine vrendts!—I vos nod ri-ed—he nud ly-e do me—zhe vos nod him vrau!—oh, mine Got." A final and grandest explosion followed. . . .

Horace was now escorting Miss Grady to her seat in the Grady plane which, with the other, was headed into the street; he having with celerity managed to settle with the German before her father could interpose to effectually expostulate. He bade herself and the family good-by and wished them a happy soar home; Bernard, standing near, bowing his adieus. Then the brothers leaped into their car; and start was made for the homeward air-lane—the Gradys having preceded them; the hour, seven P. M.

What a prospect now opened to the homebound floaters!

Harvest Moon was in the starry heavens; twilight effects were melting into suggestion of what of color and light had preceded.

The Frames were in the center of a brilliant scintillating far-radiating star; whose myriad rays denoted paths of light that streamed out into infinite space on the ether seas. They were in an endless procession of planes bearing resplendent lights, and banners besprinkled with electric starlets. To rearward appeared a constantly welling-up fountain drift of soft illumination—an ocean of light, alive with enchanting movement! Down the vista of one's own procession-line was illusion of being in midst of expanding fan-wings—countless other processions etched farther and farther away to right and left and beyond—and flanking the beholder in nearer view; while in farther distance others seemed changing from a lateral to a direction more and more the reverse of that in which the observer's procession was moving—the whole crowned by space at the far end of the vista wherein the star-rays were faintest lines slowly moving directly away.

And what resulting phantom did this panorama reveal! A Fairy of the Eve, garbed in softest raiment of light, whose tripping dancing feet bore her in an illusive whirl amid whose gyrations she was daintily lifting the folds of her mantle in two grand sweeps draping downward from her uplifted arms!—arms and folds outlined in the masses of laterally-and-semilaterally moving clusters of planes—her head the vista's end! . . .

Hark! . . . It is the theater-program on the fairgrounds. And *this* ahead?—and that and that and that—all round the great circle of this sphere! Dazzling monuments of Light—in front—to right and left; less dazzling as the startling balls in this ring recede toward the fairy's arms—then grow paler as the closing arc seems beyond her!

They are the telepho-crome instruments; with quadruple ex-

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posure—to time, sound, color, light; all pointing toward the star's center to register this miracle of air!

The operator at the station ahead—speaking in unison with the two-score other members of the lens-circle—calls by reënforced megaphone:

"H-a-a-alt! Hark! Hear the foreign bands play! Get a movey-register of the p-a-a-anorama of music, of color, of light!"

To all the halted processions come strains of music through wireless phones at the ears of all. One by one the bands are heard to play as each is announced: London, Paris, Berlin;—finally, the Roman. Then all join with the local theatrical orchestra in playing "America"—then the Italian national air.

"Now h-e-e-ear the guns!"—from the megaphone. In succession—pre-announced—are heard the volleys; conveying impression of long succession of. reverberations—reëchoes from vast peaks in stupendous mountains of the Universe!—guns captured by every one of the European belligerents of the World War.

"R-e-e-egisters of to-night's p-a-a-anorama ready in five minutes! Take 'em home for yourselves—for the darlings there! O-o-one dollar! Salesmen flyaway-to-you in five minutes!"—told the megaphone.

Processions were again slowly under way for a real soar homeward; while from the studios of the aërial operators came salesmen. As Bernard purchased one of the registers, he was remarking to Horace upon how all at home would enjoy this reproduction of the wonderful panorama they had witnessed.

"Yes; this outlook grows on a fellow!" was Horace's enthusiastic response.

"Do you think the effect is more satisfying, now that you've run down that Grady girl?" queried Bernard lightly.

"Not a whit!" was the instant reply. "All the light and color we've seen to-night won't dim by one iota another kind of light, old boy!"—then, in lower tone—they were still in a sea of planers—"darned if it *don't* make a difference"—and the brothers had a quiet chortle; Bernard putting up his hand in deprecating protest.

"Well," he said, "I'm ahead of you on to-day's experience, anyhow."

"How's that?"

"Got married first!"

"W-h-hat?—how—some more of that blasted con-demned Dutchman?"

"Married; had a child—a *sick* child—all within five minutes

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by the watch!" Horace in wild expectation read in Bernard's demure aspect the source of another revelation; ejaculating:

"The scoundrel! Tell me about it?" The detailed exposition followed. Hilarity having subsided, Horace exclaimed:

"After all, it's disgusting—*such* a pig-headed"—he threw up his hand as his face took on a sickening cast. Then came exchanges upon what each had seen on the grounds during the after part of the day; including the "Chancellor" race, the latter part of which both had seen, it now transpired; Bernard's bantering having finally traced Horace and "the Grady girl" to an air-perch near the grand stand. Moreover, all those beautiful air-functions centering in Empire Roost toward nightfall had been enjoyed with his new-found flame. Thus reminiscence browsed through the vari-colored staging of the day's experiences of the brothers; until they began to realize that the procession had become attenuated, the airal making much faster time, and that they were now being guided partly by aid of the moon, partly by occasional aërial landmarks. Meanwhile conversation had ceased; both in reverie.

Bernard's thoughts were of the law school. What of honor would graduation bring? . . . And beyond. Striving for principle—and a central idea; in which psychic faculties seemed to loom large. . . . Would he pursue the quest by himself?—if not, who would be his helpmate? . . . Miss Loor! . . . Miss Brodein. Still beyond!

As he faced the vault of heaven, fair Night seemed solicitous. . . . Superconsciousness peered through ranks of order of the universe; caught a far hint of remote causation. The sun!—mere casual resultant in the universe, but in our system—causation! And the fuel that feeds the endless process of wresting this appearance of order from chaos! A voice from the Fathomless interpreted: Cast the atom of your effort into the consuming flame! Thus only can sun that fructuates be functioned for tomorrow's task. Your reward will be the spark emerging from the crucible!

So was fate read in concave of bespangled firmament.

And when he was aroused by the vigorous jolt of Horace's arm and by his voice that sang out—"Egz-guse me, brother, wake up!—we're here!"—the tremendous mental sweep from worlds beyond back to earth and day's adventure found expression in:

"I um ur-reddy!" The airal sank into the Frame plot—and the brothers were home from the fair. . . .

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CHAPTER XVII

FRAME had ended his law course; his things were packed for the start homeward! and he was strolling in company with his closest and most prized classmate in the campus, gravely conversing upon past, present and future in the general connection.

"I have enjoyed this experience at the law school the more because of my contact with you, Frame," said the friend. With animation Frame responded:

"I was just this moment thinking, Soper, whether I should ever have another friend and co-worker to at all match you." Each then expressed feelingly the aids he had received from the other as life-impressions and as strengthening mutual friendships.

"That thesis of yours—I am obsessed by it, Frame." And Soper prefaced his further comment by stating the title of the thesis: "'Enforcement of International Welfare as Government.' Your comprehension of the subject has greatly impressed me. How to sit down in council, outside of an international tribunal, and effectively solve and end a more or less portentous dispute between nations, and whether it be or not within the principle of an old Hague Agreement, or of the League of Nations—and dispose of it without resorting to either the generally established tribunal as the forum, or to the course of diplomacy." Frame modestly acknowledged this compliment.

"And what most impresses me," Soper continued, "is your theory of a system of special representation of government by trained men, who also command public confidence in such degree as that they may, as appointees to such a council, promptly exercise such power, and be assured also that the obligation imposed by such solution will be executed by the home government."

"And doubtless you have in mind my suggested means of acquiring that confidence?" said Frame.

"Yes; that it shall be earned by the appointee by previous study of and devotion to public welfare, at home and abroad—and which means, as you theorize, a study of the interest and welfare of the foreign nation involved in the dispute; and then too, as I recall, you would especially inculcate in the minds of the people, that

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Soper was cast between groping for comprehension, and a marveling. He was murmuring something: "I think I begin to understand in a new sense——"

There was a commotion upon the campus.

Soon the distinguishing voices of what proved to be a chorus of classmates emerged from the general din—a bevy of marching students were coming toward where Frame and Soper were seated.

"Hello!" shouted the leader, as the sallying spirits approached their two comrades, who were now rising to hail and affiliate, "here's the pair—the Twin Sprigs! Let's give 'em an ovation, fellows."

Some wag among the classmates had long since conceived a doggerel intended as a recognition of and a rallying comment upon the fact—well known in the circle of the law students—that "Framey and Soap" were very chummy—and very much immersed in diplomacy as a joint hobby.

"All right!" responded some one in the ranks, now squared about and fronting the informal hosts, "here goes"—and with uplifted hand the speaker began to count time and the refrain began:

"*If* Jap and the Yank fall out,
Then Framey and Soap fall in,
And stand by the Chinks
And mend all the links—
Then Jap and the Yank fall *in.*
. . . . .
Fall in, fall in,
Their faces saved from chagrin—
Till China's no more
And Ocean's mad roar
Is heard nevermore—*no* m-o-o-o-ore!"

"Well, Frame," observed Soper laconically, when the "ovation" was by common consent deemed ended by the dwindling moan of "m-o-o-o-ore!" "here's hoping that we'll never run up against as tough a knot to invoke the shades of Gordian, as this assembly!"

"We'd have to cut it, sure—'diplomacy' would be hopeless!" chimed in Frame.

"Oh, don't spoil the fine record you've made, chummies," said the leader—"you 'Twin Sprigs'—or we'll cut *you!*—come now, ain't you going to do the handsome?"

Off the whole company started at Frame's beck, as he grasped Soper's arm and, waving an invitation to the jolly classmates,

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joined his chum in escorting the crowd to a neighboring restaurant for refreshments.

The little lunch-spread ended, the graduates were now outside, grouped upon the sidewalk.

"Frame, say something, we want to hear from you," said the leader.

"Yes, Frame, Frame." "Not here—let's adjourn to the tree," said several voices. The "tree" was a nearby corner of the campus in which many a gathering had occurred when hearts were fraternizing and instinct of polemics was astir. An overspreading tree marked the spot—hence the tradition of the locality. Frame's deprecatory gesture in response to the demand for remarks was regarded as merely a deferential mode of acquiescence; the suggestion of an adjournment being the signal for a falling into line and a peremptory marching to the "tree"; Frame and Soper walking side by side in the rear. All save Frame were now seated upon the benches; he standing before this devoted fragment of the law graduates, mentally grouping some thoughts for apt expression.

He began by thanking them for the invitation to say "a few words" to them; referred feelingly to their acquaintanceship during the law course, and wished each of them all of success at the bar which their respective merits deserved. Then he briefly summed his ideas of the lawyer's obligations to himself, his clients, and his country:

"Gentlemen, we can not be true practitioners unless we are first and always true men in life's general affairs. . . . We should seldom come into the courtroom for determination of legal disputes. . . . Our labors should embrace more outside of strict law than within its sanctuary. . . . He is not really a lawyer who fails to search into the rights of his client's adversary. . . . We owe it primarily to our profession to do much that conduces to success of self-government. . . . If government fails, it will be largely because of moral insolvency and consequent fatal indifference of the bar. . . . The greatest, because the most unspectacular and constantly trying warfare of life, is the campaign of peace. Lawyers must be its foremost veterans. . . . Foreign nations are part of our own. Americans must learn for the first time what 'the God of Nations' means. So must other peoples. . . .

"Gentlemen, I thank you. And God bless you and keep you!"

Vigorous handclappings followed, and cheers for "Frame, of the Frame of Mind!"—this couplet had somehow sprung up in

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allusion to his faculty as a student. Then he was "drafted in" as leader in singing "Hymn to the Advocate"; several classmates jostling him to the head of the line, ignoring his reluctance. . . . Then the final handshakes! . . .

"Well, we're all glad that you have graduated at law," said Horace, after heartily greeting Bernard at the tram-station on his return home, "only we're already half in mourning to think that you'll be gone again before we know it, and for good, too, I suppose," he ended with a rueful look.

"That's an inevitable circumstance of life, Horace," replied Bernard as they entered the airal. "There's a parting at the threshold that in a sense breaks, in another sense makes firmer, family ties."

"You've hit the mark! It strengthens them—in more ways than one," was the rejoinder. After certain commonplaces had passed, Horace related that Miss Brodein and the family had returned home from Chicago; that it was reported that she was not to continue with the Boehms; some misunderstanding had come about. Boehm's manager thought she had set up too firmly her ideas of how dramatics should be worked out, and so on.

"That is strange," observed Bernard. "Why should they feel that way toward one who has achieved such marked success as she has realized during the season there?"

"Oh, they say that, behind the scenes, it's jealousy. She's made her mark, you know—it's the old story."

"But jealousy is a common phase of stage life, Horace—it instinctively assails every life that is lived in earnest and that achieves. But her work has dominated the plays at the Athenian, so say the critics. Why should the management permit jealousy to control their policy?"

"I don't know; but they say some one on the force there told Boehm plainly that he or she wouldn't put up any longer with Miss Brodein's dominating ways in the rehearsals, that's one report," said Horace.

"So she is dominating the rehearsals," Bernard was saying musingly.

As they touched the plot in sinking to ground at the Frame farmstead, father and mother stepped briskly forward and eagerly greeted and congratulated the son who had ended his university career; she, leading, sinking upon his breast in motherly embrace, as she in voice visibly affected exclaimed:

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"My son!—and so soon to leave us again!"—and tears came as she gazed half dotingly, half pleadingly into his eyes that looked fondly down upon her.

"Yes," said Julius in wholesome reassuring tone, "I expected this. Meta's been thinking of your admission to the bar, Bernie, as a signal of your permanent departure from home. But we all feel that we know you're going to amount to something when you do get to the bar;—here, shake! I sincerely congratulate you, son, upon your completion of your law course,"—and as father and son grasped hands and frankly faced each other, Bernard seemed somewhat overcome.

"So do I!" exclaimed the mother, again rushing up, and now clasping his arm in her hands, then bringing them down to embrace his extended hand. . . .

"So you're 'Frame of the Frame of Mind,'" said Julius rather proudly that evening, as Bernard was relating his experience on the campus. "I dare say some of those fellows will carry some things you said to them to their graves."

"I shall carry some thoughts of those hours to mine, Father," said Bernard. . . .

On the following day Frame was slowing wandering along the roadside near the dooryard, pondering upon the resolve he had made long before graduation, that he would make his own way after entering upon law practice. His father, who was well-to-do, had declared that he honored him for his self-reliant attitude.

"Shall I go to Wiltsburg and try to secure some opening there that will enable me to pay my way while getting my hand in at law practice?" he was asking himself. Thus far he had made no inquiries into possibilities there; but he knew one or two lawyers at the county seat. He resolved to air over there within a few days hence; and if unconvinced after visiting Wiltsburg, it would then be time to seriously consider seeking a position with some law firm in one of the large centers:

"Perhaps it won't matter which one, I'll be a total stranger in any one of them," he was musing.

There came soaring up an airal. The occupant had emerged from and folded her plane before he reached the plot, and was walking toward the house when he discovered her identity.

"Why, how do you do, Miss Kiteler, I'm so glad to see you—we haven't met since you bade me good-by at the base of the Empire Roost!" he greeted her. Then the caller explained why

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she had come to disturb his dreams the very day after he had reached home. But first, she enthusiastically congratulated him upon his graduation in law. Then:

"We want you to help us out at the annuals next week—I come right to the point, as you lawyers say——"

"W-h-a-t?—perfectly ridiculous!—but pardon me, let us go into the house," responded Frame; and he escorted the visitor to the hall door, thence into the sitting room; where Mrs. Frame heartily greeted her, and inquired how matters were progressing at Tromple Shades.

"Oh, just fine!" she replied. "There's only one missing link—and I've taken the liberty to come right over here as soon as I learned that your son had returned home; and my excuse is, we want him to help us out"—she turned her face toward Frame—"with just one song, on Wednesday afternoon——"

"Oh, goodness gracious!" exclaimed Frame. "Now, Miss Kiteler, the idea"—but the caller would accept of no negative.

"It just can't be, that's all," was Frame's challenge to the foregoing, as each braved the other's look.

"Very well; I'll just say to Miss Loor and Miss Brodein that you'll come over and join us in presenting Gradothian's 'Fate's Caprice,' and that you'll be at Miss Loor's Friday evening to rehearse," observed Miss Kiteler in tone of fine bold irony of his expression.

Frame looked at his mother and smiled sardonically. Miss Kiteler proceeded:

"And, now that we've perfected all preliminaries, Mr. Frame, I'll venture to say that we are all feeling very hopeful of bringing off one of the best annuals we've had; and as everything centers at the Shades, that about covers the inquiry your mother just now made." And then, from an accompanying gesture toward Mrs. Frame, the visitor's eyes turned to Frame, as she diverted:

"However, Mr. Frame, you may be interested in learning—if you are not already aware of the fact—that Miss Brodein has severed her relations with Boehm. She will not return——"

"Horace had told me that this was the case," interposed Frame, "and if you chance to know of the circumstances, if they are known to the public, or——"

"Yes; something of them," she interposed. "It is said that differences as to the correct mode of presenting one, in particular, of the plays brought out at the Athenian last winter, are accountable. As we know, Miss Brodein is very devoted in her convic-

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tions regarding *living* the character she represents; and in some way—I really don't clearly understand—there was a hitch, some friction between her and another actor, who differed; and Miss Brodein wouldn't concede—that's the purport, you'll understand, Mr. Frame," she ended; and she rose to go.

"You mustn't be in a hurry, I want to talk with you further, Miss Kiteler—about the fair. Please sit down." At mention of the fair, she resumed her seat.

"How did you and Miss Loor enjoy the balance of the day there?"

"Oh, splendidly! We heard some fine singing, and some excellent recitations. Then, later, we saw that sunset procession——"

"Ah, that too was attractive," interrupted Frame with zest. "I myself was just airing out of the grounds as that feature was on—but pardon me——"

"Yes, it was good; and in the evening we attended the fair theatre;" and Miss Kiteler related with enthusiasm the Italian play, and the preliminaries in the overseas music and the cannonading.

"We—my brother and I—went home earlier," Frame was saying, "and that sea of light and color—and of movement! We thought it was grand—the procession of airals spreading out from the center over the grounds and city. And they sent that music and the ordnance out to us by wireless——"

"Yes, we heard of it afterwards. And how we enjoyed airing home that beautiful evening," the narrator proceeded. "Of course the big crowd had preceded us; and it was all clear sailing—save for a certain adventure—incident, perhaps I should say—but I will not pursue that incident, beyond saying that it pertains to Miss Loor, and was not very creditable to a certain young man—but I'll say nothing more about it——"

Mrs. Frame was looking forbiddingly at Miss Kiteler; plainly indicating regret that this subject had been mentioned. Frame, all attention, was staring fixedly at the narrator; then he cast his eyes toward his mother as if attracted by her posture. Her look suggested disapproval as she slightly turned her head away. Miss Kiteler was somewhat flurried—thought of something of what had passed when she had excused herself at the Empire Roost was rushing to mind. But she tactfully resumed the general course of narrative:

"We got home all right, Mr. Frame—at her home; and I stayed over night with her and went home next day," she ended.

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But Frame's mind was upon the mystery of the "incident." But in an instant thought of Selton, and the latter's hurried entry into the Loor dooryard and his as surreptitious departure, came to mind. A moment's reflection convinced him that Selton was not improbably the "young man" referred to.

"I *must* be going now"—Miss Kiteler again rose and stepped toward the hall as she was exchanging greetings with Mrs. Frame, and was about to do so with Bernard; but he was saying:

"Well, if you must go, I'll go out with you and set up your airal." As they joined in passing along the walk, she resumed:

"I wouldn't have mentioned this at all, Mr. Frame, were it not that the facts have transpired since the fair. But out of consideration for Miss Loor, I'll mention to you, that Mr. George Selton came upon us—he and the Miss Files, with whom, it seemed, he was attending the fair—and he was very rude—to Miss Loor. He aired alongside of us, just as we had fallen into line in the air-lane outside the grounds. Well—I'm not going to attempt to recite his language—I doubt if I could do so with strict accuracy—but he reviled Miss Loor—spoke of her having been with 'other gentlemen' that day. And Miss Loor was seemingly dazed—well, you'll forgive me for even mentioning this matter, I hope; I just couldn't refrain from making *some* mention of it, in view of my friendship toward her—and yourself——"

"I readily realize that you might wish to make known to me—or to any other male friend of Miss Loor, any act by way of downright affront such as this action of Mr. Selton's seems to have been, toward her," Frame quickly asserted with apparent restrained indignation.

"And after having a—yes, a rumpus, with this lady, Miss Files, who sat there in his plane and heard all he said to Miss Loor, he darted away ahead of us without even saying good-night, and with some fling—oh, it was—well, ungentlemanly is certainly not too strong a term!" she ended.

Frame brought forth, unfolded and started power in the airal; Miss Kiteler was seated. As they were shaking hands he thanked her for what she had told him; making no further comment than to observe in a firm even tone:

"I shall consider this matter with due deliberation, Miss Kiteler," then raised his hat in adieu; and the visitor rose for the air-run home.

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CHAPTER XVIII

FRAME was seated in the plot and pondering seriously this revelation regarding Selton.

The fact that Selton had become "cold" on Miss Loor, and of his "running with" Miss Files, had become well known in the vicinity of Trompole Shades. Gossip had for some time decreed that his old relations with Flissey were—some said that, for her sake, they ought to be—ended. Feeling ranged from a certain sympathy toward her to downright indignation over his treatment of her—circumstances concerning his various recent unceremonious contacts with her had somehow become public. It was hinted in some quarters that he had beome "green with jealousy."

In this latter connection the question arose: Jealous of whom? Many could not think; few really suspected. Perhaps, outside of the Selton and the Loor families, no one knew that Bernard Frame was or might be the cause of Selton's supposed estrangement from her,—until, indeed, this "incident" of the night of the fair had come to the ears of Horace Frame, and through him, to his mother.

Soon after he had heard of Selton's action on the evening in question, Horace had mentioned the subject to his mother and had bitterly arraigned Selton for "abusing Flissey Loor because of his outrageous jealousy of Bernie,"—so he had put the matter in narrating what he had heard.

"Then this Files girl, she's told on *him,* for his jealousy in regard to Flissey, and for what she declares is his abuse of herself. But more than all this, Mother: Eleanor told me all about his abusive treatment of Flissey on her return from the fair; only I won't repeat some of the language she said he used. I shall hate to mention this to Bernie when he comes home, but I shall do so;—and I'm mixed up in that myself, you see. And if I were in Bernie's place, either Selton would apologize to her, or I'd have satisfaction!" His mother had expressed a disliking to having the matter mentioned to Bernard; and while she did not like the way Selton had acted toward Miss Loor, yet if the matter were made known to Bernard it would "set him to brooding over the

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affair" while he was at home, she thought; especially in that he would soon be gone again—and for good. Then, to Horace's gentle expostulation that she should not take the matter in this sense, she confessed: "It's a mother's weakness, that's all." These revelations, made known to her by Horace, accounted for her attitude of reluctance to listen, when Miss Kiteler was about to explain the Selton incident.

Bernard's first serious thought, as he sat reflecting upon this subject, was of the propriety of calling upon Selton to apologize. But what had been Miss Loor's disposition concerning the affair? Selton's relations with her had begun in childhood. He mentally dwelt upon what he had believed to be her natural disposition to tolerate rather than resent injury. Perhaps, he mused, she still entertained a belief that George Selton would yet come back to her in real repentance and plead for her heart. But finally—this thought he could not escape, although he tried not to estimate it as a positive factor in the consideration—her seeming immersion in his own development—and, should he say, future?—this thought in the circumstances brought him to doubt as to whether Miss Loor would willingly acquiesce in the suggestion that Selton be called upon to apologize. In the end he resolved that he would be justified in broaching the subject of what he had heard concerning Selton's conduct, to Miss Loor on Friday evening. Her own disposition should guide him as to future action in the premises.

When in the evening Horace—who had heard that Miss Kiteler had called—took Bernard aside and inquired if she had alluded to the Selton incident, the brother, after answering in the affirmative, related the substance of Miss Kiteler's recital to him; whereupon Horace informed him that she had told himself of the occurrence soon after he, Bernard, had returned to the university; and expressed regret, especially for his brother's sake, that "this disgraceful exhibition" had occurred:

"Of course I couldn't help feeling wrathy at Selton for his insolent behavior to Flissey, especially when I knew he meant you and me when he spoke of 'other gentlemen' being with her—the senseless, jealous ingrate!" He then related that he had mentioned the subject to his mother, who had felt badly when thinking of it in connection with him, Bernard, who would soon be home——

"That accounts for her looks this afternoon," interposed Bernard, "when Miss Kiteler mentioned this subject. Of course I

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couldn't guess at the moment what it meant. However, I soon came to the conclusion that the allusion to abuse of Miss Loor by a 'young man' meant Selton."

The brothers discussed the matter; and in response to Horace's inquiry as to how Bernard felt about it, the latter replied:

"Nothing short of an apology, Horace, would satisfy my own sense of justice to Miss Loor, and of indignation toward Selton for his shameless heartlessness. For, to demean himself in this way—especially when he is openly paying attention to another woman, however frivolously—reveals a reckless abandonment of moral principle, while it places him beyond the pale of consideration as having any grounds for objecting to her being free to act toward other gentlemen as her disposition may dictate," was Bernard's response. "Not that I imagine she considers that there are any special relations of affection between herself and myself, Horace," he quickly added. "I wish to make that plain to you—since this incident is being discussed between us." Horace cast a surprised look at his brother as he remarked:

"I thought there was—of course, Bernie, I feel that I'm invading sacred ground to even express myself upon this subject; and I do so only because of what you've just said."

Bernard diverted by remarking that he was to go over to the Loors Friday evening—since Miss Kiteler had impressed him into an engagement to rehearse a song production there for the annuals, with Miss Loor and Miss Brodein.

"Quite naturally. I understood they had counted on your assistance at the Shades. It's a beautiful production too—don't forget that," said Horace.

When on Friday evening Frame was met by Flissey in the front yard, she with extended hand and joyous countenance hastened to greet him, and to congratulate him upon having ended his law course. He returned thanks and expressed his pleasure to be again in her presence.

"We're all feeling so pleased that you have consented to help us at the annuals entertainment, Mr. Frame; come right in," and Flissey led the way through the hall into the parlor. As he stepped toward where Miss Brodein was sitting she rose and extended her hand, saying:

"Mr. Frame, I suppose I am greeting a full-fledged lawyer now, and I wish——"

"I'm not a lawyer yet, Miss Brodein, but I'm *enough* of a lawyer to opine that I'm not one—as our quaint professor as-

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sured his classmen when he handed us our diplomas," and Frame's eyes reflected humor. He diverted:

"But I hasten to sincerely congratulate you upon the fame you have won with the Boehms, Miss Brodein. We all rejoice to know that what we predicted has even more than come true."

"I am truly thankful for such words, Mr. Frame." There was warmth, mingled with greater reticence even than when he had met her during the latter part of the last vacation. Frame reverted:

"However, I'm ready to *become* a lawyer by being admitted to the bar——"

"Oh, yes!" ejaculated the actress, her eyes brightening—"and *provided,* that I'm so fortunate as to have some friends in good standing who'll solemnly asseverate under oath that I'm a person of good moral character——"

"Oh!" shrieked Miss Kiteler—who also was present and standing by to take her turn at renewed greetings—"these technicalities of the *law!* Who'd ever!"

Then, she having expressed gratitude over Frame's presence to participate in the rehearsal, Miss Kiteler, at Flissey's suggestion, briefly outlined to him the scheme of entertainment at the annuals the following week, including the play in which Miss Brodein was to bear the title rôle; and lastly, the parts in the production "Fate's Caprice," in which he was to execute the baritone solo phases. Flissey began thrumming the notes as Frame at her invitation came to the piano and followed her through this preliminary.

Miss Brodein's part was impersonation of the whimsicality of Fate; while Frame's rôle was that of emphasizing the opposite conception as something fixed, or preordained. Flissey's instrumental was an interpretation of these two attributes of Fate.

As indicative of the character of the production: Miss Brodein embodies Enchantment of Fate. The fated victim is a youth; to whom she chants of delights of a boating expedition upon a beautiful stream half buried in forest fastnesses and overhanging foliage. Fascinated, he enters the boat; rows downstream as he faces the Enchantress sitting in the stern. She sings of Bliss of the Woods; of the Haven of Delight just beyond! He hears not the distant murmur of the vortex at the foot of the cataract. She sings louder; her beguiling gaze into his soul completes enthrallment of ear and vision. The boat approaches the brink—youth's ecstasy is oblivious to what is behind him! The

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Enchantress vanishes as she beckons the precious freight on to Destiny—the boat rushes into an eddy—dashes upon the brink—but at the shore—is jostled by the rock at the beach—the youth is startled!—looks down the yawning abyss—shudders as he turns his head and leaps nimbly upon shore, as the Enchantress reappears and hails him:

"'Tis my Caprice that led, appalled—and saved you!" But sang Frame:

> "'Twas all in preordained Conceit
> Of Destiny, ages agone!
> E'er he was born this tempting sweet
> Fate compassed—and saved him anon!" . . .

The rehearsal ended, exchange of compliments was proceeding. Frame declared with sincerity that he believed he had discovered in Miss Brodein a growing facility of adaptation to changing rôles.

"But, Mr. Frame," replied the actress, "when I am done with a part I seem to live on in what you in your vocalizations picture as something so inevitable in life's phantasm, that my 'caprice' becomes absorbed in the conception you so artistically present." Then she thus expressed her conception of the fundamental truth:

"Fate is fickle only in its surface manifestation; this being its normal mode of revealing its mystery to human consciousness. Then, through impact of consciousness upon the soul, superconsciousness becomes active in apprehending fate as the inevitable—as wholly dissociated from its external *herald* of frivolity; and my own——"

"I conceive that you speak a vast truth!" ejaculated Frame——

"And—I was about to conclude, Mr. Frame—my interpretation of the 'caprice' of it was not natural, until I came to conceive that that faculty is but a superficial indication; in fine, that the true relation of fate to human life can be revealed only through our soulful faculties—and then we see it as the inexorable!"

"It *is* inexorable!" exclaimed Flissey.

Here Grampion Loor came striding into the parlor, only a step or two in advance of Mrs. Loor—they had been out for a soar and had just returned. As they came into the hall he had declared to her in his inimitable way that he would get to Frame to congratulate him before she did.

"Howdy-do-Miss-Kiteler-Miss-Brodein"—he rattled off with a courteous smile, taking in with one grand sweep both ladies;

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then squared himself around and almost fell toward Frame, only to hear the wife, who had hustled in and on ahead of him straight to Frame, exclaim as she grasped his outstretched hand:

"Congratulations!"—then, as she turned and looked into Grampion's face in rallying defiance she flung out: "You didn't! *I* did!"—and burst into laughter; which by this time had become contagious, since all present saw the significance of the double rush to the goal of honor's bestowal.

To save himself Grampion blurted out: "Congratulations on what?—that he's home again—oh, that's all right, but here's congratulations, Bernard, upon your accession to the bar, sir!—There, Myra, who's ahead? *I* am!"—as he shook hands with Frame.

Then came a tittering all around, among the young people. Grampion was striving to comprehend as he looked about in bewilderment. Meanwhile the wife was by gesture protesting Grampion's claim, yet realizing somehow that she was upon uncertain ground. Miss Kiteler, who had buried her eyes in her handkerchief in a fit of merriment, raised her head and quietly but mercilessly observed:

"Mr. Frame hasn't yet been *admitted* to the bar, Mr. Loor—that's where the joke comes in on you!"

"Oh!" groaned Grampion with a downward inflection. But, determined not to be irrevocably worsted, he again faced Frame, looking appraisingly upon him; his manner for all the world resembling that in which he might have assessed a fine-bred steer; and without moving a muscle of his face, he said in matter-of-fact tone:

"What *is* he then?"

"I'm just a bit of raw material ready to be ground up into a lawyer—is what I am," said Frame with a sly twinkle in his eye. "I proved as much to these young ladies' satisfaction." Flissey's turn came now; she explained quite intelligently the final steps constituting "accession to the bar." Grampion contented himself with observing:

"But he's as *good* as admitted to the bar when he's eligible! There!"—and, turning to Myra, he said in mock derision: *"My* congratulations are confirmed!"

"Oh, well, Grampion, after all your fuss and feathers, I got there first!" gently retorted the wife in a pose of pompous self-assurance. . . .

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Back to the homecoming from the fair, when Flissey Loor, accompanied by Miss Kiteler, was accosted by Selton:

No word escaped her when so startled by his so sudden appearance at the plane side in the night, and by his cruel revilement. Surprise moreover, at his greater audacity in so doing in presence of her whose escort he was, and in that of Miss Kiteler; the memories awakened by his taunts that she lacked faith in himself—that she was "gadding about the country"—his protest that he was "long-suffering in forbearance" but that with him patience "has ceased to be a virtue"—and that now she had "capped the climax" by having been found far from home "in company with other gentlemen";—all this so piercingly pained her—filled her with momentary shame in presence of those witnesses—that she had at his no less insolent leavetaking only so far met the impact as to have been conscious of a determined effort to control herself. She would not complain was her crowning thought in this crisis; rendered more perilous by a nameless profane epithet he had hurled at her as he shot away into distance! Nor did she utter a word concerning the incredible incident after he fled—for that, to Miss Kiteler, was what his disappearance meant.

Her friend was restrained from instant protest and sympathy as she read in Flissey's face resolutely subdued sense of wrong done her, of humiliation—but above all, of treasured living in the past—and of compassion! This realm in which regret seemed to dominate, thus revealed, caused her whose heart was bleeding for sympathy while loathing the author of this onslaught, to pause and mentally recast the situation. For the tear she saw in Flissey's eye was pathetic of happy days, even now lingering in fond memory; therein was read part of the resolution that curbed and subdued. In very amazement over the aspect thus clearly projected in Flissey's countenance, she ejaculated in wonderment and sympathy:

"Oh, Flissey!" . . . She had turned her head slightly away—but no response. . . .

"And that Files girl!—no wonder she demurred!—oh, the" —Miss Kiteler did not utter the word her mind adjudged was fit—"scoundrel!"

Flissey's eyes caught the now somewhat distant diffusive, penetrating and wonderfully expansive flood of white light that from the umbrella-point of Empire Roost was dazzling the fairgrounds and the heavens—putting even the moon to scorn—in its good-

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night hail to the world of patrons that day. As it faded while the two gazed on, Flissey was saying:

"How fine!—and what a fine time we had up there!"

On the day following the return from the fair, and after Miss Kiteler had gone home, Flissey had repaired to the bower, where she had sat for long amid the amber shades that September frosts had imparted to the enshrouding foliage; living again the experience of the preceding day and evening; again marshaling in mind her past relations with Selton; then of what seemed her really fateful experiences in connection with Mr. Frame.

Selton's outrageous exhibition of last evening was transparent—it was madness of unthinking vain jealousy from having again found her in company with Bernard Frame. She was convinced that he had discovered the party on the Roost; a correct surmise. He, while there lunching with Miss Files, had discovered the Frame party at a distant table; had made some remark to Rhoda about Flissey being there "with that 'Judge' Frame—and this far from home!"; to which Rhoda had poutingly replied with the fling: "They're no farther from home than we are! what's the pity with me!"

Flissey's unusual reticence—even in presence of Eleanor, on the morning after their return, was noticed by her mother as she listened to their conversation concerning their experience at the fair; a certain subtle reserve that she did not quite comprehend. But she had made no comment or inquiry in consequence, then or later when Flissey was alone with her after Eleanor's departure.

But out of her saddening reflections in the bower, concerning Selton, emerged two thoughts: that he was out of her life as never before—that *that* was irrevocable! and that compassion and even forgiveness toward him were doubly inspired by a calm buoyancy of spirit—a gladness—the result of the fascination by which she had been irresistibly drawn into the life of another! *This* thought was dominant as she rose from the bower and entered the house. . . .

So, when Miss Kiteler, on the Friday evening, as the social interim following the rehearsal was about to merge in adieus for the time, gently whispered Flissey aside into the rear hall to suggest to her that, now that Mr. Frame was present, she would confide to her that she had told him something of the Selton incident on the day she had called at the Frames——

"I could do nothing less for your sake and his sake——"

"No, no, Eleanor," interrupted Flissey, "do not bring us to-

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gether to speak of this matter. I forgave George Selton long ago!—and oh, how I pity him!" she covered her face with her hands. Then suddenly she withdrew them and, with beaming countenance and in quite even tone, quickly added:

"But some time—you'll know when, my dear Eleanor, say to Mr. Frame that I think Mr. Selton owes him an apology, but that I've forgiven him for his words to me."

Miss Kiteler never again mentioned to Flissey the subject of that night's experience at the fair. But as the net result of it her love for Flissey was deepened. Her regard for her rare womanhood grew into adoration. . . .

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CHAPTER XIX

WHEN the end of the social-civics annuals at Trompie Shades had again come, most notable in connection with the even larger attendance than had occurred the previous year had been the presence of many dramatic critics and theatrical business professionals; who had come from far and near to observe and appraise the "vacation work" of Miss Brodein, who was now rapidly developing into an actress of national reputation.

Personality—analyzed as rare native ability and versatility, surmounted by mysterious power through play and counterplay of psychology—and unique method, under which she not merely *lived in* her part *as* the rehearsal, but lived it on the stage—these characteristics accounted for her success. Her gifts had been crystallized by a famous critic in the phrase "The Silent Marvel."

In the play at this year's annuals entertainment, "Avenge of the Reactive," her rôle of "Adelia" was lent to revealment of the might of vengeance when halted by the super-power of self-control, and refined into the divine function of retribution.

Of the trio who presented "Fate's Caprice," it can be said that it reflected their joint facility in an ensemble which evoked marked and universal praise from the overcrowded auditorium. Frame's voice was credited with having developed in richness and versatility.

In a conversation between Frame and Miss Brodein before the final partings at Trompie Shades, she was alluding to certain circumstances which had led to her declining to renew with Boehm for another season:

"It was inevitable," she said, "unless I were to abandon my conception of what rehearsal work in the drama really means. At the request of the management I had unfolded in detail my idea of rehearsing for the parts; it had been adopted, and not without a certain enthusiasm; and the director had gone on in consonance with my plan. Well, Mr. Boehm came to me one day and declared that Mr. Seely—he was my chief support in 'Belinda's Remorse,' the play that ran there last winter——"

"Yes, I recall very distinctly——"

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"He said that Seely had 'balked'—that he would quit unless released from what he termed the 'bondage' of my scheme of rehearsal; and desired me to permit the director to resume charge according to his own plans. To make it brief: After I had indicated a willingness to withdraw from my engagement rather than discontinue my general course of participation in rehearsals, he, after intimating that my 'legal obligations' bound me to continue through the season, returned and announced that it had come to a question of Mr. Seely's withdrawing; did I wish to 'impair the success' of the play, and so on. I finally consented to remain until the date when I must return home to participate in our annuals, meanwhile deferring to his proposed change; with the further understanding that he need not expect me to remain with them longer."

"Just what was Mr. Seely's objection to your plans?" Frame inquired.

"He rebelled against sitting in the psychological experience—let me explain, Mr. Frame," replied Henrietta. "My conviction is that one must soulfully commune with one's self in presence of the co-actors, while each is mentally rehearsing his or her part; each individual phase of a scene being strenuously thought upon—each believing he or she is *living* the part, and that the others are really characters *in life*. The first step in this 'experience,' as I term it, is to learn how to become possessed of this *belief;* yet it is simply a process of concentration and self-control; only there must be a profound conviction of the truth embodied in the part one takes, in its relation to the other parts. Here is where psychology comes in; effecting an inter-communication between subconscious faculties of actors present."

Frame, gazing fixedly upon the actress as she had proceeded, was insensibly led in a process in which successive conclusions seemed obvious. There was a seeming of familiarity in what she had unfolded; yet he experienced a certain amazement.

"Is it meant, Miss Brodein, that this process is practicable with any group of professionals who may seek to adopt it?"

"With certain selected participants, yes; and with proper leadership and initiative," was her calm response.

As their eyes now met, Frame perceived the profounder truth—the abyss of all she had fathomed in this revelation in words—and instantly he was carried back to the demonstration at the auditorium of a year ago! Then his mind reverted:

"And the director—is he present?"

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"As observer and listener—but in a booth that screens him from view. At the time he simply makes mental observations and notes. Not until after the stage performance has been witnessed by him and the next rehearsal is about to begin, may he comment or criticize; then he is free, and frank interchange of expression goes on."

Frame was contemplating:

"And—just why did Mr. Seely 'rebel'?"

"This was the gist of it: 'That director over there in that booth—and not a word to say—it got on my nerves after the rehearsals,' he confessed—and protested. He insisted that *that* was justification for his attack upon my theory—that the 'dumb director' feature condemned it."

"I am curious to learn how you met his objections?" said Frame inquiringly.

"I suggested that his entry into the 'experience' was not sufficiently complete, else no serious afterthought as to the director's aloofness would likely have come to him. But he rejoined with something about its being 'spookishness' rather than aloofness."

Conversation turned upon rural environment in rehearsal. Henrietta had found new uses for inspiration of country surroundings:

"Aside from the factor of restfulness in the process of both the preliminary and the stage work, I discover the clearer conception and saner comment of those who observe and interpret for us our work in country centers, as compared with those of crowded cities," she declared with animation. Besides, she added, migration from city to country in recent years had conduced to truer conceptions of city life, entertained by rural dwellers. "But as life's wellspring is the country, there is the native seat of criticism of life."

Frame then inquired as to her future plans for professional work.

"Yes. I have an offer from an eastern management that I am seriously considering, Mr. Frame," she replied. They were willing to give her plan a trial; and would defer to her idea of preselection of a corps of players specially fitted to act together. Furthermore, they would permit her to specialize upon certain classes of dramatic production.

"I feel a kind of secret joy at thought of embracing such an opportunity," Henrietta told him. "But if I accept the offer, it will be with a deep feeling of responsibility. It will be pioneering with a sanguine party of adherents who may or may not stand

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fire under stress of probable hostility of the profession at large, and of the inherent difficulties to be encountered." Frame declared his belief that success would follow her efforts.

"There is still another feature concerning which I am not so sure that they will accede to my requirements; my insistence upon having a retreat for rehearsals in the Catskills—this manager is in New York City," Henrietta continued.

"Ah! You are going to the eastern metropolis, then?"

"Yes; if this offer is accepted."

As they shook hands in parting, Frame expressed a fervent wish that she might achieve a real success without temporary setback:

"That success will come in the end I have not the slightest doubt," he assured her.

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CHAPTER XX

TWO years have passed since Frame was admitted to the Wiltsburg Bar and became attached to the law firm of Deever & Bradshaw. He was now becoming known in the local country round as a young lawyer of exceptional and marked ability, a citizen above his fellows in devotion to public welfare, and a man of unquestioned integrity and fearlessness.

The greater part of his first year at Wiltsburg had been a ceaseless struggle for a living under an arrangement he had finally negotiated with that law firm, upon the basis of a nominal salary plus certain percentages of fees derived from such clientele as he was able to create through his own exertions. But there was another incident to his efforts to acquire practice, which operated as a temporary deterrent, although giving point to his professional character and by degrees bringing him reputation.

In few words: He had from the start resolutely declared that he would not bring a case into court if he could effectuate adjustment between the parties in substantial harmony with legal principles outside of such forum. Largely because he had insisted upon pursuing this course he had failed to secure in the outset a living salaried position. Moreover, it was only through solicitude of Reginald Deever, the senior member of the law firm, that he had been saved from dismissal from his professional connection on the ground (alleged by Bradshaw) that he had not fulfilled his contract by using due diligence in securing practice. For Deever alone had listened with toleration, and not without a curious and solicitous interest, to Frame's theory of dealing with differences between disputants, and of the relations between controversy and the courts of justice.

Notwithstanding Frame was not endowed with the faculties of a "good mixer" among men, and in spite of what at first seemed a kind of perverse reluctance to bringing parties into court, his plan of invariably bringing the disputants together in conference over their rights—and notably his remarkable success in bringing them to one mind as to what were the facts involved—soon came to be publicly regarded as distinguishing his character as well as his law practice.

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However, lawyers differed widely as regarded both the tenability and the practicability of his principle of law practice. He would never be a successful lawyer, beyond possessing the faculty of "getting the men who are at odds together to talk it over," as one critic had expressed it, and which he admitted was in itself meritorious—he was an impractical theorist, a dreamer. Moreover, a compromise out of court was not a legal determination of rights, in that it ignored legal principles—such was the run of adverse comment among local members of the bar who were disposed to speak discouragingly of his system of practice. On the other hand, Deever thus expressed his conception of Frame's process to a fellow-attorney:

"He seems to have reversed, in theory, the concept of adversary rights that has prevailed for ages. He does not array the parties so that they regard one another's rights *as* adversary rights. Rather he regards them, and he convinces them that they should regard themselves, as holding a *community* of rights; which really means a community of interests! I confess that I was at first little short of obsessed by this thought; but I have come to a conviction that there's a vast truth at the basis of Bernard Frame's *practice*—it's not a mere theory."

Moreover, solicitude for municipal welfare had from the beginning of his residence in Wiltsburg inspired him into discussion and treatment of certain of those issues; embracing rescue of certain public utilities from private rapaciousness, and various other municipal affairs; in course of which experience he had come into contact with many city officials, and not a few of the usual herd of vultures ever ready to prey upon the public treasury. But one of these incidents will be referred to, and that only in brief outline, as indicative of the character of his efforts in these directions:

This was the park addition affair; involving particularly one Dillman Billingham, a politician having no known business or calling, as such, but who sometimes figured as a go-between where a division of profits was available to such as he. Frame—specially employed by the city—had detected him as a co-conspirator with a faithless city attorney, in a proceeding in which the city acquired certain additional parkage; the property having been awarded to the city at an exorbitant price through virtual subornation of perjury wrought upon witnesses to inflated values thereof; Billingham to have a considerable slice of the excess purchase price. He had then boldly accused Billingham to his

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face of being a beneficiary of the corrupt transaction. When the shock of his accusation and his imperative tone in demanding a return of his share of the profits to the city brought Billingham's gaze to meet his own, a psychic exchange of intelligences told the accused that his guilt was known. This consciousness of the truth seemed to have transformed Billingham from the instant aspect of a cornered beast into that of a confessed and strangely penitent wrongdoer. And while the public was skeptical of such results, the fact that the politician's inner consciousness had been bared to his accuser, was virtually vindicated when, a few days after Frame had made a similar descent upon the former property owners who had thus ingloriously profited, the entire sums recovered under the verdicts were covered into court prior to the return day of the motions for new trials—which had been interposed in those proceedings—arrived. What portion of those reimbursements had come from Billingham was never known.

Brief allusion should be made also to a prominent phase of Frame's participation in politics—that of his action as alternate of a Wiltsburg delegate to the American party state convention whose sickness prevented his personal attendance; in which convention Frame was largely instrumental in the adoption of certain resolutions; one in which the plank in the recently adopted American national platform pertaining to the Chinese question, demanding "an explicit guarantee" from England against her negotiating with China "or any European power" aiming at either "the partition of China or the impairment of her territorial integrity"—was in effect criticized through adoption of a milder resolution and to the effect that our government "expects England to respect her obligation to participate in preservation of Chinese integrity, under the League Declarations, and in keeping with the well-known obligations of our government toward China"—all subject of course to England's present right to wage war against China as an ally of rebellious India. This resolution was popularly known as the "haul-in-horns" plank, wherein it was said to have boldly taken issue with the national convention. Heated controversy had arisen also over the question whether England had in fact used Philippine waters for outfitting purposes. The other resolution referred to was one which championed the so-called "McMott Bill," a legislative measure aimed at reënforcing the township civics through transfer of certain pupils, advanced in special civics scholarship, from the public schools to the country-civics forces—a measure which, moreover, was persistently but

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vainly opposed by certain politicians among whom Billingham's coterie and allied political interests were dominant.

As reflecting the significance of those convention resolutions, these headlines in the Chicago *Mirror* are available:

"Surprise at Convention Outcome. Party Politicians Worsted. Frame and Fielding Winners. Buchanan-Caines Plans Balked." Its convention report related that on the Chinese question the Fielding men "were ably and valorously backed by a delegate who at home had gained local celebrity—Bernard Frame, a Wiltsburg lawyer, popularly known as 'Psyche,'" and so forth; while its editorial upon the Chinese issue contained this declaration: "All talk of England's deliberate violation of either the sovereignty and sanctity of Philippine waters as a base of naval activities in connection with the Oriental War, or of Chinese integrity as related to our national policy or to the League Declarations, is unjustifiable in the light of known facts and of reliable and unprejudiced intelligence."

On the evening preceding this issue of the *Mirror* Frame, upon leaving his hotel after the convention had adjourned, to take the tram for home, had read in its columns news of the return of Miss Brodein from South America; the leaders commencing with: "Adulation to Genius"; the dispatch recounting that she, "America's most versatile actress," had made a triumphal tour of the Latin States, "bringing multitudes to her feet"; referred to the remarkable reception given her upon her return to New York City, "the scene of her latest appearances prior to her departure for South America"; and ending by stating that she was en route to her home in the middle West.

Three years had elapsed since he had last set eyes upon her—when he had called upon her at her home soon after observing her as the "Princess" at Tromple Shades. As he now tried to picture her in vision in her matured young womanhood—to imagine her "living the part" in one of her strongest rôles—he was entranced! Then the incident of the music came in a flash as consciousness of the force of that locally famed production became again a revelation—and then came vision of the beautiful artist, Flissey Loor!

He had seen Flissey but twice since he had come to the bar—once, and but for a moment, at the Shades a year ago. She had seemed paler. A certain wistfulness, and a tinge of what seemed a new phase of sadness was revealed in her countenance. But her old vivacity accompanied exchange of greetings; he-

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their present meeting was unmistakable; as was her enthusiasm when, in reverting to the subject of Henrietta's success in the east, she ecstatically declared:

"They believe she is divinely inspired—in a new, strange sense!" —a certain refined fire illuminating her eyes. "And oh! how I wish I could be with her!" She almost sighed out this ejaculation as the longing of a pent-up soul. Frame had believed he had never before beheld her so beautiful as now. . . .

On the more recent occasion of his meeting her in Wiltsburg, they had happened to come together on the street. He had declared as his excuses for failing to visit her since establishing himself in Wiltsburg, that he had felt obliged to subordinate all else to a concentrated effort to make headway in his profession—and she had responded that she understood.

"It is almost enough, Mr. Frame, that I am privileged to hear you tell of what is before you to do and of how you are striving for the great ends for which you live," she had declared.

Now, as the upshot of the train of thought suggested by the dispatch, he was thinking again of what his relations to these two personalities meant to him—how would they affect his life—his life-work? In this pondering he was lost to all consciousness of his relations to the events of the convention work. The sole response from his heart was: "They have been in my thoughts—part of my aims!". . .

The rigid and unique rehearsals of which Retta Brodein was directress at The Haunts in the Catskills, were in brief an evolution of her plan as established at Chicago; the segregation from the urban atmosphere of the Thessalian, the famous opera house in which the Columbia Opera Company, with whom she was now connected, was playing, being, however, more complete.

There she was surrounded by her supports who, after the preliminary tests to which she put them, had been selected to become co-workers in the field of dramatics created by her and known as the "Brodein Cult."

"That word was first used by Seely in ridicule of my system," she explained to her mother one day after her return from South America. "I was told that he irreverently declared that I was 'bent on substituting the Almighty for a director proper, and a cult for a vogue.' He never really comprehended my subjection to the operation of the Divine Spirit in my work."

"The Haunts" became famous as the center of propagation of this "cult." There, in the woods near her villa, her selected sup-

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ports daily lingered with her; sitting a little apart; she being rapt in communion with Infinitude whereby to attune her spirit and make her one with the character she represented. Thus were the rays of her immersion in the Deity shed upon the kindred spirits whose parts articulated with her own. This state of spiritual communion became the essential basis of subsequent daily rehearsals such as were never before known—in modern times at least—to the ken of dramatic production.

"You take your part too heavily," she criticized one of her associates, the tragedian who depicted woe over loss of life. "In divine conception, release of the spirit through death's hand is rather matter of approval. Such sacrifice may be impersonated by living to the bereaved ones the divine truth that the sacrifice is one on God's altar. They, being parts of Divinity, should be uplifted in the arms of your speech and borne on its spirit, so that they accept the loss as divinity's gain."

"Oh, Mademoiselle Borodino, verily this is divine conception—I shall try to *live* it! But oh, another thought—that I shall seek to express—that he who took this life was a bloody felon—murderer!"

"Think of him as an instrument of evil. But Divinity dominates the kinship of evil. So live that spirit in utterance of these lines, that in denouncing the criminal you interpret forgiveness, which dominates revenge; otherwise your acting is not divine."

So, one by one she trained the others; by such training of one, training all. Then she herself, being thereby the more uplifted, would rehearse her parts. Then, after a restful season, would follow the regular rehearsal on the rustic stage. This process, at once labored and inspired, brought about that strangely perfect unity of action which characterized the Brodein Dramatics.

In the pending primary nominating campaign, Frame had been solicited by the local civics to speak at a meeting at Tromple Shades upon the subject of the legislative candidates and issues. One Mrs. Rhea, an effective lecturer, and Henrietta Brodein were engaged to participate in the program—it being understood beforehand that the character and fitness of opposing legislative candidates would be the main theme of discussion. Frame and Mr. Montgomery Caines—of the Billingham faction—were to divide time in behalf of opposing candidates.

The attendance was exceptionally large, even for Tromple Shades, noted as it was for crowded halls. Mrs. Rhea, by way

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of preliminary, had made a brief but telling address upon the subject "Character." Then had followed an episode under auspices of the civics, involving certain proofs concerning an American candidate's character and standing, as also relating to the animus and good faith of his accusers.

Henrietta Brodein now was announced for a recitative entitled "Dream of Worth"—her own composition. As she stood silent upon the platform an involuntary hush pervaded the auditorium. Through her personality an atmosphere from afar—from above—seemed ushered in. . . . All seemed immersed in and worshiping at the altar of *character*—she its embodiment. . . . Organ tones were now felt blending with, exalting and glorifying the psychological realization of character.

"Worth!" . . . With utterance of that word came an indefinable interpretive spirit—none present could afterward fitly describe it.

"Worth! I, Spirit of the Weal of Man, come with the laurels of the Infinite to crown thee with its fealty. . . . No pomp is in my train. The quality I here adorn aloft is perched, above wild billows, battle-plains, tempestuous winds of mortal aim, on height of Character!—yet tempers ambition, wiles, scandals of men with transposing touch, as down on envy, scorn, detraction—scum of Worthlessness—thine eye is cast, thy hand outstretched! . . .

"Thou alone can save the state. Brains that serve Power to dire Corruption's end are dashed to naught beneath thy wrath, ransomed through thy smile. So high thy station seems, its Olympus an outpost of the Godhead is. E'en Deity as crowner, with humility presides.

"I place this garland on thy head, feeling how poor are words!"

No sign of applause came from the audience as she sank in the grace of Divinity to her knee and affixed upon the brow of the kneeling personage she had created, the wreath she had held in her hand, while pronouncing the concluding words. Now rising to her feet, she remained, silent and abstracted, seemingly gazing contemplatively upward into the face of the Highest.

The successive organ accompaniments interpretive, now of what had preceded, now of what was to follow, had ceased. Miss Loor's fingers had performed a potential part of the production. . . . Individuals involuntarily rose to their feet—Frame seeming but one of the multitude in this movement. Momentary transport fused all present into collective fealty to Worth! . . .

Caines now spoke in favor of one Bylinkel, a candidate of the

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Billingham faction, but who had been virtually repudiated by Billingham himself, during the state convention proceedings, when the crisis there pending had moved him to incontinently propose by wireless that if Caines should succeed in defeating the McMott bill resolution he, Caines, should be substituted for Bylinkel—a proposal Caines had indignantly spurned.

The atmosphere had been so clarified by the appeals to character and worth that Caines felt lifted to a high plane of discussion. Both in his advocacy of Bylinkel and his criticism of Burrell Edam, the opposition American candidate, he had been fair and courteous.

Frame, who closed the discussion, unmercifully scored one Otis Jacobs, an unprincipled officeseeker who was a third candidate, repudiated by both factions, and who had scurrilously attacked Edam's character—and defended Edam's candidacy. He summarized:

"At bottom, the supreme question is, Whose character is at stake? Whose, as candidates? Whose, as *constituency?* For in the end, it is the public whose character is really reflected in the man it nominates, elects. The public *can* prove its own bad character by nominating, with eyes open, the wrong candidate. The voice of the people is no more the voice of God than is that of the average individual.

"True indeed it is," he ended, turning and saluting Miss Brodein, "that worth alone can save the state. But worth, in saving the state, never encounters greater peril than in legislative halls. There is the center of gravity in our government. If the legislature is kept to the standard of worth, no power among men can overturn the structure of government. And among all the instruments that time has devised to weigh the past, to counsel the present, and to predict the future in government, none rises to the summit of character!"

The demonstration at his closing—which at last grew to a remarkable climax—came with a dawning upon the collective mind that this man was more than he seemed that night—it was sincere deference to the mark he had thus far made in life.

The result of the primary—in the nomination of Edam, with Bylinkel second, Jacobs a bad third—was generally regarded as having really turned upon the issue of character; while the McMott bill proposition—supported by Edam and opposed by his contestants—was believed to have played a strong secondary part.

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CHAPTER XXI

IN retrospection: The impressions made by Frame's thesis upon the law school faculty, reënforced by the success he had achieved in application of its principles in his law practice, had eventuated in its having become a subject of interested discussion in various educational centers by the time—a year from his connection with the law firm—he had been admitted as a co-partner with Deever & Bradshaw. Indeed, the system itself had by this time become, in theory, a movement in some intellectual circles. From the schools it had reached the ears of certain officials of the federal government, who had regarded it simply as a basis for speculation, which might possibly lead to some empirical tests when applied, for instance, to certain domestic questions under the federal system of government. Through these channels some foreign seats of learning had become acquainted with the subject. In particular there had grown up a series of tentative discussions between one or two American universities and certain professors of diplomacy in Peking—and through contact of the latter with foreign representatives at that court, these discussions had become known in certain strictly diplomatic circles.

In this process of familiarization of the court of Peking with this scheme of settlement of disputes, Soper, Frame's classmate, had played a part. His bent for diplomacy had borne fruitage soon after he was admitted to the bar. Largely through the influence of his father—a man of learning and an artist of considerable repute—he was enabled to secure an appointment as a member of the suite of the American ambassador to China. Thenceforward he had been in correspondence with Frame upon the theme in question; the joint aim being the application in theory of Frame's system to the facts of international life—more particularly as between the United States and China; since Soper had come to believe that the atmosphere of oriental diplomacy was peculiarly susceptible to the application of Frame's theory and his psychical functions as well.

He believed, moreover, that he had discovered a disposition at that court to consider the possible application of such a plan to

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certain differences of lesser consequence, affecting the two governments. In an urgent letter to Frame setting forth the circumstances, he had pressed him to come to China and be introduced to the authorities there as the author of his process, bringing with him certain credentials.

It is due to Frame to declare of him that he had now become known among the legal fraternity and in certain American universities, as a man of some national reputation—his innate passion for exhaustive study of principles, his unique theory, and his remarkable psychic faculty having contributed to this result. Some press notices had somewhat vaguely referred to the fact that a former classmate had urged him to proceed to China with a view to the solution of certain differences through some modified form of his theory.

"This," ran a Chicago editorial, "sounds somewhat utopian. But the idea involved in his theory is taking root in responsible circles of educational work in this country."

But to break away from his strictly professional connections at the threshold of his career, and to embark upon an adventure such as Soper had suggested, at first appeared to Frame as little short of foolhardy. He had as yet but begun to lay aside a competency. The development of the principles involved in his practice had meant sacrifice of services to an ideal, rather than remuneration. Still, more than the usual clientele of a young practitioner had come to him; some of which had redounded also to the benefit of the now senior members of the law firm.

Yet he now longed the more to go to China. He resolved to lay the matter before Deever. . . . To him he declared that he could not seriously think of disregarding his obligation to the firm, which bound him for a term of two years, less than half of which period had then elapsed. Again, to proceed to China and prosecute the investigation comprehended by Soper's proposal, would be a course precluded by financial considerations. The conference resulted in a generous expression by Deever, ending with this remark:

"You know my more than mere respect for your theory, Bernard. If at any time you conclude that your duty leads you to embrace the opportunity that seems open to you, to lay foundations in China for application of your process to pending differences between that country and our own, you have my consent to an immediate dissolution of the existing partnership. Of course this means obtaining Bradshaw's consent as well."

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In Frame's reply to Soper, after thanking him profoundly for his interposition in the matter in question, explaining the circumstances surrounding himself, and declaring that he longed to realize upon so rare an opportunity of feeding a flame that had inspired him to the preparation of his law thesis—and especially there in the Orient, where the peculiar pleasure of collaboration with him, Soper, would lend further enticement—he declared that such a course would be inadmissible from a financial point of view. He could not, he declared, resolve upon a course whose outcome would be so uncertain that not improbably he might be again thrown upon his professional resources when reëntry into practice would mean virtually a new beginning.

Upon considering this reply, Soper perceived the difficulty confronting Frame. But the latter's theory had now become a growing factor in his own life. In casting about for a possible expedient to meet the emergency, it occurred to him that he might prevail upon his father to endow a chair at the university, to be devoted to propagation of the Frame process in diplomacy. The thought having grown to resolve, he wrote his father a long letter, unfolding the circumstances and the suggestion which had been favorably entertained by the Chinese authorities; urging the great importance of the subject to himself, and concluding his appeal:

"You can well afford, Father, to donate to such a noble cause a fund sufficiently ample to insure remuneration to such a professorship. And as a preliminary to the permanent endowment, and as a means through which Mr. Frame may realize upon the opportunity presented, you may well provide, say five thousand additional to defray his expenses. You need not be reminded of what it will mean to your posterity to have your name forever connected with such a beneficence."

Nathaniel Soper took to heart this appeal. Through Ichabod he had known something of the Frame theory. Being now deeply impressed, he had finally concluded to act upon the suggested endowment; had informed the son that the necessary document had been deposited with the university trustees, and that if the trust should be accepted, an endowment of fifty thousand dollars would be placed with them, together with an additional five thousand with which to defray Frame's expenses upon the contemplated trip. . . .

On Wednesday morning following the primaries, while Frame (who was now visiting at the farmstead) was congratulating

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Edam upon his nomination, by wireless, the latter informed him of the morning press account of the so-called "Soper Foundation," and of the purposes thereof, including the incident of the expense benefice; that the dispatches gave him credit for having been the occasion of the endowment "and that you've earned the right to assist in making a practical application of your 'system' to a pending international dispute."

Frame was overwhelmed with surprise—and impressed by emotion in which gratitude was shared by impressive responsibility.

Parental pride and thanksgiving dominated Julius Frame when Bernard came into the hall and broke this news. But after the first flush of the tidings had measurably subsided, the mother began to cry—whether from joy over the event, or sadness at thought of Bernard going abroad—and into a country at war.

"Now, it seems, somebody besides my son is convinced that there may be something in what I've been in the habit of calling 'this notion of yours,'" declared Julius. "Of course, as you say, Doctor Soper's son is responsible for his father having come forward with this endowment. But what faith in his son!—and in you! I'm proud of you, Bernard!" And with a sort of beatific smile on his face he slowly walked across the room to where the still tearful mother stood; and for a brief moment each leaned a head upon the other's shoulder as silent joy found expression.

Bernard suddenly turned and started toward the rear door of the sitting room, saying: "I'm going out to see Horace," and passed out of the house. As he slowly strode toward the field he realized—responsibility. He was facing elementary things. The bright morning smiled in a larger sense; fragrance of field and air was shot with new power. Nevertheless, surroundings were but flitting phantoms in a vision of pacification of counter-currents in a world-tide—their ultimate *oneness* through the wooing of psychology!

He all but stumbled upon Horace before he saw him.

"You've got it bad this morning, brother," Horace bantered from a little distance. "Of course you helped to nominate Edam, but don't let that circumstance banish you from the farm; you're visiting now."

"I am thinking of visiting—in a new world, Horace," replied Bernard, startled to consciousness of environment by this rally. "It is not Edam, nor primary election; it is diplomacy—my sort——"

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"But that's not a *new* world——"

"I'm going to China—to study the Chinese side of a dispute with our government——"

"What?" Then Bernard explained. "And there's something in it that almost bows me down with a sense of what this bringing together of two *national* minds may mean!" he ended. The brothers were eagerly clasping hands upon Horace's fraternal congratulations, and they returned to the house, conversing upon the extraordinary subject.

"I can't begin to comprehend what it means," said Horace, "only, that your ambition is being realized—and that the family is to be wonderfully honored!"

Bernard repaired to his room; wrote two letters—a brief but feelingly appreciative one to Nathaniel Soper; a somewhat lengthy one to Ichabod, in which gratitude towered above all else. After explaining that he must lean heavily upon Soper in entering into the preliminaries of the proposed investigation, he referred to the necessity of clearing the way:

"For, Soper, you will readily realize that we must first obtain the consent of the department of state for me to enter upon this special mission—for such our government will doubtless regard it to be. And the service itself must be prosecuted in such a manner as not to be subversive of the functions of our Chinese embassy. For I have realized that the application of my theory is certain to involve in some degree those functions. . . ."

Frame lay upon his couch, thinking how the purpose indicated in the endowment, as regarded himself, would be likely to be met by the department of state.

"My plan," he mused, "does not preclude employment of accredited representatives of the nations in dispute, as auxiliary forces in expediting its adjustment."

When, on the afternoon of the following day he called upon Miss Brodein—pursuant to an appointment made on the previous Saturday evening at Tromple Shades—it was not in the sense of deepened affection that he now felt a new interest in her. Rather, a persistent thought was of her undefined association with his own future. She appeared more cosmopolitan; yet more reticent than ever. His impression of Saturday night and now was of her larger worth to the world—and to himself.

After felicitations concerning her own and his recent experiences had been exchanged, she explained that her director's confidence—at first based upon the fact of her success in Chicago—had come to rest upon faith in her system of environment in the study:

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"My plan and my personality were complements of each other," was her final expression.

Flissey was announced by Mrs. Brodein—her presence too had been pre-arranged—and, following greetings, Frame explained that Miss Brodein was relating some of her stage experiences in South America. He recalled to mind a dispatch from Buenos Ayres concerning her having transformed audiences into actors.

"It is true they became my chief support and inspiration. We all lived the life of the part."

Frame suggested:

"And you made them live that life!" To which she measurably dissented.

"Conscious assimilation between audience and actors can not be said to initiate from the stage. In truth, psychology in this connection is more manifest in the personality of the audience. But the real influence that makes the whole assembly live the part, is an exterior faculty. I have sometimes received through some influence in the audience, the momentary inspiration; but the original suggestion was that of the Deity using the human soul, singly or collectively, as the medium."

"The audience is the grand organ!" ejaculated Flissey.

"You speak a deep truth," Henrietta responded. "But you do not go far enough. The organ you conceive of really embraces also the stage forces. The primary player is Divinity; we but responsive voices."

"Oh, how I wish we could be together more!" sighed Flissey.

Frame, looking first at Flissey, then at Henrietta, as if inspired by what had been suggested by them, declared sententiously:

"My belief is, ladies, that you ought to coöperate professionally; that you, Miss Brodein, are specially aided by Miss Loor's instrumentation on the organ, and the harp also——"

"I have felt the same, Mr. Frame, from the time she began assisting in my interpretations," interposed Henrietta with spirit.

"And you, Miss Loor: I believe that Miss Brodein is a kind of crowning inspiration to you—that you *need* to be her instrumental assistant. I believe there is no worthy cause that you two would not effectually advance, were you to join forces."

"That is a great compliment, I must declare," responded Henrietta with delicacy of feeling that showed she was stirred. "Oh!" exclaimed Flissey. Then, as if suddenly awakened to a more significant truth, she said to Frame:

"Mr. Frame, since you've so frankly spoken concerning Miss

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Brodein and myself, let me say, as to your own future, that it has come to be a compelling thought with me, that in some way Miss Brodein seems linked in my mind with *your* future—your life-work! To me, there is a harmony between the two objects she and you are pursuing;—it is more than that: that neither of you can reach the climax of usefulness without aid from the other," —and she flushed as she seemed to imagine her real meaning might be misinterpreted.

"For myself, my dear," said Henrietta, undisturbed by this declaration, "I can not believe that the trend of my life is such that the harmony you imagine, really exists."

"But think! Miss Brodein," persisted Flissey. "Everybody felt that your recitative at the Shades, on Worth, helped wonderfully in interpreting the truth that character is the main thing in politics—which was the central idea of Mr. Frame's speech."

"Please say remarks, don't call it speech," said Frame, who continued seriously: "Quite unjustly to yourself, Miss Loor, you have omitted reference to your own participation on that occasion. . . . And I must declare without reserve, ladies, that I have realized a growing appreciation that such delightful accessories as you afford, have led me to constantly associate such devoted histrionic talent, and its accompaniment of music, with my own endeavors and aims. And this ideality in environment centers in your accomplishments as a climax."

The ladies thanked him cordially for this high testimonial. Then Flissey said to him:

"Pardon me, Mr. Frame, for not sooner congratulating you upon your great and well-earned good fortune in connection with the Soper foundation; but I was so deeply interested in hearing Miss Brodein tell of her experience, and in having you hear her through; —I am pleased beyond measure over what is in store for you." Frame returned thanks for these expressions. Then there was exchange of regrets over the incident that they would be so far away from each other during his absence. In this connection, Flissey remarked that Miss Kiteler had referred to public mention having been made of some supposedly contemplated engagements of Miss Brodein in the Orient.

"I have no thought of going to the Orient on a professional tour, if that is what is meant," interposed Henrietta. "But I have sometimes thought I would like to make a study of those races, and particularly of their religious side. I believe we Americans have much to learn from them, in civilization and in soul-relations."

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"She remarked," continued Flissey, "that if it should happen that you did go there, it would be so fortunate if Mr. Frame could have the privilege of hearing you before an oriental audience."

"Oh, ladies," eagerly interjected Frame, "I need not say such a pleasure would be unspeakable!" To which Henrietta responded by declaring that to meet him there and to imbibe something of the atmosphere surrounding his work, would be a pleasure indeed.

Later the party were enjoying air and scenery from the roost. Just as Mrs. Brodein was joining them, an air-plane flitted by.

"Not a day passes," she remarked, "without our seeing flags of many nations in aërials darting past. Were it not that they sometimes slow up and signal for wireless information, or to impart news they have 'caught' en route, we would never know from what quarter of the globe they came, or where they were going."

"And nowadays they don't need to land for want of power," observed Frame, "since devices in common use enable fliers to replenish power, by extracting it from the air itself."

"Yes; I recall an improved method occasionally resorted to by my chauffeur," said Henrietta, "which 'reënforced' through wireless process, by drawing electric power from a distant stratum of air."

"And now in mid-ocean light, radiated from 'captive' centers, makes day out of darkness and furnishes power to all manner of passing conveyances; wind-and-water being of course the initial power, exerted also through wireless gathering of air-energy; these 'captives' being themselves cabled to a sea-bottom anchor. Thus Nature herself is in harness."

A faint humming sound was now heard. It grew louder as it seemed to be rapidly approaching. Frame rose to his feet—and caught sight of what appeared to be a huge bee darting straight toward his head with such velocity that he threw up his hands and made a frantic effort to escape by lunging sidewise. Then, just as a collision seemed inevitable, it so suddenly and rapidly slowed down that he was amazed; ejaculating, "Good heavens!" as the "bee" now quietly alighted upon the side of an apparatus at the side of the roost area.

Cecil, who had quietly stepped into the circle just as Frame was battling with the mysterious visitation, now lay rollicking upon the floor in convulsive merriment. Frame saw him—and the reactive shock of delusion came over him. He exclaimed:

"But I thought it *was* an immense bee! What is it?—and whose idea?" The mother began to explain that an artisan in

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Wiltsburg had "made it work," but that it was Cecil's idea—and she looked at him half reprovingly, half indulgently. Then the boy, now on his feet endeavoring to wholly repress his titters, explained: It was an evolution from his bug-trap—a motor for the real bug, a magnet in the implement on the roost, as substitute for the bulb, and a "governor" for the slow-down. And he proceeded to demonstrate that it all meant that a tray containing goblets and a pitcher of delicious drink had been spirited thence from a neighboring rural refreshment stand. . . .

At Flissey's suggestion the party had repaired to the parlor to sing; she presiding at the piano, Henrietta and Frame standing by. Several vocal productions were rendered. Then followed discussion of Henrietta's immediate plans for a season of special dramatics, with a concert of actors of her own selection and under her headship, to be known as "The Brodein Dramatics." The production to be thus brought out was Boschet's "Muses of the Ages," written especially for Henrietta, she having assisted in coördinating the central truth—that of crystallization of the Past in successive voices of the Epochs expressed in dramatics. Of the operatic instrumentals, the organ was to be chief, the harp an occasional variant.

"What an ideal scheme!" exclaimed Flissey.

"I am going to invite you, my dear, to witness some of our preliminary rehearsals——"

"Oh, but that will be so delightsome!" Flissey exulted. "I never could thank you."

Frame, in answering final inquiries concerning his projected trip to China, suggested probable delays and possible embarrassing circumstances connected with the Department of State. He thought that by mid-autumn he would know definitely when he would leave for the Orient.

When Frame was about to take his leave, Henrietta remarked, as she took his hand in the parting exchange:

"Now that you have attained an even higher level than I had believed you would gain so early in life, Mr. Frame, it is easy to feel that you will grow with the great opportunities time will enable you to overtake."

"Mr. Frame hasn't surprised me," said Flissey. "I have believed he would achieve everything!"

"Of course you're coming over to call upon us?" she inquired, with expectant eyes. Yes, he certainly should. And it was arranged for Friday afternoon. . . .

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CHAPTER XXII

WHEN Henrietta had unfolded her plan of dramatics which so obviously comported with the idea of Flissey's assistance, Frame had realized as never before that his own thoughts had paralleled Henrietta's—that she had been longing for such a realization. Then, Miss Loor's declaration concerning reciprocal aid as between himself and Henrietta, had almost startled him—not the idea itself, but as coming from Miss Loor.

As for Flissey, we know she had believed that fate connected Frame with Henrietta professionally. And now she had felt free to so declare to them. But she had never conceived of this tie as a heart-relation.

And now, after what Mr. Frame had said, and Henrietta had confessed regarding her inspired aid, and the rehearsals under that suggestive plan of dramatics, Flissey left the Brodein home with a consuming faith that she herself was coming into inheritance in the boundless field of dramatics!

But in Flissey's heart there had come increasing loneliness. Irresistibly drawn as she was toward Frame, she still felt that the interpreted expressions in his letters stood for all time. . . . Yet she longed to be parcel of his life!

When Frame faced the event of another call upon her, while no circumstance tended to lessen her real worth in his eyes, yet he was conscious that he did not now entertain precisely that feeling toward her which prevailed at the preceding visit.

And when he had now spent some hours in her presence, some lack of his old cordiality seemed coördinated with a slight tendency on her part toward aloofness. The wonted sprightliness, the indefinable faith, were attended by a more serene look—was there negation in its interrogation? . . . In truth, this superimpress of a new life upon vacancy at the heart, which told her that sacrifice to her profession meant craving hunger for another sustenance far dearer to life than acclaim of multitudes—this he had not yet sensed.

But to her, the new vista that opened to his vision should not evince a suggestion of her longing. The blessed opportunity of

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which Henrietta had hinted—there she would find satisfaction which should reveal itself to him. So she talked of Henrietta—of her love for all the actress' life meant to herself! . . . Frame spoke of the assurance conveyed by "The Brodein Dramatics". . . . Then she talked of the "boundless opportunity" in Frame's widening life. He would be so happy—so renowned!

"I will be groping after truth. Happiness—yes, if good is achieved for my country. As for fame, we know that of itself, it is but mockery."

"Not the phantom, but real fame of high achievement—that great truth you are commissioned to bring home to *nations*! . . . I shall pray for your success—it will be my supremest happiness!" —she cried in transport, as he bade her good-by.

Her guileless eyes searched his, stirring him again as of yore. Subconsciousness was instant in analysis. Was there deep below exultation in his success a recess in her heart that longed for something diviner even than his apotheosis—or her prayers?

"Good-by, Miss Loor. You will never know how your words impress me!" . . .

In a further conference with Deever after returning to Wiltsburg, Frame was assured by him that Bradshaw was agreeable to the suggestion that dissolution of the existing partnership should stand subject to his pleasure. Frame thanked him for his good offices; then outlined his tentative plan of action in dealing with the Department of State by way of realizing upon his personal relations to the Soper foundation—the trust having been accepted. In communicating with the department, the fact that there was no semblance of a legal standing in his favor must be dealt with. But would not the department act in the spirit of a desire to promote the purpose of the foundation, as regarded both the university and himself? For unless the graduates under this professorship were accredited by some manner of recognition by the federal government, the foundation itself would be likely to fail. Deever assented to these suggestions, and encouraged Frame's idea of having a thorough discussion of the whole subject with the trustees themselves, looking as well to their coöperation in securing his appointment to the desired function of dealing with a Chinese disputation. Moreover, they coincided in the thought that rejection of his application might mean at least temporary disfavor toward the foundation itself.

"However," remarked Deever, "as great caution and mature deliberation will inevitably be exercised by the government in

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establishing such a precedent, the fact that they had turned you down in the outset should not mean final rejection of your application."

"Quite true," rejoined Frame. "But a still more serious phase of the subject is the effect my theory of adjustment may have upon the foreign government, when considered theoretically and in advance by its representatives." Then was discussed the fact that strong views in support of his theory, emanating from several universities, were known to both governments—a significant circumstance in that connection.

At an informal banquet in honor of Frame as the moving cause of the Soper Foundation, held that evening in the Municipal Hall under auspices of the Wiltsburg bar, the demonstration with which he was greeted while being escorted to his seat at the festive board, touched him deeply. He was visibly affected.

When the repast was ended, the after program was initiated by the toastmaster by reading an appreciative letter from Dr. Soper; whose leading note expressed the hope that what he believed to be a profound truth whose importance had led him to bestow the endowment "would ultimately impress itself upon the diplomatic arm of the federal government, through inculcation of its principles in the educational centers of the country." Frame was alluded to as "the mainspring whose achievements in actual practice of his theory inspired" the writer to founding of the professorship.

Dr. Mempfer, representative of the trustees, being present, responded by enlarging upon the importance of the foundation; lauded the donor, who had shown "a faith which itself transcends reason and enters the realm of psychology," and reverted to the author of the famed theory as one "who has already demonstrated its truth and efficiency in the treatment of individual disputes."

Deever feelingly expressed regret over the impending severance of partnership relations which had been cemented by exceptional ties of friendship; and proceeded to declare that Frame's idea, put into daily practice, had fully proven "that disputants can afford to resort to it for settlement of their differences," and that litigation had visibly decreased since Frame began his practice there.

Judge Alling, in responding to "Psychology and the Courts," corroborated Deever's statement concerning litigation, and ended his discussion of Frame's method with this deduction:

"It would seem to follow that if two minds know themselves psychologically, those possessing them are nearer to seeing and

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feeling alike than they could become under any other process. And as courts are composed of mechanisms of men's minds; the process should in time become efficacious when applied in the tribunals."

Frame, summoned by the toastmaster, arose. He was unable to duly express his gratitude in this presence. After alluding to the essential faculties of the process in question, and expressing the hope that time would bring it "into something like general application," he concluded:

"As every human transaction involves psychology, much of its inner consciousness is stored in the subconscious chamber of the soul. Memory, as part of this storage process, is a prod that awakens subconsciousness. The confidences inhering in what we term 'transaction' constitute, when revealed psychologically, the evidences which unfold the transaction itself."

Judge Alling begged to interrupt by observing inquiringly:

"If, then, a court judge could accomplish what you are able to do by way of psychological analysis, he could dispense with oaths and juries in all cases?" To which Frame replied:

"Yes, if he were brought into the proper relations, directly or indirectly, with the actors in the transaction."

"And now," pursued the jurist, "I am prompted to the mental inquiry, whether perjury could be charged against one who had been thus dealt with psychologically, but who had sought to evade the truth?"

"Permit me to suggest, Judge Alling, that there can be no such state of things as you have supposed," rejoined Frame. "The truth, being written upon the subconscious, nothing but the truth is finally elicited through this process. And while mere failure of memory implies error as to the facts, this, as you will agree, is not perjury. But subconsciousness clears up lapse of memory; since even imperfect memory, spurred by this analysis, awakens subconsciousness, which in turn perfects the revelation of truth."

A feeling of wonderment came over the assembled guests.

The banquet over, Dr. Mempfer declared to Frame that he was profoundly moved by what had transpired in further elucidation of his theory:

"I feel that I can now discuss this subject before our board with a confidence I could not otherwise have had."

Frame gave out a precautionary hint to the trustee, to the effect that the university authorities should exercise circumspection in admitting students to the course to be prescribed under the Soper foundation; this in order to guard against imposition from those

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who really lacked the faculties essential as a preliminary equipment for such a course of study.

"Then, how to test the student's capacity?" suggested Dr. Mempfer. Frame rejoined that that would necessarily be matter of expert treatment. . . .

Frame had visited and thoroughly discussed with the university trustees the course to be pursued in inculcating the principles and practice comprehended in his theory, under the foundation; and they had agreed that his application to the government would be reënforced by their representation of the facts connected with that endowment, and an urgent request made that the application would be granted. Moreover, several senatorial and congressional representatives of the state were to use their influence in this direction.

Meanwhile, he had received a reply from Ichabod Soper; expressing unbounded joy over the outcome of his solicitation of his father's action in the premises. He was glad to report moreover, that the Chinese authorities—who had learned through press reports of the endowment and of Frame's projected visit in that connection—seemed willing to encourage the proposed course of action, and to submit its agents to the suggested analysis, in the event that the American government should certify to the Chinese, its recognition of Frame's application and according him standing as possessing the function of investigator of some specific matter of international difference which it would be agreeable to both governments to submit, upon agreed conditions, to such a process of adjustment. He mentioned the handicap of Frame's citizenship as a possible ground of suspicion of prejudice on his part toward the American contestant, in the minds of the Chinese:

"Were it not that the occult and its incident of psychology are more familiar elements of consciousness here than among western nations, this handicap would have been a more serious obstacle to your proposed experimental work here. As it is, this incident will probably present but slight embarrassment." He closed:

"In my inexpressible thankfulness, for your sake more than all else, I am anticipating in all this far more than fulfillment of my dream in the closing days of our law course, my dear Frame."

Frame had already nearly completed his application for an appointment; outlining therein his hypothetical course of preliminary investigation of the American side of a supposed dispute before proceeding abroad to take up the opposite side; assuring the department that he realized that his plan demanded of himself

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"such justification in advance, as would measurably overcome the prejudice which any unique and conceivably improbable theorum of this character might engender in diplomatic circles," which burden of proof he would undertake to assume. He referred to the attached communication from his law partner, Reginald Deever; to his law thesis, and to the law faculty of the university, who, he believed, "will be willing to testify to the growing impression of the merits" of his plan as outlined in the thesis.

This formal application and its supplement in the communication from the trustees were duly lodged in the Department of State, and were put in due course of consideration by subordinates and report to the head of the department; Frame having received a brief acknowledgment to the effect that he would be advised of any action taken in the premises.

Shortly thereafter, Frame met on the street in Wiltsburg one Hounslow Hast, who was passing through town. As delegates to the recent state convention they had become acquainted. There, in a debate in support of a resolution relating to England's attitude toward Chinese integrity—of which we have already heard—Hast had severely criticized the opposition leader, who stood for endorsement of the declaration in the national party platform requiring England to give a guarantee that she was not aiming to violate the territorial or political integrity of China, during her war against that country as an ally of rebellious India. The pending resolution, having been a modification of the national plank, was known as the "haul-in-horns" resolution. To illustrate his point that the national plank was an unwarranted interference with England's justifiable effort to keep the peace in her Asiatic realm, he had humorously related that his mother's remote ancestor, a lone submissive stage-coach passenger during a dark stormy night on Hounslow Heath, and who was "held up" and robbed by outlaws, had arraigned the British government for disarming and hanging the chief outlaw, while he himself had merely been *threatened* with death and was "still at large"—which story had aroused a storm of merriment in the convention.

On the present occasion Hast referred to the alleged fact that Frame was "about to skip the country," and observed:

"You have chosen, Frame, a safe asylum; for you can't be *ex*-tradited, for the nameless crime, you have committed; since the pre-ce-dent you have set, is altogether above the law, wherein it settles, the rights of adversaries, by proving, that there ain't any adversaries. When I die, Frame, I want you to arbitrate, the still vexed question, whether, when I was born, my moth-er, in

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naming me *Houn*-slow, did the wise thing, or other-wise, in assuming, as she did, that one of my for-bears, on that there *heath,* was brave, or did he, flunk?—by calling up that ancestor, from his grave, Frame, and by reading on the famed wall, of his subconsciousness, whether the impression, made there by them guns, was the impression, of *emp*ty guns, or ware they, loaded? Make it so plain, that my posterity, down to the remotest generation, won't doubt it, that there *ain't* any controversy, over the vexed question; and certify it, on my tombstone. It will so relieve my future repose, as I lie there in my grave, looking up at that tombstone, that says here *lies, Houn*-slow, Hast! And it will so relieve, my posterity!"

"I discover already, in the present link in the ancestral line, that you was properly christened in honor of a redoubtable ancestor——"

"What! Have all them minds,—the whole line, back to the Heath, become assembled in mine?—Am I, the whole thing? The whole convention?—Frame! Is there no future service, to be performed, when I'm gone? But if the latter, how much do I owe you, for the future service? I pay, in advance?"—and Hast deliberately thrust his hand into his pantaloons pocket,—"and I don't want, any controversy, over the post mortem obligation?"

"Well, it will be about one such cigar as you carry about you."

Hast became serious. After the cigars were lighted and were being enjoyed, he declared:

"When you read, as I believe you did, the collective minds of many men in that convention, Frame, then I knew what that *Psyche* meant. But how did you accomplish it? About the man you didn't talk with?"

"I am able to ascertain very nearly what was in his mind, by the impression he made upon the man of whom I inquire as to what he told him. By analyzing his register I obtain approximately that of the other man," was the response.

Hast fell into abstraction. . . . "I'm going to see if I can help you a little in getting that appointment, Frame. I want that experiment tried out. And I want you to be the man to make the demonstration." Frame thanked him and Hast departed.

A fortnight or so after receipt of the first, came a second letter from the department—one principally of inquiry. Must the government assemble together the parties to be "analyzed"? But if some of them were dead, how would he act in such an instance? Again: if the diplomatic corps of both governments were to be participants in final determination of the facts in dispute, how

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would he convince them of the facts previously "found" by himself? Or, if he should fail to convince, how then settle the controversy? Finally: Did he propose to psychologically convince the respective diplomatic corps? Categorical responses to these and some other details inquired of, were requested, as a condition to consideration of his application on its merits, etc.

No question thus propounded was new to Frame—he had anticipated them all, and even others not thus broached. But before replying to this letter he conferred with Deever, for this main purpose: He, being familiar with Frame's theory as applied in practice, could he arrange to be present at a conference with a representative of the federal authorities upon the subject? He could be of great service to both Frame and the government.

"Yes, Bernard, I would defer almost any professional matter in order to aid in your promotion to a definite task under this Soper Foundation," was Deever's ready response. Frame gratefully thanked him; he would mention his name in connection with a suggestion of such a conference. Retiring to his room, he framed and mailed a reply to the departmental inquiries, making it plain that, while his plan contemplated satisfying the respective diplomatic representatives upon the facts, he yet expected to, and believed he could, convince them through a recital to them, as part of the psychological process, of the facts previously determined by himself. This course, he conceived, would not "dispense with the diplomatic arm"—borrowing a phrase from the departmental letter.

Soon—about the middle of July—there came response to Frame's second letter, informing that, upon consideration of his response, the department had "so far entertained" his proposal "as to have concluded to recognize" his suggestion for a conference; which had been appointed to be held on the 1st proximo, etc.

In an immediate conference with Deever upon the subject of this announcement, the latter declared:

"Bernard, I regard it as a tentative recognition of the applicability of your process, *in the way you propose,* to some manner of dispute." Frame was elated.

"Unless some members of the diplomatic corps interpose obstruction, I do not think serious objection will be raised in the department to granting me a commission; especially if the department is assured by the Chinese court that that government is agreeable to my proposed experiment."

"While if they turn you down, they must do so in the face of the Soper Foundation?" was Deever's further observation.

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CHAPTER XXIII

ON the appointed day, Frame's conference delegation assembled in a room in the State-War-and-Navy Building in Washington, occupied by the second assistant secretary of state, Nicholas Dominick. While awaiting arrival of one of the United States Senators from Frame's state, Dominick sat quizzically poring over a document from among Frame's application papers. Handing it to Frame with a grin, he remarked:

"I am not certain as to whether this amounts to an endorsement of your plan of settling disputes, or whether it condemns it."

Frame's "Oh!" after sweepingly glancing over its contents, then at the signature, told volumes. Then he read—a communication from Hast to the Department. After the address and a brief reference to its purpose, it ran:

"Should the appointment be made, before this comes to destination, I hereby forever waive all formalities, in the final disposition of its remains, in the mausoleum of the Federal, waste basket. Its ashes, will not deserve an individual, urn.

"Otherwise, I strongly endorse Mr. Frame's longing, for a commission to undermine some international, unpleasantness—China, preferred.

"More scientifically put: Through this psychological treatment, of his, the parties proceed to forgive, and forget. But before this, they remember; and remembering, they remember, more, as the screws are tightened, so to observe. The *whole* facts now stare, into their reconciled, faces; the dispute vanishes to parts, unknown! They discover, *within themselves,* in the very same sense, no scrap. Not that they literally fall into, one another's arms, in the last scene, nor does either, faint. But they are converted, to the innate *truth,* a rough imperfect, nugget of which, had long lain in one, whilst another large hunk shadowed, so to observe, the dress parade consciousness of, the other; but betwixt which *two* parts, no living man had ever before, been able *to connect, the circuit.* Such is his pro-cess, boiled right down, to zero—that is, the scientific label, of the scrap, as *his* scrap, *is* zero.

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"But, Honorable Sir, wisely reject all this, from a harmless yeoman of, the prairie. For when Mr. Frame shows up, in your Honorable Department, his *person,* chap-eroned by his luminous, eyes, of wonderful light, will forever dispel, all surmise of, *fakehood.* And if not, a fake, he is the most indispensable, man, of modern times, for dissection of differences, that don't really, differ. By all means, he should go, to China. May your Honorable Department perceive this further, truth, no less psychological than, is his amazing, patent.

"HOUNSLOW HAST."

Frame was inwardly chuckling as an exchange passed between him and Dominick when the paper was being returned to him.

"You are safe on the score of good looks Mr. Frame," said Dominick facetiously, "but this endorsement rather suggests a search of your person for dynamite."

The delegation was now complete in the arrival of the expected senator. A departmental counselor—one Sinclair—was now called in. He began an interrogation of Frame upon the question —seemingly still undecided by the department—as to whether the application of his method of analysis to the minds of the respective diplomatic representatives, for the purpose of convincing them of the truth of his previous "findings" of facts, would constitute simply his "process"——

"Or would you say it would be the joint process of your own and their minds acting together?" he ended.

"It would be my process, as distinguished from a determination of the facts by a formal ratification of my findings by independent action of the diplomats," was Frame's response.

During this exchange Dominick had apparently sunk into a deep study—an incident Frame had noted. Suddenly Dominick turned in his chair and suggested to Sinclair a brief private interview. The two then asked to be excused from the conference temporarily, and withdrew to an adjoining room.

"Sinclair," said Dominick, "I have been thinking of this snarl we are in with that Brazilian attaché over this Baral-Denman claim. We are still wide apart. He may be nearer right than I am on the facts. But we have made no progress for ten days. I am inclined to broach to Flindbraugh the advisability of calling in this man Frame, and of letting him exercise his 'faculty'."

"Not a bad idea—if you have faith in his expedient," replied Sinclair.

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In reply, Dominick declared his intention of broaching the proposition to Broche, the Brazilian attaché, as soon as he could secure an audience; and directed Sinclair to resume conversation with Frame.

Within an hour Dominick, after conferring with the Secretary of State, Flindbraugh, and as the result of an interview with Broche, reëntered the conference room and, beckoning Frame and Sinclair aside, arranged that the three withdraw to confer by themselves, and to return shortly. They retired; Dominick explaining that he had prevailed upon Broche to admit Frame to a preliminary conference with a view to his services being availed of in the Brazilian dispute. Would Frame tender his services? and the department could then act more intelligently upon his application?

After recovering from momentary surprise at this turn of affairs, Frame readily acquiesced in the suggestion. He would be introduced to Broche that afternoon.

After the three had reëntered the conference room, Frame's delegation urgently pressed his appointment; Dr. Mempfer explaining the university's interest in his advancement; Deever taking Dominick aside and detailing Frame's method and its success in practice. The conference ended with announcement by Dominick that Frame's application would continue under advisement, and the delegation dispersed; Frame alone remaining in the national capital.

The Baral-Denman dispute grew out of the question of whether Denman, supercargo on board an American merchantman plying between New Orleans and Rio Janeiro, had paid certain harbor dues at the latter port, for which he held purported receipts in full. After being convinced that the dues were paid, the captain, after vainly ordering the pilot—who, with a Brazilian officer who had demanded payment, were on board—to start the ship homeward, gave orders to the engineers and helmsman to clear the port; the vessel started—it was on a dark tempestuous night—and escaped to sea, in spite of protests and the firing of guns across her bows and also broadsides—on, and returned to New Orleans, where the Brazilian parties—who had remained on board—filed protest in the name of their government. Public excitement over this incident was rife in both countries involved. Press comment dealt with the captain's nervy and unusual action, and with the alleged injustice of the Brazilian authorities in demanding duplicate payment, and so forth.

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The controversy reduced to two questions of fact, namely: Whether the fees were actually paid and had been converted by Baral, the alleged recipient—for if paid he had not so reported—or whether the receipts were forged as a pretext, and to smother the fact of non-payment? And as to the law: Could the captain's government justify his defiance, even if payment had been made; and if not made, the question of an apology, etc. Baral, the subordinate receiver of harbor dues, had been guilty of certain financial irregularities prior to the incident in question; no actual defalcation however having been shown; while Denman's character and business reputation were above reproach. The amount involved was small—less than three hundred dollars.

Baral, the pilot, and the Brazilian officer, as well as Denman and the ship captain, were still in Washington in connection with the sifting of facts in the case; and had been examined or cross-examined by both Dominick and Broche and their respective counsel, during the negotiations.

Our government had expressed deep regret that what had seemed to the Brazilian government an affront, had been enacted; accompanied however by representations that all harbor dues had in fact been paid and that the receipts were genuine.

While Frame was hearing Dominick's version of this dispute, and later while listening to that of Broche, he, by his startling power of insight into their mental operations, communicated wholly through his compelling gaze, which became in turn a resolving of their minds into willing subjectiveness—by this phenomenon he amazed them both.

Why that incredulous look, that imperious negative? "How did I come to feel that he knew my mind *better than I knew it?*" Dominick asked himself. The fact that Frame had heard them separately, rendered the surprises more significant.

Said Dominick to Frame that evening: "I seemed to realize something strangely true—in that you perceived some impress in my mind but which my words were not expressing. I was astounded—afterwards—at your discovery!"

"You was narrating from hearsay," replied Frame. "Some of the statements you had heard or read you was inclined to doubt, perhaps to scout at the moment as untrue. Some of those impressions lay more or less dormant in your sub-consciousness, to which chamber they had passed through the memory-register. My process detected and suggested them to your consciousness; and that was the 'negative' you say my looks indicated." Dominick's

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rejoinder was expressed in a blank, amazed contemplation of Frame's personality. Frame impressed him the more by adding: "I also perceived in your registry certain doubts as to whether one or two of your informants really believed all they were narrating to you concerning this harbor transaction."

By pre-arrangement Frame was to meet Dominick and Broche at the former's office on the following morning, there in their joint presence to give his version of the facts in the Baral-Denman dispute. After thinking deeply upon the subject at his hotel before retiring that night, he resolved to request to be permitted to hear Denman's statement concerning his alleged payment of the harbor fees; and that Broche would grant him an audience with Baral in the former's presence.

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CHAPTER XXIV

AT the appointed hour Frame found Dominick awaiting him at the conference room, Broche not having arrived. At his request Denman was called in; told in straightforward narrative of his payment to Baral of these particular dues, and of taking his receipts therefor. He had paid this same deputy harbor fees on former occasions; had also on previous trips paid the collector himself—M. Fanado, whose name, purporting to have been signed by his deputy, appeared on the receipts in question—similar harbor fees.

At Frame's request a messenger was sent for the receipts. Meanwhile Denman informed Frame of his belief that Baral had a confederate, and referred to the "chief bookkeeper" in the paymaster's office as the party referred to. Frame's mental dissent had already impressed the others.

"I must confess," Denman continued, "that there seems a momentary revival in me of consciousness of another theory that came to mind but for an instant on board that vessel that night—concerning these receipts and Baral's connection with this transaction——"

The arrival of the messenger cut short Denman's remark.

Frame examined the receipts now produced; no one speaking meanwhile.

Broche was now announced. Frame had already assessed him as being one whose inward consciousness was often at variance with his word-expressions; a diplomat presenting a certain duplicity, the finished product of official experience; of which estimate he had had more than mere intimation at their first meeting.

He at first mildly demurred to producing Baral. But when he learned that Frame had heard Denman's statement, and that that of Baral should likewise be heard only in presence of Broche and Frame, he at once acquiesced. At Broche's invitation the two retired and proceeded to the attaché's rooms, the latter promising to return with him later.

Baral, a tall, dark-eyed man, timid and of somewhat vacillating disposition, soon appeared. He was an odd combination—a cer-

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tain mental alertness opposed to a tendency to lassitude in action, and a marked equivocality at times, accompanied by an apparent leer. Intuitively Frame swept all surface indications of other qualities aside, and saw in him two vital characteristics—integrity and weakness.

But it was apparent that Baral was ill at ease. Did he fear the thrust of Frame's intuition?

At Broche's request he proceeded in a half-hesitant, undecided manner to recite the little he professed to know of the transaction in question: That he was absent from the paymaster's office and at a neighboring restaurant during the period when these fees were paid, if paid; had received or appropriated none of the moneys, and had passed no receipts to cover said fees. He had been in earlier in the evening, and had in fact received and receipted for the other harbor fees paid by Denman that day. One Diart, the office bookkeeper (the confederate, in Denman's belief), and who also served at times as assistant in receiving fees at the window, he averred was in the office when he had gone to lunch and when he returned. His principal, M. Fanado, was also there when he absented himself, but was gone when he returned from lunch. An assistant bookkeeper also was present during that evening.

Broche noted that Frame's mental demurrers to Baral's statement were few and comparatively slight. Both governments realized that if these receipts were forged to Denman's knowledge, then he must have acted in collusion with some one in the harbor office, in order to have utilized the receipt forms. Right there lay Broche's difficulty—to account for the confederate. He had intimated cryptically to Frame that the assistant bookkeeper "might easily" have been such, while the paymaster himself "could not be imagined to have committed such an act." Contrariwise, if Denman had paid the dues, the theory of forgery was irrelevant, the disposition of the funds the sole question.

Baral was excused; Broche and Frame returned to Dominick's conference room, where Frame revealed his summary of the facts in dispute; turning his keen eyes now upon Dominick, now upon Broche, according as his statement differed from either of their own. He stated in effect:

That Denman had paid the dues, and to the paymaster himself; that here Denman had confounded Baral with his principal; that Denman was acting in haste, being concerned in clearing the port in the stormy night; that the receipts had been previously signed by Baral *in blank,* and were in the paymaster's office for use by

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either himself or his deputy, Baral; that these particular signed receipts had been filled in by the paymaster, and by him passed through the office window to Denman:

"And he it was who in person, or in collusion with one of the bookkeepers, *or some one else,* embezzled these funds," he added.

Broche's countenance revealed virtual confession of the truth of this concluding statement, as Frame, during its utterance, discharged a final psychic resolvent into the attaché's consciousness. He sat with folded arms, contemplating Frame; seemed lost in a study.

"That is strange!" he ejaculated.

"Strange to me as well!" echoed Dominick, manifesting zeal and amazement. "*That* may have been the thought that came to Denman this morning—another theory he seemed to recall as to Baral's connection with this transaction? Let me call Denman," and he started for the phone.

"Wait!" Broche raised his hand in protest. "If he is summoned, then I shall desire to summon M. Baral." To this Dominick quickly assented. Baral should witness Denman's statement. But before they were called in, Broche saw Baral privately informing him of Frame's assertion that the money was paid to Fanado, not to him. Baral merely nodded his head.

"Not surprised?—I am amazed!" Broche went on. "He avers, moreover, that M. Fanado it was who defaulted?" looking his interrogation. Baral slowly shook his head, but looked non-committal. The two now entered Dominick's room.

It should be explained, that on the night in question Baral was informed by the bookkeeper, Diart, that Fanado had not checked the dues-slip in question as paid; that notification thereof to the harbor police officer led to his boarding the ship. That on the following morning Baral had answered in the negative Fanado's inquiry if he had received these particular fees, but had explained that he had received certain other fees from the supercargo that day; that the fact that Baral was absent during the lunch hour was readily recalled by Fanado; that the latter remarked that he himself knew nothing of any payments not credited on the books. That this conversation had been recounted by both to Broche, who had related what he had thus heard, to Dominick; but that Baral, when reciting to Frame the facts, had not been interrogated by Broche concerning this conversation. So that the virtual basis of Frame's perception of Fanado's connection with the incident, were the brain-registers of Baral, of Broche and Dominick.

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While awaiting Denman's arrival, Broche sat deeply absorbed in study. Just as the door opened at Denman's entry he started up and exclaimed:

"Since M. Frame has declared that M. Fanado received those funds, he should face the harbormaster and *repeat* his statement!" Then, as Denman appeared, he went on: "And if M. Fanado received this money, why M. Denman's denial? He too, should meet M. Fanado, and *then* let us see what he will say."

"What is this?" spoke Denman. "Does Mr. Frame declare that it was the paymaster to whom I paid those fees?" All assented to this assumption. Denman suddenly looked blankly as if confronted by reminiscence, and spoke in tone of confession:

"Something told me this morning—yes, Mr. Frame's *look* told me—that I might be in error about having paid Baral." He looked at the latter apologetically, and proceeded: "If I have deposed to what is untrue on that head, I desire to correct myself. But that I paid those fees—that I *know!* Mr. Frame is right in his conclusion."

"But will you confront M. Fanado?" inquired Broche; Denman promptly replying that he would desire to do so, since there was question whether the payment had been made to him. A similar inquiry of Frame elicited a like response:

"Had he been in Washington I certainly would have requested an audience with him also before concluding upon the facts," he ended.

Broche declared he would instantly summon Fanado to Washington, if Frame could be prevailed upon to remain until he should arrive: "By to-morrow afternoon he would be here? Justice demands——"

"Yes, gentleman," replied Frame. "Under the circumstances, I myself feel that justice to both of the high governments commands me to await the coming of M. Fanado. I will remain; and you may so inform him, M. Broche. . . ."

From five thousand five hundred miles away there arose, at one o'clock in the afternoon of that same day, from the Grand Plaza Aërial Station in Rio Janeiro, an official flyer of fleetest type, bearing M. Fanado, two attendants and the official engineers in charge. They were bound for Washington, D. C.; and came through without delaying incident, reaching destination soon after two o'clock P. M. of the following day. Fanado immediately reported at the Brazilian Embassy. Before starting he had been fully wirelessed of the precise occasion of his being summoned;

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he knew he must make a statement under oath concerning the implied charge in Frame's summary.

Broche was constrained to put the matter thus imperatively, from having been so far won over by Frame's drastic analysis, as that the one circumstance in the harbor transaction remaining beclouded in his mind was, Who had *converted* the funds? Why he had not had the conscience to deny, when confronted by Frame's conclusions, that he now believed that *Fanado had received the money,* he could not mentally explain—save through revelation of Frame's process.

This, moreover, was the sole remaining unsolved doubt in Frame's mind. He was convinced that he could more completely settle this point against Fanado, in the minds of Broche and Dominick, by hearing the paymaster's statement.

As to Denman: He now felt that he had paid to Fanado, and had forgotten this circumstance. But the result of his protracted effort to recall the very circumstances, was but a haunting of another personality than Baral; the substance of which reflections he had communicated to Dominick that afternoon; the latter having in turn related it to Frame in the evening. Frame's mind was centered upon Fanado. He remarked to Dominick:

"Fanado is a lighter complexioned man than Baral." Dominick in wonderment asked his reason for so thinking.

"Something in Baral's personality, coupled with his expression concerning Fanado's presence when he—Baral—left the office, and his absence when he returned—I can not otherwise define the source of this belief," was the response. Dominick's consequent amazement was now linked with his previous thoughts when, alone in his office after the arrangement to summon Fanado, he had mentally asked himself whether the revelations since the commencement of Frame's investigation were indeed reality! His present silent contemplation of Frame was merged in his own conviction that Denman had indeed paid the dues. Moreover, he had seen that Broche had been completely undeceived by Frame's analysis.

He rose and went to the ante-room of the Secretary of State, and later secured an audience with that high official.

"We know he has so strenuously insisted that Baral did not and that Fanado could not possibly have received it," observed Flindbraugh of Broche, at the conclusion of Dominick's account of what had transpired. "And when Fanado comes, will Frame be able to bring *his* mind to coincide with his version of the facts? —impossible, Dominick?" he continued.

"Really, sir, I have no idea as to how Frame expects to han-

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dle Fanado. But—this man Frame is a very remarkable man!"

On the following morning Broche ushered Fanado into Dominick's conference room, where were assembled the latter, Denman and Frame.

Fanado's summons to Washington was so sudden as to have baffled deliberate attempts at expedients to evade detection of his crimes—for be it known, he had not only received but embezzled these particular funds, and indeed others previously paid in as harbor fees. He well knew that Broche's theory of forged receipts was unfounded; and, moreover, that another person, Lasterem, the assistant bookkeeper, knew of these payments, and that only fear of being discharged had served to preserve the secret. But there had been no previous collusion between them, nor had there been any division of these fees. He had barely had time before leaving the harbor office, to call Lasterem aside and to say to him in tone of significance:

"Your welfare depends upon your keeping incommunicado—mum is the word,"—with a warning look and without even intimating where he was going.

Broche, in discussing the case with Fanado in the light of Frame's declaration: while he did not denote his own belief, he made no secret that he had been profoundly moved by his experience with the "psychic specialist." "This man possesses wonderful faculties!" he told him with a look of deep significance. Fanado had ventured to remark to Broche:

"If Denman shall hereafter state that he paid me, he stultifies his own previous oath. And no one at the harbor office knows anything about this pretended payment." Broche's reply that he was not entirely clear as to that, caused Fanado to inwardly tremble. Would Lasterem also be summoned?

"One thing you should not forget," declared Broche. "This Monsieur Frame will know your thoughts as well as your words when he has heard your statement." Fanado felt the force of the accompanying glance.

Fanado was a medium sized, well-set man of middle age; large pale-blue and non-luminous eyes. His complexion was pale or bloodless. He had something of the clerical air. An accident in his youth caused his head to be poised slightly to one side. He was a man of few words; was of good repute.

From directly opposite Dominick at the conference table he told of the occurrences of the evening in point. The receipts lay before Dominick, sitting between Frame and Sinclair.

Even before Fanado had been introduced to the Dominick party,

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Denman recognized him; but mentally observed that this was not conclusive of his having seen him on the evening in question; he had doubtless seen the paymaster on former occasions; though he could not recall having previously paid him fees. Again: If seen over the office counter, but part of his rather short form would be visible. But before he had begun his recital, what seemed special features of his countenance became more familiar to him. Fanado was in turn scrutinizing Denman; and the abnormal poise of his head caused him to look from the corners of his eyes —a further cue to his identification.

Fanado's statement needs but summary: He had received no payments, and had had no occasion to report any, on account of the *Jewess* on that night, from the supercargo or any one else; had not even seen him—if he present as Denman was such agent—while the vessel was in port on that trip; had had nothing to do with giving or filling in of receipts for any such fees, or with handling same, if paid. Baral had been present that day and evening until within about half an hour before he himself left the office for home, when Baral had gone out to lunch. Both the bookkeeper, Diart, and Lasterem, his assistant, remained when he went home.

He was about to depose concerning the receipts Broche had now placed in his hands, when Baral, who was entering the room, was seen by him.

"Yes; these signatures may be in the handwriting of M. Baral; they resemble closely those to these former receipts."

"Were ever any such receipt forms signed by M. Baral before being filled in?" queried Broche.

Fanado looked at Baral—then quickly his glance ran the gauntlet of all eyes. Something near consternation was in his face. Now he again set eyes upon Frame's. Resolution calmed his steady gaze into their depths—or did *they* steady him!

"Yes—sometimes."

"Who in the office had authority to fill in and deliver such forms?"

"M. Baral himself; the head bookkeeper—him only by special instructions; and—myself," was the response.

Suddenly, and as he spoke the word "myself," Fanado with his left arm shoved the receipts back toward Dominick, as he added in tone of subdued bravado and of reproach: "But I know nothing of those receipts."

Denman started from his chair—then settled back into it, a

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look of exultant discovery upon his face as he turned to Dominick and whispered:

"Now I know I paid *him*—and that *he* thrust those receipts through the window!"

Frame had already known, through his now more direct analysis, that Fanado had received the dues and had filled in and delivered to Denman the receipts; and felt certain that Lasterem had guilty knowledge—Fanado's brain-registry told that *he* was being shielded.

When now again, following his last utterance, Fanado's eyes caught those of Frame, the psychic light that fathomed his being said to him as in eternal judgment: "Thou liest!"

Fanado cringed back in his chair, folded his arms, and like a cornered beast whose waning courage is masked by a show of its teeth, he gazed successively into the batteries of onlooking eyes—things of fire that seemed to compass his ruin—and half cried as in challenge:

"Well?"

But now he felt that he was impelled by unseen powers to be *looked at* by Frame; and from the instant when again the two sets of eyes met, Fanado was the submissive subject in the hands of condemning, resolving and converting power! Even Broche saw this in his abjectness, submission and conversion.

"Well?—M. Frame, what say you now?"—in tone of the inevitable, from Broche.

Fanado pictured despair mated to resurrection of conversion—psychic conviction of the moment.

"That M. Fanado received, and alone embezzled these funds; delivered those receipts to Denman, who paid him; and that one Lasterem, the assistant bookkeeper, knows of the receipt of the funds by M. Fanado," spoke Frame, as his now compassionate eyes beamed upon Fanado as one who thought and felt as himself.

"True indeed, as to my having paid him!" declared Denman. "Those same eyes looked obliquely at me when he handed me those receipts; and that *stiff left arm* it was that shoved them at me—like his movement a moment ago!"

Fanado exclaimed to Broche in a wail of guilt and of a kind of exalted repentance:

"Monseigneur Broche, do with me what you like! I am ready. . . ."

A moment later Broche, returning from the hall to where he had gone with the paymaster and Baral, walked dignifiedly to

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Dominick's side of the table and declared, addressing Frame:

"As to the facts in this disputation, M. Frame, you have won the case for your government. I thank you for my government for your singular and successful services. I had felt that your process possessed merit. The truth it is to which we all bow. I congratulate you"—turning to the second assistant secretary of state—"Monseigneur Dominick—on the facts, remember. As to the law, we shall see"—and M. Broche retired.

Dominick grasped Frame's hand, declaring in restrained exultation:

"Mr. Frame, what you have accomplished is not merely notable. You have dazzled the officials of my department. We can not comprehend how much your faculty means to the cause of resolving and composing public disputes. I need not add, that I shall most heartily recommend the appointment for which you have applied." Frame replied feelingly:

"I am unable to express my gratitude, sir. If I shall receive this appointment it will afford me an opportunity of exercising my faculties along similar lines in the Oriental field—something I cherish dearly, I assure you. . . ."

The Baral-Denman controversy and incident ended by mutual exchange of notes between the two governments; the Brazilian court apologizing for the unwarranted attempt to detain the *Jewess* and for making the demand upon her supercargo; the United States accompanying its acceptance of the apology, by renewed expression of regret that the incident had occurred.

On the evening of the day of Fanado's confession, the Washington dailies teemed with headlines announcing the result, one of which referred to the "remarkable psychic performance" of Bernard Frame as the expositor. Three days later, when the legal aspects of the case had been determined, the Chicago *Mirror's* leader, under the heading "Won by Frame's Psychology," referred to public excitement over the outcome of a dispute whose aspect of romance had been enhanced "by the redoubtable act of a ship's captain in defying the Brazilian authorities," and proceeded: "All other phases have however been overshadowed by the fact that a western lawyer who, before he had seen the defaulting Fanado, had detected and announced the fact of his guilt, solely through his genius in reading 'what minds are doing while tongues are wagging' "—quoting from another journalistic editorial—"minds, too, that had expressed themselves to him from hearsay impressions upon their brain-registers."

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At Dominick's suggestion, Frame was tarrying in Washington. In his surmise as to the significance of this suggestion he was not disappointed, for on the day following the press reports of the Brazilian apology, his presence was requested in Dominick's conference room.

"I am glad to inform you, Mr. Frame, that I am instructed by my chief to say to you that your appointment to a special service in connection with a certain difference between our government and that of China, has been tentatively determined upon," said Dominick. Frame's countenance beamed with delight as he expressed profound thanks for this assurance. Dominick continued:

"You are doubtless aware of the dispute over the unfortunate circumstances culminating in the Hunan uprising of 1932, in which two Americans are alleged by the Chinese government to have been implicated as instigators of the trouble?"

"Yes; the Chen-Chau disturbance, in which the British consulate was destroyed," replied Frame, who went on: "The present controversy, I believe, is over the liability of our government for those losses; the Chinese government having indemnified England, and is now seeking to hold our government responsible for the sums so paid."

"Precisely—I see you are familar with the character of the dispute," rejoined Dominick. Frame then disclosed that it was in this connection that he had had correspondence with his friend Soper, to which he had previously alluded in a general way; that Soper appeared to be conversant with the history of the case, particularly from the Chinese point of view.

"That is fortunate, Mr. Frame; since—well, it is to this claim that the department intends to assign you," said Dominick. Deep gratitude was depicted on Frame's face as he declared he had cherished in mind this very case since resolving to apply for an appointment; that moreover, he had gathered from Soper's letters that there were peculiar aspects in the case.

"Come with me, Mr. Frame," said Dominick, after cogitating for a moment. "I wish to introduce you to the Secretary of State," and the two passed out, Dominick leading the way to the office of his chief.

When, a few moments later the callers were ushered into Flindbraugh's presence, Frame was introduced as the young lawyer who had "ended the Baral-Denman dispute," that official declared pointedly:

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"Mr. Frame, this department feels itself fortunate in having so opportunely brought you into contact with that controversy; and even more so when we realize that you fathomed the secret of those payments—through your unique and remarkable process." Frame thanked him for such "fulsome praise"; and observed that the process was that which he had applied in his law practice. Flindbraugh frankly confessed his skepticism of its efficacy until convinced by the conclusion of the Brazilian contest. Then came consultation concerning the appointment.

"Quite to my surprise, sir," explained Dominick, "I have learned from Mr. Frame that he is already somewhat acquainted with this Chen-Chau case—through his friend Mr. Soper, an attaché of the American legation at Peking."

"That is something quite unexpected—but equally fortunate also," remarked Flindbraugh, "since we had anticipated assigning you to that case in making your appointment."

"Nothing could be more to my liking, sir," declared Frame warmly. The secretary then represented that certain reasons had led to withholding the appointment until he, Frame could be consulted:

"First, this department and our legation at Peking are not agreed as to the facts. And while for that reason this dispute is imagined to be one that should appeal to your peculiar faculty, yet it was conceived that some embarrassment might arise as between yourself and the diplomatic corps, should you be assigned to this particular controversy. How does this suggestion of embarrassment impress you, Mr. Frame?" The prompt response was, that he had anticipated that diversity of judgment concerning the evidence, such as suggested, might not improbably exist; that he did not regard that circumstance as at all serious.

"I have, then, but one further suggestion to make," pursued Flindbraugh. "Doubtless you may have anticipated some degree of friction as not unlikely to arise over your appointment to act in matters usually dealt with by the diplomatic arm?"

"Yes, sir. I may say frankly, that I have regarded the point of imputed encroachment upon the jurisdiction of the diplomatic function, as the only source of possible embarrassment that could result from my appointment," responded Frame. "But Mr. Soper assures me that, according to his belief, no difficulty on this head is likely to arise at the legation. He also informs me that, after having given the Chinese authorities an outline of my procedure, they seem tentatively willing to permit me to investigate the case from the Chinese point of view——"

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"Really, such an announcement was unexpected," interposed Flindbraugh, who continued: "This relieves the department of some anticipated embarrassment. Doubtless you readily understand that your appointment must necessarily be made conditional upon its being agreeable to the Chinese court—from the novelty of the process."

"Undoubtedly, sir. Necessarily, both courts must be agreeable beforehand, as an essential basis of my appointment becoming effective," replied Frame. Flindbraugh expressed gratification that Frame had thus mentally paved the way to entrance upon the contemplated task.

Having called Dominick aside for a moment's consultation, Flindbraugh resumed his seat to formally announce to Frame that his appointment to the function of ascertaining the facts in the Chen-Chau case would be made on the morrow; and the elated lawyer, after returning his grateful thanks, was ushered out of the room by Dominick; who, upon being inquired of by Frame at the vestibule of the building, as to whether the records and evidence in the Chinese case on file in the department would be available for his immediate perusal, should he conclude to examine them before leaving the city, replied in the affirmative.

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CHAPTER XXV

FRAME, exulted over his great good fortune, wirelessed his father and Deever that his appointment was forthcoming. He believed they must already have learned through press reports of the result of the Baral-Denman dispute.

He wrote to Soper a detailed account of his connection with the Brazilian controversy, its outcome, and of his coming appointment; adding that he should at once investigate the Chinese case as it appeared from the departmental files.

"It was indeed fortunate, my dear Soper," he stated, "that you had acquainted me with this Chen-Chau case before I came here; since the fact that I already knew something of its character and details was matter of felicitation by the department officials. They of course apprised me that the department is at variance with our legation as to the facts. You will realize that what is here stated is given in a certain confidence." He might be on his way to Peking within, say, thirty days. "I may meet with some adventure on the Chinese coastline, in view of the concentration of the military there, as indicated by current dispatches," he declared. He trusted to hear from Soper soon concerning developments in the Chen-Chau case, etc.

In contemplating the events succeeding his coming to the national capital, Frame felt the fullness of realization of hopes that more resembled fiction than reality. Most satisfactory of all—he had earned his appointment on the spot! His achievement in an international dispute had been "fortunate" for the Department of State. He lay in his bed that night half dreaming of imagined future conquests in the Orient; then fell off into peaceful slumber.

After receiving his commission the following day, came a wireless from Soper congratulating him upon his appointment; and assuring him that the Chinese authorities were "not averse," but that only a satisfactory personal interview could place his acceptance "beyond peradventure."

The examination he was now making of the files in the Chen-Chau case disclosed, through Chinese depositions: That Gore

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and Morrison—the Americans involved in the uprising—had willfully stirred up among the populace of Chen-Chau a deep feeling of antagonism toward the European governments represented by local consulates, by openly inculcating the theory that all of said governments had "defied God, the ruler of the universe," by engaging in the European War, and were still defying, etc.; and by publicly declaring that those governments would bring war upon China; thereby arousing anger against the consulates, particularly that of England; all resulting in the uprising which in turn had wrought said destruction of property, etc. The American proofs virtually denied these charges, and went to show that the alleged utterances simply declared that Christianity was opposed to war, that said nations had become steeped in worldly ambition for commercial and social supremacy, thereby ignoring the ethics and spirituality of Christianity, and that war had come as consequential punishment, while yet the participants therein continued to justify their respective action; which insistence would precipitate wars upon China; and that certain fanatical mandarins who had heard this "preaching," had themselves excited the populace to the acts in question, etc.

Upon these proofs, the American legation at Peking had concluded that the two Americans were themselves the culpable fanatics who had caused the uprising; while the Department of State maintained that their action was but the earnest dissemination of their belief in Jesus' spirituality. Further evidence had been ordered taken by each of the two governments; where the matter now rested. . . .

As Frame, en route from Washington to his home, was about to descend from the Union Aërial in Chicago for transfer to the tram for Wiltsburg, he saw hurrying toward him with hand raised as if in signal, Miss Loor. She and Miss Brodein were on their way east, and were soon to take the Airshot Special.

"Oh, Mr. Frame," cried Flissey, "do give us an opportunity to congratulate you," and she turned and looked back toward Henrietta, who was now hastening up.

Frame, delightedly surprised, put down his traveling bag; greetings were exchanged, the ladies showering felicitations upon the event of his appointment to the Chinese function. Henrietta, seconded by eager interjections by Flissey, declared that her pleasure upon learning of his brilliant work in the Brazilian incident, was heightened by her sense of confirmation of a kind of prophetic consciousness of the outcome, she had experienced

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beforehand. Frame tried to look his appreciation of this significant remark.

After returning acknowledgments, and declaring that he regarded the opportunity thus afforded him as of measureless value, he adverted to the subject of the ladies' destination:

"I presume you are on your way back to The Haunts, Miss Brodein?—and is Miss Loor to be with you there?"

Flissey's enthusiasm was not to be curbed. She anticipated Henrietta's response by quickly exclaiming: "Yes, she's going to let me into the charmed circle of her blessed work, Mr. Frame, and I'm *so* happy!"

"And I am sure I shall enjoy the work more than ever, with her assistance, Mr. Frame," said Henrietta. "And I wish you to know, too, that it is arranged to have the summer's rehearsals culminate in an actual performance of the production there in the woods, amid the environments of the previous study. It will take place in 'The Nymph,' as we are to christen the new auditorium my friends are so generously aiding in constructing." The lawyer was about to express his pleasurable surprise, when Flissey broke in:

"I'm going to say, for myself, Mr. Frame, that I shall always feel that this step taken by dear Henrietta was due largely to your encouragement."

"I have not hesitated to suggest such a course on the part of Miss Brodein," replied Frame. "As I have more than once declared, that you two ladies should collaborate in dramatic presentation, is too obvious to admit of debate."

Flissey had a faraway look; and there was ardent deliciousness in the sigh that escaped her.

Frame was hurriedly escorting the ladies out to the aërial, the last call for which was being cried. As from their seats the two east-bound travelers were about to say farewells, Flissey, whose hand was clasped in Frame's, suddenly became calmly, almost sadly, grave—the momentary mastery of dismay that he who was so much to her was to go to a far country, over joy of her coming experience of Henrietta.

In that instant the native psychic penetration of Frame again threaded the vista of circumstance back to that boyish experience of her first impress as the nymph who charmed from distance and haunted his perversity.

The signal for departure startled him to sense of the present. Hands unclasped as fervent gaze met quest of truth. The detected fragment of a tear in her eye was joy and hope and love! Ob-

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served of Henrietta, it reminded of those other tears she had seen when she had visited her in her home. Not strange that these were linked with the personage of him who was lifting his hat to them as they were about to cleave the air for the East—and he for the West and the Orient!

From Wiltsburg—having severed partnership relations with his former law firm—Frame went to his old home on the farmstead for a few days, where he prepared for his departure for China.

He had desired to study the Chinese people and customs, as a basis for the more or less permanent application of his professional theory in that country. In connection with the Chen-Chau Case, he would personally interview witnesses in China concerning the uprising, then absorb the local coloring pertaining to the ethics and spirituality of the Hunan Chinese, and those of the Christian missionary cause in China.

But he mused: "I might, by following that course, be able to resolve the facts without further study of the local customs, for instance, than to dissect merely the particular evidence revealing the cause of the uprising. I might be back home within, say ninety days."

Soon after returning to Wiltsburg, Frame received his formal credentials to the Chinese court in connection with the Chen-Chau Case. The document gave him certain precedence as a special medium of investigation and adjustment, which measurably substituted him in place of the diplomatic corps at Peking; and recited the appointment as having been made conditional upon acceptance of the appointee by the Chinese government; his conclusions on the facts to be subject to acceptance or rejection by either or both countries.

When he had arrived home, the parents and Horace had shown a marked aspect of dignified regard for the now famous son and brother. Less demonstrative than formerly, sacred pride of family distinction in higher achievement, was the key-note of this new appreciation. And when the credentials came and were read in the home circle, Julius had voiced the family gratitude in remarking with a show of emotion: "Providence and the government have been very kind to us!"

And now, on the 3rd of July, when bidding the parents good-by as he was about to leave for the Orient, his mother nearly collapsed at the parting. Julius, by her side, was resolutely calm.

"It isn't that he is going so far away," she grieved, "but—the war over there, that something may happen——"

"Calm yourself, Mother," he soothed her. "There is no real

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danger. Aërial travel will steer clear of military operations." And then, Horace would be with them:

"By the way, Hod, I haven't yet heard of the date"—he was rallying the brother upon his engagement to Miss Alice Grady——

"Wait till we harvest another crop, and you'll receive a card——"

"Oh, Horace!" half sobbed the mother.

"Well, *we* won't be far away," and Horace's hug and kiss was consoling cheer; made momentarily perfect by those of the departing son.

Horace accompanied him to Wiltsburg by airal; whence he took air-express to Saint Paul; boarding there for Peking the limited flyer of the Continental-Oriental Aëro line. The only stop en route after touching at Seattle, was Soya, on Yezo Island of the Japan group—the air-route being thus deflected owing to military operations.

The train—consisting of a large elongated passenger-float with baggage car at the rear—was skirting to southward.

"Soya in twenty minutes," the conductor had just announced.

Nightfall was approaching; the train was passing through cloud-rifts, the falling mist from which obscured view of the earth nearly a mile below; the wan new moon low in the west.

The lookout with glass caught fitful flashes of light to southward—they rapidly became visible to the unaided eye. The sound-ear recorded almost constant reverberations from gun-discharges.

Suddenly from out of the northwest emerged a cloud of gun-planes—the lookout was reporting more of them and transports to rearward. He warned the conductor:

"A battle is on to southward, sir. We are likely to be caught in a pocket. You should land immediately."

Before he had finished, concentrating war-craft, pouring forth deafening thunder and fire from all sides, proved that the flyer was now completely enveloped in the encircling mass of war-planes.

Amid general consternation Frame—among the first to realize the situation—sat peering from an open window to northeast. The remotest planes were on higher levels and bore the heavy ordnance—the battle line formation faced southward. The entire fleet was rising above the flyer's plane, a few seemed scouting below.

"Down!" megaphoned the lookout to the main engineer. The

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conductor was paralyzed. Already several shots had pierced the flyer's wings and torn through the baggage car. She was now rapidly sinking. Now two scouters menaced her pathway; she was deflected upward, only to be met by gun-planes to westward. To maneuver for a turn to eastward was impossible.

Frame—now from the left side of the flyer's stateroom—saw to southward a wall of belching fire—the British advance upon the Chinese, which later enveloped the flyer. Mechanical megaphones seemed useless—only the well-maneuvered electric signals counted amid the din of arms.

Now came a portent from the heavens—a driving rainstorm from the southeast, lowering darkness beyond, relieved by recurrent blinding lightning. A typhoon!

High above the plane of the battle and far apart, were pinnacled the super-scouts, commanding the respective fleets. Their searchlights diffused illumination below and behind them, thus facilitating the work of local officers while enabling the gun-men and infantry to do execution on the enemy.

Lost to all sense of danger, Frame saw in uncertain outline air-sleds of infantry; transports arriving, then retiring to rear to be operated as aërial hospitals; wounded and dying suspended by individual motors, rescued by first-aid men and women similarly floating, and borne to rear; demolitions of planes; scraps of disabled air-sleds floating as units intact—individual combatants pursuing the enemy and firing their guns as if still on board air-sleds.

The impact of the typhoon had borne the general mass westward. The fitful but not unequal rivalry of illumination of battle and of enshrouding clouds; the pandemonium of gunnery joined to howling of the elements; and subtone of crashing noise and shriek and moan—were aspects of demons' revelry and souls' despair!

Where was the vantage? From Chaos would the gods of air and ocean emerge sole victors? Nature marshaled by them was all but baffling Science in thirty thousand men opposed in minor conflict.

Suddenly the flyer collided with a scouter—Frame's detached survey of battle and storm merged in a falling sensation—the car struck the earth with a crash, rebounded, casting him through a window out of which he had been leaning, slightly fracturing a rib, and rolled over partly on its side as struggling occupants climbed or dragged themselves out through the nearest available opening. Its fall was broken and certain death to its occupants

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averted by the automatic starting of auxiliary motors when the collision had disabled the main power; the wings being thus operated to preserve buoyancy.

A wireless distress signal, before the collision occurred, told of marooning of the "Condor," and of the typhoon, and of location; many planes responding, including the east-bound flyer on this same aërial line.

Now the "stored" wireless in the shock-proof cabinet was established on a tripod erected against the side of the upturned car, by the operator and engineers, drenched and half exhausted by the pitiless hurricane.

From the baggage car—which the collision shock had automatically uncoupled, and whose machinery was intact, and which had landed a few yards distant from the mother-coach—the master was shouting:

"All hands to this tentage!" and the arranged parts of a tarpaulin tent-house were being hustled from the car and erected on the leeward side of the stateroom coach. Able-bodied passengers joined with crew in this process; Frame, oblivious of his slight wound, being foremost among the former. However, a surgeon among the passengers was ministering to several of the wounded—a little girl the most seriously; her arm, protruding through a window in the descent, having been wrenched between the car and a projecting rock at the toppling.

But while determined effort raised and stayed the tent-house for temporary shelter, the swirling blast overturned the baggage car; through whose upturned doorways the deluge of rain was now pouring.

To the operator at the tripod came a wireless at the last stays were being driven in the four-minute process of erecting the tent-house:

"Hello, Condor! Air-yacht Mogul, Chino-American registry, Hong Kong. A. Morehouse, to rescue. Where are you?"

It came from west-southwest. The two operators found each other directly. Even before Belden at the tripod had received from the stateroom the flyer's universal aërial directory, a megaphone call from overhead said:

"Morehouse! Here I am." Responded to by: "Belden here. Drop in." Part of these articulations were borne away on the blast and were not distinguishable. But the diffused flickering lights from the battle scene far above, and from the clouds, aided by the impaired motor-lights in the stateroom, discovered the par-

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ties to each other; and Morehouse's pilot circled and landed. Belden had not more than grasped the hand of Morehouse and shouted his thanks, than he heard another megaphone blast—from the Overland-Oriental—shouting:

"Belden! Aid from Redbreast." Belden responded, but realized that he had not been heard, as the call was repeated. He now applied electric power, making a meg-trumpet of the auxiliary phone attachment; and was heard. Moreover, his line-signal colors were now recognized by the circling lighter from the Redbreast—the east-bound flyer. Its master leaped from the landed plane and on to the wireless stand, grasped Belden's hand, and seated himself and began to bob the keys after hurriedly ascertaining that no one had been killed; wirelessing the Redbreast a few explanatory words.

Morehouse, already informally known to those in the tent-house as the first to come to the assistance of the flyer, remarked upon the miraculous escape of the passengers from more serious injuries.

"I myself," he explained, "had been all but inclosed in the circle of war-planes as I saw the English forces gathering, and barely escaped to westward. After catching Mr. Belden's signal I dived below the level of the contending forces before turning to air to this place."

Morehouse was en route from Hong Kong to Victoria, B. C.; was skirting northward to and beyond the Corean peninsula in order to reach the provisional international thoroughfare of aërial travel, and to evade contact with the military in the British air-advance from Hong Kong on Peking—rumored to have been on foot when he started. Being a British subject, he had left Hong Kong clandestinely, the city being still held in part by the Chinese.

Realizing not only his jeopardy because of the overhead battle, but from his relations to the enemy country should they become known to the Chinese military, Morehouse, as soon as he saw he could be of no further service to the passengers, resolved to immediately depart from the scene of the accident. But while he remained close-mouthed as to his British allegiance and his destination, because of the known strained relations between the United States and England, yet the fact of his allegiance was too obvious to permit of prudential screening.

In a general way Frame's mission to China had become known to the Condor's passengers and crew. The conductor, being convinced that Morehouse was a British subject, had expressed to

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him the hope that his country would not become involved in war with England over the question of her political dominance in China; to which Morehouse replied:

"Your country will have no occasion to resort to force against England's alleged encroachments upon Chinese political sovereignty. And should your government at any time investigate into this subject, or concerning England's attitude upon the open door policy——"

Morehouse's sentence was cut short and the colloquy ended by the crash of a spent shot that tore through one end of the tent-house and buried itself in the ground close by.

Word having come from the Redbreast that a rescue plane would arrive from Soya to take the stranded passengers thence, the baggagemen rushed to the car and were now passing out to passengers such of their belongings as could be so handled.

Frame, who stood near Morehouse, had overheard the exchange between the latter and the conductor. When he had been introduced to Morehouse by the conductor he was referred to as the famous American who had been instrumental in adjustment of the Brazilian dispute, and who, he believed, was now on his way to Peking "on a similar mission." This remark had reminded Morehouse of a dispatch he had read to the effect that the "arbitrator" who had negotiated that settlement was commissioned to China upon "a mission relating to the Chen-Chau controversy." Stress of present circumstances had, however, caused him to dismiss the subject with the mental exclamation: "This then is Mr. Frame of whom I have read."

Into the tempest plunged Frame to secure his baggage. Morehouse, eager to assist before leaving, followed him closely and, with his attendant, aided in transporting the articles to the tent-house.

Wireless exchanges had proven that the collapse had been at a point some thirty-five miles southeast of Soya and but a few miles from the east coast of Yezo Island. A ten-minute soar over a range of hills would bring the passengers to Soya—provided the war-missiles did not injure the rescuing craft.

The scene of the battle had, however, shifted to southward; the Chinese on the east flank had forced at least a temporary retreat of the British, notwithstanding the storm had lent its blind aid rather to the latter.

But the ghastly aspect of the neighborhood of the wreck!

The bodies of three Chinese soldiers had fallen nearby. Even

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above the voice of the storm and of the now more distant confusion of battle, the shrieks of the one survivor were heard. To him the surgeon became a ministering angel, at the tent-house. Fragments of bodies were lying about, and straggling parts of gun-planes, small arms, clothing and other battle-scraps were strewn about in wild confusion. A little farther away the most ominous landmark of all appeared as a distortion of native surroundings in oriental landscape of dark-green shrubbery and waving pine-trees—in the projecting muzzle of a six-inch gun which, with its wrecked carriage, had plunged into earth so far that but some six or seven feet of the shaft remained above the earth-dent which told of that trembling all had just now heard above the general roar, and which had reminded of an earthquake! Over against which visage of terror reared a tall uncouth rock whose gaping angle seemed a voracious monster about to swallow the defiant muzzle.

The man-motors alone availed, when not measurably disabled, in arresting precipitation from the aërial battlefield, so that human bodies were intact after contact with earth.

Said Frame to Morehouse, when both had returned to the tent-house and were swishing their soaked hats and regarding grimly one another's bedrenched raiment:

"This is more like a dream than reality, sir. Twenty minutes or so ago I had not a thought of coming upon the scene of an air-fight."

"On the contrary," replied Morehouse, "I had been anxious all afternoon for fear of coming upon some military detachment. Some such engagement was portended by rumor at Hong Kong yesterday morning."

Frame took occasion to inquire of Morehouse if he could inform as to the most practicable way of traveling from Peking to Chen-Chau.

"Take the air, sir, every time, and the usual route. Military operations have not yet interfered with inland travel, save at unfrequent intervals, as far south as Hong Kong," was the reply.

"All aboard this rescue plane for Soya!" shouted Belden, as the looked-for craft settled down. At the pell-mell parting with those who remained on guard of the Condor's sections, Frame hastily grasped Morehouse's hand, expressing the hope that they might meet again under more favorable circumstances. He ended by remarking that he presumed he would be in Peking to-morrow. "But I feel that eventualities may delay us." Morehouse assured him there would be no trouble on the mainland.

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"Invasion will follow, but not this far north, for some time to come." On the outcome of the pending battle or its effect upon the campaign of invasion he made no prediction.

"Are you bound for—America?" Frame ventured to inquire, as he was parting with Morehouse. "I shall cross the Pacific," was the cryptic response. "I too shall go to Soya—will be there about the time you arrive, perhaps. Good-by," and Frame stepped into the flyer; which when under headway flew low and steered to eastward of destination, so as to weather the storm.

Soon after the air-battle had swerved to southward as related, fresh Chinese reënforcements came from westward; the English found themselves attacked in rear. Shortly thereafter a general and concerted movement toward an eastward flanking of the English was ordered; and with the formation of the contemplated junction of the Chinese forces, a section of the enemy was isolated and caught in a vice. The line of battle now was substantially north-and-south; the English were driven westward, the movement being accelerated by the typhoon—but the storm was now visibly abating.

Suddenly from southwestward came a cloud of light-foot war-planes—Indian reënforcements. Like winged arrows they came, and clashed with the foe. Demoralized by this unforeseen new attack from the rear, the English broke; desperately endeavored to escape to southward, were cut in twain, the northern section being virtually surrounded. The main division to southward rallied for retreat toward its Hong Kong base; were grievously harried, many planes being captured and prisoners taken. The surrendered English—a total of nearly seven thousand men—were hurried by the Chinese generals southwestward to a northern base on the continent. Thus ended the air-battle of Yezo—the first general engagement in air of the Anglo-Chinese War; heralded abroad by wireless that night as the astounding fact of probable superiority in tactics and generalship of the Oriental over European warfare. It became a portent of the potentiality of Northern China—and of the energy of the Indian Rebellion far from its bases of recruitment.

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CHAPTER XXVI

INDEMNITY to Japan, the neutral over whose soil the battle had been fought, would be paid by the belligerent powers for all physical injuries incidental to the engagement; this under the Hague Declarations and other guaranties of the League of Nations. Moreover, such conflicts were prohibited, under drastic penalties, by the League, over or near towns of a certain size and upwards.

"Melican man muchee slavy me not flunkee," faintly spoke in pigeon-English the wounded soldier, who had been taken on board the rescue-plane, as they aired toward Soya; addressing the surgeon. "Clomee shlootee men, clomee Melican man slavy slick man!" thus voicing the universal tradition of the American as the arch-reliever of war sufferers.

The wind had slackened somewhat when Soya was reached at about nine o'clock P. M. Yet the night was still portentous. Every one who had fared through the wreck's experience was rain-soaked.

An extra flyer had been sent out from Peking to meet the Redbreast lightship, which would proceed with all passengers desiring to go on without stopping over, crossing the Japan Sea—some five hundred miles—before meeting the extra at Hunchun, north of Corea; and weathering the lulling tempest at right angles. This lightship was collapsible, inclosed in heavy canvas, and supplied with ample motors.

Frame, having undergone a change of clothing, and his injured side having received a relieving application administered by the surgeon, resolved to go on; the extension reclining back to the lighter seat would form a substantial couch. The soar was made without other incident than occasional rebuffs from the storm. Hunchun was reached at about half past one A. M. Thence he was safely ensconced in a sleeping berth on the extra on her return via Mukden. He had wirelessed Soper, summarizing his experience at the battle-scene and that he was on board the extra, and had received reply that Soper would meet him at the station in Peking.

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As he stepped from the craft at destination shortly before five o'clock A. M., Soper grasped his hand, exclaiming:

"Bernard, old boy, how are you? It was so providential!"

Frame set down his grip, looked longingly and gratefully into Soper's eyes, and replied feelingly:

"Ichabod, how much I owe to you!—and to your kind, appreciative father! *That* was so providential!"

"I feel that that foundation was his master-stroke," said Soper, modestly and with deep filial thankfulness. "And it meant so much to me, old chum, as you know." Then suddenly—"but let us go over to my quarters, Bernard, you know the arrangement;" and, instructions having been given for transfer of baggage, the two entered a conveyance and were soon seated in the cozy oriental establishment of his beloved college classmate. On the way Frame explained, in response to Soper's inquiry as to whether he had escaped from the wreck wholly without injury, that he had suffered a slight contusion; that a surgeon on board had opined that there might be a slight fracture of one of his ribs.

"Well! You should go and have it thoroughly diagnosed, Bernard," rejoined Soper. Frame, however, made light of the matter at the moment and while his experience of the night before came in for detailed discussion. He tried to picture in words something of what his eyes and ears had registered of those thrilling incidents.

"By the way," interposed Soper, "where do you suppose the English intended to give and take battle? . . . Over the Yellow Sea, off Shantung, somewhere around a thousand miles from where it did occur," and he explained, in response to Frame's inquiry, that this resulted from superior Chinese strategy which overcame that of the British in their endeavor to entice the enemy out over the sea in force before giving battle; that the legation had kept tab on the entire campaign after the skirmishing began over the Yellow Sea about midday; that after pretending to be drawn out in force the Chinese—whose planes could out-soar those of the enemy, would withdraw; then flank to northward.

"All at once the natives again fell back, but skirmished as if covering a retreat, the English pursuing, to and across the Corean peninsula; out over the Japan Sea, the pursuers there vainly attempting to flank and turn the enemy lines. The fight-and-chase continued until, late in the afternoon, there came reënforcements from southwest—no danger appearing to the English from any

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other quarter. Over the west horn of Yezo island as evening came on, the Chinese did give battle in earnest—from westward. Then Chinks began to arrive from all directions to northward—and far around to almost due east—they came in swarms——"

"Now you've located the Condor, Ichabod, I know something of that swarm," interjected Frame.

"Well, you know the rest—or don't you?"—Frame gestured a negative—"well, as to the remainder of the flight—the typhoon was on; and the English were getting the worst of it, according to dispatches from the natives' pinnacles. Then came the final surprise to the English—the rebel Lightfoots came darting down from their rear—the west; the English were separated, a lot of prisoners taken, the balance retreated southward—and the victors swept back across seas and landed with their trophies, some two hours ago."

Frame slowly nodded his head as he thought of what Soper had narrated. He remarked:

"Now I am confirmed in a thought that came to me as I sat looking up through those columns when the fight began—that those Chinamen knew what they were doing and how to do it."

"I would give much to have had that rare experience," rejoined Soper. "But didn't you realize the danger?"

"I was so absorbed in what seemed a drama in the clouds that I became oblivious to my surroundings," replied Frame. "I felt myself part of the action itself." He seemed lost in the contemplation; and suddenly resumed: "More than that: I did not realize the element of altitude—until that clash came."

Soper was looking into Frame's face; saw that he was living it over again. He involuntarily ejaculated reverentially:

"How sublime!" To which Frame replied that it had not impressed him in that sense. "It was an obvious thing; a normal sense of the inevitable. And I believe that was the experience of the participants. I doubt not that most of them felt that they were spectators, rather than actors, on the whole—a sort of obsession." Then he seemed reminded of something in connection, and diverted:

"Soper, I'm thinking whether I should write, or wireless, Father, concerning this accident and my escape from injury." Soper noted a slight twitching of the muscles of Frame's face as the latter partly turned himself in his chair. Moved by this demonstration, he said:

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"Bernard, that injured rib needs immediate attention. Let's go and see a physician—just across the street," and he rose and walked to where Frame sat.

"It does feel a little stiff and sore, Ichabod. I guess we will," replied Frame.

An X-ray examination revealed only a partial fracture of one of the short ribs—on the left side. "And nothing you need regard with concern, sir," said the physician. "Temperature should be looked to for a few days, and you should remain comparatively quiet for a while."

On the return to Soper's quarters, Frame remarked that he believed he would wireless home; that the press dispatches concerning the accident to the Condor might give his mother undue concern:

"I am thinking of a remark she made when we parted—expressive of concern over my taking this trip during the war. . . ."

Mrs. Frame, after Bernard had departed, had remarked to Julius: "If he gets through without any trouble, I shall feel easier."

When Julius came into the front hall on the morning of the second day after Bernard's departure, he saw flashed upon the news-tablet the following wireless:

"Bernard: Arrived Peking safely. Airal Condor collided with scouter near air-battle over northern Japan. Letter." In calling the mother from the sitting room to read it he guardedly announced:

"Bernie's all right. The flyer had a little brush, is all. Come and read his wireless, Mother."

Mrs. Frame read it through, and ejaculated, spreading her arms in explanation: "There! I knew—I felt, that something would happen before he got there!" She was skeptical as to his not having been hurt at all. Julius did not wholly disabuse her mind of this thought.

"There's a hint of it right there, Julius. A collision!" But she was silently leaning her head upon his arm as tears, less of joy than of thankfulness, came to her eyes.

A few seconds later the wireless had "died" from the tablet, to be succeeded by a news-note to the effect that the Condor had been "caught among war-planes in battle over northern Japan. Accident complicated by typhoon—no fatalities." Horace, passing through the hall, saw this note, and hurried into the sitting room, explaining unexcitedly its purport.

"Oh!" shrieked the mother. "I told you so!" All passed

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back into the hall as Julius was explaining to Horace Bernard's wireless—an electro-copy of which he took from the tablet and showed to Horace, declaring confidently:

"You see, he's all right. He says so——"

"You wait till we get his letter, Julius. If he don't tell us he was hurt—some, I'll miss my guess," responded the mother as a fitful sigh escaped her.

"A typhoon," mused Julius. "Northern Japan. Too far from the equator. Anything for a scare-head."

"He said he'd be crossing Japan in the night—oh!" the mother exclaimed.

"How silly, Mother," urged Horace. "Of course he would have told us if he was really hurt."

"Well, I hope it's that way. We'll know when the letter comes," was the response. . . .

To the reputation of Tromple Shades as a special seat of the social-civics had already been added the honor of having initiated the development of the genius of Henrietta Brodein—whose mode of dramatic production was itself creating a vogue in some of the principal theatrical centers. Moreover, during her last visit to her home she had given it out in a definite way that she intended to found there a conservatory of dramatics.

"It is my belief that the foundations already laid warrant the establishment here of a seat of training which should draw patronage from a large area of the whole country," she told a committee, of which Flissey Loor and Miss Kiteler were members, one afternoon at the Shades in a discussion of the subject. To this end she had recommended enlargement of the grove by acquisition and beautification of the grounds; and that the main wooded section, as a setting for the theater-to-be, should be isolated —entirely detached from the present social-civics headquarters.

This idea had set the neighborhood afire with enthusiasm.

"We can raise the money to buy part of the Tromple Tract, of that I feel certain," declared Miss Kiteler. Joe Cotsworth, a member of the committee, believed there would be no difficulty in acquiring title to more ground, "once it becomes known that Miss Brodein is planning such an ambitious establishment at the Shades."

"And I know of people a hundred miles away who will be crazy to contribute to the theater itself," pursued the zealous Eleanor.

But further luster was being imparted to the already brilliant diadem of fame of the locality—Flissey Loor was to become part

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of the Brodein Dramatics! Music was to lend her thrall to that of the prima donna, in faraway New York City!

"Those two women are growing into each other like sisters!" Miss Kiteler had declared to a friend. "Flissey is as great at the organ as is Henrietta on the stage."

"And some of her harp-feats are just as great," confirmed the friend.

"That reminds me," rejoined Eleanor, "of Henrietta's remark yesterday. She said 'Miss Loor's harp-tones haunt me. It was while under their spell that I conceived the name I gave my Catskill retreat.' Think of that!"

But broader and deeper still were becoming the civic foundations of this rural center. For Bernard Frame's phenomenal development was a powerful accession to her versatility as the mother of local celebrities who were becoming landmarks in far wider spheres of action. As indicative of the significance attached to his appointment to the Chinese mission, the congratulatory wireless sent him at Washington by some of his co-workers, ended with: "Tromple Shades believes you will further honor her and your state and country in transforming the means of ending controversies." This wireless had been copied from a Washington daily by the Public Bulletin and other county and state papers.

Frame sent a brief wireless to his father; and after breakfasting with Soper at his clubroom restaurant, he had lain down for a rest before accompanying Soper for an introduction at the legation. Half an hour before noon he rose and wrote a letter to his parents. It was brief; minimized the eventfulness of the Condor accident; made light of his slight hurt of his rib; expressed his delight over his reunion with Soper; and ended with this summary of his impressions:

"China is a delightfully strange country. Her soldiers know how to fight well."

Before visiting the legation Frame and Soper briefly discussed the situation created by the former's appointment, as modifying the relations of the diplomatic corps to the Chen-Chau Case. Soper's assurance that he believed he had paved the way to a perfect understanding, which would obviate friction, was received gratefully by Frame. To the latter's remark that his information pointed to a belief by the legationists that the missionaries were responsible for the so-called uprising, Soper replied:

"Yes; on the face of the investigation. But it is really a dictum of Byron Cheshire, counselor for the legation. The dean is not convinced, but he at present defers to Cheshire."

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Soper declared that, as to taking further testimony, there was none to be had, unless resort was had to the general mass of those present at the riot. Cheshire, he said, was of the same opinion.

Inquiry developed the fact that Gore was now in Peking, nominally in missionary work, but was really being held to await the outcome of the controversy. Frame remarked that his first step would be to interview him. Morrison had been allowed to return to Chen-Chau, upon his promise not to indulge in expressions calculated to again agitate the people.

In regard to Frame's probable reception by the Chinese authorities, Soper was still of the belief that his appointment would be concurred in; that his suggestion in the wireless was intended to apprise him, Frame, in advance, of the necessity of a personal interview as a preliminary to the acceptance of his services by the Chinese government.

"I conceived that you had in mind some definite phase that might present embarrassing features?" said Frame.

"Your surmise was correct," replied Soper, "but I would not care to explain further, until you have discussed the subject of this dispute with certain legation officials." Inquiry as to the impression entertained at the legation concerning his, Frame's method, and the eventualities of its application in the Orient, elicited Soper's response:

"They are not at one on the subject. Mr. Beaumont—the dean, as you know—is non-committal, but has taken the matter of your interposition seriously into consideration. Drachmeil, who has this case under his special oversight, has expressed an enthusiastic belief in your process, while disclaiming definite knowledge of its psychic phases. Cheshire affects to have adopted your theory, in principle—even professing to have dealt psychologically with the witnesses, especially the missionaries and one or two of the mandarins. In fine, the impressions abroad at the legation are principally the result of what they have heard of your disposition of the Brazilian controversy."

After Frame had met Beaumont and Drachmeil, and the tentative discussion had led them to express unqualified submission of their functions to his special process, in keeping with the spirit that had led to the appointment, he was introduced to Cheshire; with whom he freely discussed the Chen-Chau Case as might two lawyers having identical functions in the premises have done. After a discussion of the evidence, Cheshire said:

"Such a case—where fanatical religious faiths clash—can be analyzed only through a psychic process. I could not otherwise

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have demonstrated that their rashness, in turning the phials of their perverted wrath upon Christianity itself and making of it the enginery of war, and then in declaring that China's jeopardy lay in precipitation of another war by that same Christianity—that thus they fanned the spark of pagan faith into the consuming flame of anger that fired and destroyed that consulate."

During this pronouncement Frame sat dissecting the mentality of the speaker. In the contact of eyes Cheshire realized that his own psychic self was being subjected to Frame's scrutiny. So profound was this conviction that certain subconscious negations he himself was experiencing were discovered by Frame, that he was bereft of faith in his ability to favorably impress upon his auditor his belief in the cause of the uprising.

Each now sat contemplating the other. Cheshire became an obsessed observer. He seemed to be facing a solicitous antagonist. He felt mental foundations within him weakening. He declared:

"There is more in this than I have known!"

"I was thinking," only this phrase came from Frame's detachment of the moment; for his psychic faculty had been piercing circumstances centered in Chen-Chau, but seen through the vista of Cheshire's soul.

"What of the mandarins?" asked Frame, still unmoved by Cheshire's ejaculation. The latter, striving to comprehend the purpose of this question, became amazed as he felt himself in new environments. Frame was helping him to *realize himself* as never before! . . . The mandarins! . . . He had not heretofore known *them* as now. . . . Those subconscious negatives—the fleeting doubts he had all but unconsciously entertained when listening to their depositions—were revealing truths he had not before imagined. From true interpreters in giving testimony against the missionaries, they were now revealed as instruments of evil! Frame's look was a command to him—but in form of an interpretive invitation—to tell him through soul-communication of his revelation of the mandarins. Cheshire now felt that the missionaries were only relatively responsible. And when he finally spoke, it was but the oral landmark mutual consciousness had registered in the consciousness of each.

"Those mandarins were falsifiers!" Frame made no oral response.

The lawyers rose from the conference. Cheshire looked with a new familiarity into Frame's face as they clasped hands, and said:

"I was surprised—aroused—when I read of your feat in the Baral-Denman controversy, sir. But the experience of this hour

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is more than surprise. It is revelation!" Frame, bowing his acknowledgments, requested Cheshire to refrain for the time being from communicating to any one his present impressions of the testimony of the mandarins.

"Certainly—I realize what you mean," was the assenting response.

The discussion between Soper and Frame over this interview was very brief; Soper yielding at once to Frame's suggestion that he felt bound to refrain from communicating, for the time being, the result as affecting Cheshire's views of the evidence. Soper then said:

"I have arranged with the dean to present you to-morrow at the Wai-Wu Pu, and an audience has been appointed for eleven o'clock." Frame expressed his pleasure, adding:

"You know how anxious I am for a favorable issue to this matter of presenting my credentials."

Frame's reason for desiring that Cheshire withhold an expression of his present impressions of the evidence is obvious: Knowledge of his changed view might prejudice his, Frame's, standing before the Chinese authorities, were they to learn that he had already virtually applied his process to the American counselor, whose present attitude regarding the mandarins was unfavorable to the Chinese side of the case.

In view of the fact that he, through contact with the records of the Chen-Chau Case in Washington, and with the officials there and at the legation, had learned something of its merits, Frame was in doubt as to whether he could now discuss with the Orientals the nature of his process without communicating to them something of the virtue of his potency, in the sense of revealing the facts; as also as to how this might affect the matter of confirmation of his credentials.

On their part, the Wai-Wu Pu had received the impression that his analysis in the Brazilian dispute had revealed to the participants a version of the evidence which they *confessed* as being true. Still, to them the process was that of *forcing the will* of adverse witnesses; this although Soper had not in his explanations to the Chinese officials put forward such a theory.

After lunch, when Frame and Soper sat on the veranda in front of the latter's apartments, watching the motley throng of passers-by who on foot and in every conceivable form of conveyance, Oriental, European and American, known to this cosmopolitan thoroughfare—Legation Street—presented an ever-changing spectacle to the observer from abroad, Frame remarked:

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"This is so different from America! Yet there is much in these changing scenes that reminds me of the States. However, I heard an Englishman at the clubroom remark that Europe dominates this ancient capital."

"Even a brief residence here brings one to realize that the social and business atmosphere owes more to America than to any other foreign peoples," replied Soper. "The Chinese are in closer sympathy with us Americans. The work of our missionaries and statesmen has convinced them that the Americans are their most disinterested friends."

Soper, changing the subject, related to Frame that in broaching to the Chinese officials the subject of his method, he had endeavored to emphasize its possibilities when applied to an international dispute:

"I made known to them that you had long contemplated a practical application of your procedure as between the United States and China. One of the members of the Board said to me, inquiringly: 'His method is communion with the spirit of the other man, over whom he is trying to prevail in the controversy?' To which I replied by referring to your dealing with the disputants separately, then of revealing the facts in their joint presence; that you do not prevail *over* either party, but *through* them both. They were puzzled; seemed not to comprehend how one could 'prevail' in the case through a psychological process, without forcing the will of at least one of the disputants. I then appealed to them to conceive of it as a process of analyzing the *minds* of the participants in the transaction. And while they seemed to distinguish between dominance and analysis, yet in their conception your faculty is that of a purely psychic revelation savoring of occult power. I referred also to the phase of your interpretation of memory registered in the brain-cells, and, through that medium, of apprehension of the source of knowledge of the person analyzed——"

"What response did they make to that explanation?" interposed Frame.

"Their spokesman, Lung li, replied, that if you could tell the *beginning* of a man's thoughts, the process must be essentially an application of occult power." Frame was visibly impressed. He however, contented himself with observing:

"For myself, I do not expect or intend to go into a labored effort to explain the process, with the Wai-Wu Pu. I shall merely remind them of the conditions which limit my functions under my appointment; that is, that in case they accept of my

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services thereunder, my solution of the facts will not be binding upon the Chinese government unless the authorities at Peking shall be satisfied with my version of the cause of the uprising." Soper was here reminded of another thought:

"They attach special significance to the thought that in the Brazilian dispute you detected fraud on the part of the *Brazilian* officials; that your faculty may be partial—that it is essentially a part of the racial trait or consciousness; that with you it is a cult of western civilization—the occult in America. I imagine they therefore conceive of an analysis of foreign souls—to employ the analogy they seem to follow—with greater incisiveness because of innate affinity for the opposite in soul-consciousness; that your analysis may reveal more of truth when applied to the Chinese witnesses than when dealing with the American missionaries. They did not express it as prejudice against the Chinese government; but they may conceive it as such in effect."

"Quite naturally, their conception of my method is as yet imperfect," remarked Frame.

At Soper's suggestion, the two were now striding down Legation Street eastward toward the old Moat. Lengthening shadows stretched athwart the street and into adjoining parks, silhouetting in exaggerating outline the stately trees of various types that lined the avenue, as the sun neared the western horizon. Amid the rumble of vehicles and the babel of voices, no perceptible sound was created by the gliding forms of multitudes who soared above and along opposite sides of the wide thoroughfare.

On past groups of cypress; the venerable cedar; the pistachio, the pines of China, the alder, the walnut, the lacquer-tree; by wonderful settings of yellow-and-other roses; rhododendrons in endless variety; the Chinese clematis; peonies and countless other flowers. Glimpses of these in novel arrangements made lasting impressions upon Frame's mind, yet somehow in contrast to his early dreams of the Orient.

They had reached the outer grounds of the Spanish Legation, chatting of things of the moment's notice. Then they returned.

"When you have met the Wai-Wu Pu, and your fate as special minister is settled," said Soper, clapping Frame's shoulder, as the two were again ascending the steps to reënter his apartments—"I mean, of course, settled favorably—then we'll *do* Peking. We'll get a bird's-eye view of the whole charming landscape from the air first, and then we'll go where your yearnings or caprice may decree."

"So be it, Ichabod. I'll never be able to reciprocate"— . . .

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CHAPTER XXVII

AT the appointed hour on the morrow Beaumont led Frame, Drachmeil and Soper into the vestibule of the stately Yamen in which the Wai-Wu Pu were established; and they were soon in the presence of that august body.

Frame was introduced by the dean as the American professional who, as was fully understood by the board, had been appointed by his government to investigate in its behalf the Chen-Chau Case; subject to the acquiescence of the Chinese authorities and their acceptance of the appointee to act also in behalf of the Chinese Republic.

Frame then addressed the Board; announcing that he had the honor of proffering his services in the controversy adverted to, and of submitting his appointment to the consideration of the Board upon the faith of his credentials, etc.

The president of the Board remarked inquiringly:

"This is an unusual, and a remarkable function? Such is the view of this Board, after giving the subject such preliminary consideration as our advices enabled us to do."

"It is so regarded also by my government. In fact, my appointment constitutes a precedent in the experience of the diplomatic service of my country," was the deferential response.

"We have been led to believe," continued Lung li, "that this special commission would not have been granted by your high government without having reposed faith in your plan of prevailing with both parties to the controversy?"

"The conclusion of your Honorable body is justified," replied Frame. "The representatives of my government expressed their belief in the efficacy of my process, before making the appointment."

Frame then explained, in response to the inquiry of the chairman as to how he persuaded the officials of his government of the virtue of his method—that the principles of his professional practice were already known in a general way to the officials in the Department of State, prior to his application for the appointment. That the application itself, and certain discussion had upon the

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occasion of his personal appearance before the Department, had served to impart further information:

"Perhaps I should add," he concluded, "that my process was put to a test by the Department of State before the appointment was decided upon. Doubtless your Honorable body are possessed of some information of the result of that test." He assured the chairman that the Board's presumption that he referred to the Brazilian dispute was correct.

"And, as we have been led to understand," pursued the presiding officer, "you prevailed over the Brazilian harbor master to confess that he had embezzled the moneys there in controversy?"

"I can not say I *prevailed* over him. But after interviewing other witnesses, and hearing his sworn statement of the transaction, I announced in his presence my conclusions as to the facts. My analysis revealed to him a new consciousness of the evidence. In a certain sense, he prevailed over me when his consciousness was revealed to me. The process by which he conveyed his consciousness was perfectly free. I did not force his will."

This explanation evoked private discussion among the members. Lung li now interrogated Frame:

"How was it possible for you to *know* what was in the harbor master's consciousness, without exercising power over him?"

"In my analysis, I was simply receiving what he gave me. There was no compulsion," was the response. "There was, as I perceived, a revelation of his inner self."

"Why do you say his will was without avail?"

"Since will is not a perceptive faculty, the instant we ascend to the level of psychic interpretation, all consideration of will power is left out of account. All sense of an adversary will ceases in psychical resolving of facts." Another consultation followed; then another interrogatory. Yes; psychic force was employed in his process, he responded:

"But I do not conceive of this force as *will,* as that word is usually understood."

"Do you conceive of its having a different meaning in any possible connection, in exercise of your psychic process?" queried Lung li.

Frame, who had anticipated this inquiry, from what had preceded, promptly replied:

"Yes;" and his whole being lit up with a new and singularly animated intelligence, instantly communicated to the consciousness of every member of the Wai-Wu Pu and of the legation, as

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his discerning gaze fell first upon one then another of the array. A psychic contact was mutually realized as transcending race and all mental conception. After a brief silence, Lung li spoke—there was *rapport* in subconsciousness between all present:

"Will you define the meaning of *that* sense?" Universal apprehension was experienced of what the response would be.

"Every force that is is the will of Him we Christians call God!"

"And we of the Orient call Ti of Heaven!" echoed Lung li.

"Your God is my God! There is but one Supreme Being. He is the Universal Will!" Frame rejoined in tones of confidence and impressiveness which pervaded every soul in this now sacred circle.

By what seemed an instant universal impulse, every member of the Wai-Wu Pu and of the legation and attendants were on their feet; each array beaming with eyes of strange inspired light into those of the other—a celestial obsession. Language more potent than words found perfect expression as hands were mutually extended and hearts of Occident and Orient became one in bonds of universal faith!

Lung li, facing Frame as the two were embraced in a handclasp, exclaimed in perfect English—addressing him:

"*That* will has perceptive faculty!"

"It is the one Interpreter and Absolver of all controversy! But it is not an *adversary* will!" said the American responsively.

All stood in silence.

The president—facing first his compeers, then turning to the Americans, pronounced:

"It is well! It is enough for this audience. The Wai-Wu Pu is adjourned!"

Lung li had intended to inquire of Frame concerning the phase of his process relating to analysis of the brain-cells; but the event had swallowed up all thought of further discussion.

It was enough that the special appointee of the great American Commonwealth had resolved all doubt in the minds of the questioners, through an exposition which appealed to the common Source of all forces, and brought revelation that there is no controversy when Truth dispels conception of adversaries and makes all parties as one! The Orientals were convinced that Frame, through psychic power, could resolve the Chen-Chau dispute. And this to them was occult power!

Beaumont and Drachmeil, on their return to the Legation from the audience, were discussing Frame's explanation of his

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plan of procedure, in the light of what had there transpired and of previous information from Soper and through the press. They were deeply impressed. Beaumont declared:

"I have come to regard Frame as one endowed with singularly remarkable power of insight into consciousness in others."

"And for myself," replied Drachmeil, "I believed that his response to the question about the *other* meaning of will was, to the Celestials, the key to their understanding of his process; that they saw in his distinction between psychic insight and *forcing the will,* nothing less than the ultimate faculty they conceived of as occult power."

While Cheshire had purposely refrained from attending the audience at Beaumont's invitation—mainly because of his promise to Frame, which he conceived might be jeopardized by his being present—he sat awaiting the return of the dean and Drachmeil, as they reëntered the former's office at the Legation. He was informed that while no announcement had been made by the Board, all had understood that the members had become convinced that they would be justified in accepting of Frame's services. He learned too, that Frame had given no intimation of his impressions of the mandarins—that the subject of witnesses in the Chen-Chau Case, or the case at large, was not discussed.

"May I ask, what course did the deliberations take?" he inquired. The dean's response was explanatory of the discussion as involving *will,* and the use of force; of Frame's responses leading up to the "Universal Will"; and of the singular demonstration of psychic experience by those present. Cheshire declared he had had something of a similar sense of such a phenomenon at the conclusion of his explanation to Frame of the evidence given by the mandarins. The dean rejoined inquiringly:

"Then he analyzed the evidence?"

"In effect he did—or, for a verity, he analyzed me out of my previous convictions"—he checked himself and said apologetically, "but I ought not to have said so much—I promised Frame not to make known my—my present impressions—please to regard what I have said concerning my convictions, as being confidential—for the present, gentlemen."

"Certainly," replied the diplomats, both speaking at once.

Drachmeil was struck by this half-confession of a change of belief by Cheshire concerning the mandarins' testimony. He had learned that Frame had read the depositions of those witnesses, but knew that he had as yet seen neither of them. He mused:

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"Then he must have learned, through Cheshire himself, that which by some process of reaction, changed Cheshire's mind!—or did he make use of both the depositions and Cheshire's 'awakened consciousness,' in the operation?"

The following day Frame, summoned by Lung li to the Yamen, was handed a formal document acquiescing in his governmental appointment and accepting of his proffered services by the Chinese government as international disputant in the Chen-Chau Case.

He begged Lung li to convey his profound thanks to the Wai-Wu Pu.

"And you will please to inform the Honorable Board that on day after to-morrow I shall expect to depart for Chen-Chau, and will desire passports; also an introduction to and permission to interview there the mandarins Chung Kwang and Lee Sun." He was assured that his several wishes would be cheerfully complied with. Frame then said:

"I shall desire at all times to listen to such suggestions as your Honorable Board may see fit to submit, concerning such further evidence, if any, as your Government may desire to bring forward."

"Of that you will be advised in the near future, Mr. ambassador," replied Lung li.

Frame, who was immediately accorded an audience with and who exhibited his Chinese credentials to Beaumont, was congratulated by the latter; he observing that he presumed Frame would desire to go to Chen-Chau to investigate the case on the ground. Upon being informed of his plan of departure, coupled with an inquiry by Frame as to whether it would be agreeable to the legation to permit Soper to accompany him, he was assured by Beaumont that immediate action would be taken, and that there would be no difficulty. Frame then repaired to Soper's room at the Legation.

"The way is all clear now, Ichabod," he spoke exultingly as he extended his hand to meet that of Soper, who comprehended at once what these words meant. The latter glanced at the document which Frame placed in his hands, and ejaculated gleefully:

"This is fine, Bernard!—but I knew it was coming" . . .

A copy of the Chinese credentials having been lodged with the American Legation, a wireless was sent thence that afternoon to the Department of State at Washington, announcing the action of the Wai-Wu Pu. A press dispatch went out that morning—for this wireless had reached destination early in the day at the

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Washington meridian—over the United States, making known the precedent, thus set for the first time in history, of the submission of an international dispute between a Western nation and an Oriental power, to the arbitrament of one whose known process of solution of the facts was that of psychical interpretation of evidence as evoked from the consciousness of others. Therein the Baral-Denman case was stated as the only other instance of such a submission. The honor of instituting such a process was credited to the United States, and that of becoming the psychic interpreter, to the eminent American citizen who had acted in the Brazilian controversy.

This event, being known to the foreign representatives at Peking as a remarkable precedent in the experience of diplomacy, the heads of the various embassies were not slow in seeking the acquaintance of and paying their respects to him who was thus the center of interest.

Frame had left the Legation in company with Soper. As the two were leisurely walking toward Soper's apartments, Frame was relapsing into his former channel of expression of grateful acknowledgment to Soper; when the latter interposed——

"Now, Bernard, in view of the fulsomeness of your previous expressions of like sentiment, you will do me the favor of retiring all thought of myself as an instrument——"

"When hearts become marble, and souls are dumb——"

Frame's voice was slightly wavering; he had partially halted. Soper, divining the cause as he believed, looked into distance; then rallied, saying feelingly and sententiously:

"I believe we both feel more than words can convey, Bernard."

"Soper," declared Frame, as he clasped his friend's hand and lightly brushed a tear from his eye, "this is getting beyond me! I am immersed in much that is absent—in America!"—and eyes met again as of yore—and yet—there was something more; something absent from Frame's immediate presence.

Soper understood this only in part.

Frame found himself reverting to the days when at the farmstead and later he had dreamed of conquests in the profession of his choice; of further achievements, at home—and abroad. Then of consciousness of the possible in joint achievement! Came welling up ideals of two towering figures on the stage of vision . . . Ives Waters. . . . Apple blossoms! . . . Trompe Shades! . . . The mutual abnegations. . . . The Haunts. . . .

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Unable to communicate to Soper this fullness of exuberance in mingled present and retrospect conjured by these reveries, he realized that the words "and souls are dumb" were largely responsive to thoughts of others far distant. There was instant revolt of manhood—soulfully he owed Soper an apology!—but—and *this* was the burden of the instant: Unspeakable obligations to those absent ones so largely part of his being and his aspirations, brought counter-revolt in their favor—he should express to *them* his thankfulness!

"I knew it, old chum! *We* understand each other!" was Soper's instant response.

Frame diverted: "You are going with me to Chen-Chau?" Soper's exclamation of delight at the thought was coupled with a suggestion that perhaps it could be arranged. Frame mentioned Beaumont's virtual assurance, whereupon Soper showered compliments upon him—he was "an autocrat in diplomacy!" After all, he asked, of what use could he be in Chen-Chau?

"In various ways. We shall see," was Frame's response. . . .

He was reclining in Soper's room for a brief rest—his wounded rib had occasioned a slightly uncomfortable feeling to-day—when a long-distance wireless came—from Julius Frame.

Deever, through pre-arrangement with Washington, had been notified of the action of the Chinese Board; he in turn had notified the elder Frame, whose wireless to Bernard had reached him but a few hours after the legation had wirelessed Washington. It read:

"Mother and all unspeakably pleased your success. Tromple Shades joins." Within a few moments came another—to Soper, from his father:

"University joins me congratulations Frame's acceptance by Chinese authorities. Mirror says event and foundation great significance." Frame read this last:

"This is especially gratifying, Ichabod—something recognizing the Soper family in this fortunate development!"

"It is very satisfying to me, Bernard," rejoined Soper feelingly.

"By the way," he deviated, "the dean is planning an informal reception at the Legation in your honor, for to-morrow, at two o'clock——"

"A reception?" exclaimed Frame with unfeigned surprise. He became engrossed in thought.

"I trust that it will be also wholly devoid of stress, as regarding my mission in the sense of disparagement of the diplomatic corps," he said.

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"There will be no misconception on that score, Bernard," replied Soper. "The theory of your appointment as a tentative experiment is well understood. I feel certain the dean will not permit of any error getting abroad as to the precise significance of your mission."

"Your assurance as to his understanding puts me at ease, Ichabod," responded Frame with evident relief. Then Soper said he would leave Frame to his rest for a while longer, when he would take him for a soar over the Tartar City. "Then we'll have dinner," and he withdrew to another room.

"We'll begin by swinging over to our nearest neighbor, the Dutchmen," said Soper when the two were later in the airal; and westward they flew thence; back by the American and on to the Spanish Legation; to the Japanese; to southward over the German; back to Legation Street and darting on east to the Italian grounds. Returning, they circled the French Legation to east of the Japanese; over the Yamen enclosure; northward over the Flower Garden—they were enticed to alight here to revel for the moment amid the richness of Oriental horticulture. Thence, glimpsing the Wu Wang Tu and the tang Tzu en route, to the Austrian Legation at the corner of the general legations area. Westward they flew across the Moat and skirted the Academy grounds; thence skirting the Imperial Carriage Park and into the space above the British Legation; on southward by the Mogul Market to the Russian Legation; back to Legation Street at the starting point; where they alighted; proceeding thence to the restaurant, where they dined.

"This is a wonderful place—a mosaic of Nature and human nature," remarked Frame, as they sat at table.

"But if you could see the whole Tartar City—and then its core, the Imperial City!" exclaimed Soper. "You know we merely glimpsed the enclosure of the Imperial as we sailed by the Academy. And when you have returned from Chen-Chau, Bernard, you must inspect the walls and shrines, and get over into the Chinese City——"

"You mean when *we* return," replied Frame, beaming the satisfaction this day was bringing to his life.

"Yes; if it shall be that way," rejoined Soper. Then they chatted of the modern straight-away diplomacy; which Soper declared was inaugurated by Hay's school of American diplomats "right here in Peking."

"By the way, Soper," observed Frame, "when this Chen-Chau matter is out of the way, I intend to commune with you and

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others here concerning the alleged jeopardy of China from British insidiousness in undermining her integrity through statecraft."

"Yes. And that reminds me of our political issues at home, and of which you have so interestingly written me," said Soper, "and of your state convention—that 'haul-in-horns' resolution and so forth. I apprehend you had much to do with its adoption."

"I stood against our government becoming obsessed with suspicion that England was bent upon tearing China to pieces through intrigues with Germany—but I don't care to impose upon our time now to discuss the question, Soper."

"I'll have something to suggest when you recur to this subject in future," said Soper.

Frame met Gore by appointment, the following morning, and listened to his narration of the circumstances of his experience at Chen-Chau preceding the so-called uprising: for the two-fold purpose of comparing it with his deposition and of getting a face-to-face acquaintance at the outset of his investigations, with the central figure around whom the factual elements of the Chen-Chau Case were grouped.

It was a simple recital of his faith in Jesus' life and mission as the basis of his own religious convictions; of his teachings and preachments among the Chinese; of his belief that Christianity so-called had become an awful perversion of Jesus' being and mission; of his further belief, confirmed by the eventualities of the European War and the contemporaneous reign of Mammon, that were the Saviour now among men He would arraign the policies of the Christian churches "as scribes and Pharisees and defamers of the Temple of God."

"In a word," he with strange mildness declared, "virtual scorn of Jesus' humility, and pride of worldliness are the common terms in which the unrepentant recriminations over the cause of that war have gone on." Believing this, he had declared it. This had brought displeasure of the American Missionary Society. "They were told that their insistence that I recant was but a form of the unrecreant sinning I was denouncing. . . . I am taboo with the Christian workers of the higher ranks in China."

Largely because of his loss of caste with the leaders his mission at Chen-Chau, he declared he believed, had been deliberately perverted by certain missionary agents—this had had to do with the attitude of various officials of our government, etc.

Then this "John the Baptist of the Second Coming," detailed the circumstances of his actions in the premises; the attitude of

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the mandarins; their hatred of him and its causes; of their inspiring and conspiring in agitation of that frenzy resulting in the destruction of the consulate. He went on:

"I the cause? Yes; and no. I helped lay the foundations which facilitated the ends of the mandarins. But I plead with the excited crowd they by their propaganda had assembled, not to break the peace, not to injure Christian property.

" 'If they are false prophets, as you have denounced them as being, we ought to burn their temples! Your Book says the godless prophets of old were cast out. Then should these have high places in China?' Their tools exhorted them to strike me down as a prophet false to my own teachings. But most of these deluded people revered me for my past ministrations. 'But if his teachings are true, then take him at his word, and destroy the houses of those foreigners who will yet bring war upon us.'" He declared to those declaimers, he related, that they were moved by designing mandarins who, though bound to keep the peace, "sought to undo all we missionaries had done for their people. That if they should succeed in working destruction of Christian property, I would denounce them and the mandarins to their government as the moving cause.

"You know the result," he ended, his face shining with zeal and spiritual yearning.

But as his eyes caught the attorney's fixed attitude of interspection, the missionary realized in his own consciousness a new revelation of the "riot." . . .

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CHAPTER XXVIII

THE reception at the Legation, while informal, was of marked cordiality; a genuine ovation which regarded Frame as a special co-worker among legation compeers, and as having been distinguished by the gracious acceptance of his services by the Chinese government.

In his responses to various congratulatory expressions from foreign representatives, Frame, after acknowledging these compliments to himself and the governments involved, declared that the honor conferred by the latter in assigning him to the work in hand, placed him under obligations he could not too emphatically acknowledge; the more so in that the process of adjudication itself had been accorded by both governments a credit which, in view of its novelty and consequent liability to misgivings, was a marked tribute to himself and, in some substantial sense, to his system of professional practice. He ended:

"If the event shall prove that my services were satisfactory to that ancient and now rapidly rising power whose government has seen fit to thus reciprocate the initiative of the United States, the gratification to myself, a hitherto stranger to your gates, can not but be overflowing!

"But, gentlemen of the Legations, I wish to emphasize the fact that this recognition far transcends the personal tribute, and evinces a deep and abiding friendship of its government and people for those of the United States, born of mutual good-will existing between them!"

Lung li responded in behalf of his government; declaring that the reference to the motives of his government in the premises touched a tender spot in his heart, as it would that of all Chinese officials and of the people.

"Indeed, gentlemen," he continued, "I would contrast the sentiment thus ascribed to my government, to another thought—that that sentiment was quickened through realization that the novel process itself was *proposed* by the greatest of Democracies of all time!—and that my government and people desire to avail themselves of this new opportunity of proving that, while China is one of the oldest, she is likewise one of the most modern of states!"

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While hearty applause greeted Frame's expressions, acclamation tremendous in import followed Lung li's utterances.

M. Flourbet, dean of the French Legation, general spokesman on this occasion of the legations at large, alone among the foreign representatives at Peking had made a studied effort to comprehend Frame's process. And with the pursuit had come a fascination into dreaming out its mystery—for after discounting the explanation that the method was scientific, he still referred Frame's analytical power to some truly remarkable endowment. He was on his feet to close the speechmaking. His introductory remarks led to these impressive words:

"While, in the settlement of differences, the point of view and diversity of interest are supposed to be as inevitable as natural, yet may not this belief prove fallacious? May not the revelation that diversity of interest finally appears as but one dominating interest, come through elimination of points of view?

"My slight information of the nature of M. Frame's process enables me to conceive of only certain elements it is said to embody. That the actual participants in a given transaction find revealed to them the same evidence 'in the same sense'; that then realization of *identity of interest* banishes sense of *adversaries,* and that the remaining question of rights devolves upon *undisputed facts!* The possibilities are beyond measurement in words." Then came the peroration:

"My government, and, I doubt not, all those here represented, will rejoice that the great Commonwealth of the New World has thus joined hands with the first of Oriental peoples to become a Democracy, in a novel effort to amazingly simplify settlements of international disputes. May the experiment prevail! May psychic analysis transmute the slow process of hostile array of adversary procedure!"

These proceedings were published in the Peking dailies, the wirelessed summary appearing in the metropolitan press of America and elsewhere abroad.

At the close of the reception Beaumont, after expressing acknowledgment by way of congratulations on the part of the diplomatic corps, informed Frame that Soper had been detached to accompany him to Chen-Chau. Frame expressed his delight; then requested that Morrison—whose acquaintance he expected to make at Chen-Chau—be summoned to Peking, that he might have an opportunity to make use of his presence upon his return; compliance with which request was assured him by the dean.

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The fly from Peking to Chen-Chau—upwards of a thousand miles south-southwest—is over the upper reaches of streams debouching into the Gulf of Pe Chihli; thence over the famous Hoang-ho and on to Han-Kau on the other great waterway, the Yangtsze kiang; thence up its valley to the Siang—whence, deviating from the main air-line, the soar is over and parallel with the Yuan-kiang to Chen-Chau on its banks.

The party of six, consisting of Frame, Lung li as attaché of the Wai-Wu Pu, Soper, and an interpreter and a clerical assistant, and the pilot, left Peking in a special airal at ten o'clock on the day following the reception; and after alighting at Kia-fung and Han-Kau, reached destination at about six-thirty P. M.

Some sections of the province of Hunan—of which Chen-Chau is one of the principal cities—were still reputed so unruly as to challenge at times the local authorities. Civil commotion, intensified by periodical agitations against foreigners, proved that while the reign of the mandarins of old was fast waning, instances still existed of their continued predatory influence.

Such in brief was the situation in the city and vicinity of Chen-Chau; the uprising in question having been the principal local event of the times.

Frame's plan of investigating fundamental circumstances in revealing the true causes of the Chen-Chau riot, comprehended a test of his preconception of the situation. It involved also some acquaintance with local environments, to render more effectual his check against witnesses' recitals concerning the event itself, upon his return to Peking and when psychologically revealing the facts.

It was understood, moreover, that the respective assistant forces of the American and Chinese representatives, were at the service of the other. Lung li on his part would make such investigation at Chen-Chau as the interests of his government might in his judgment dictate.

Frame's official headquarters there was at the American Consulate; where he and Soper met the consul on the following morning. Certain inquiries were made concerning the town and people; the two spending the balance of the day in visiting various quarters of the city and environments, including a survey of the British Consulate grounds (upon which a new structure had been erected); and lastly, the immediate scene of the riot. With them were Lung li and Sin Lung, an assistant and interpreter.

Pursuant to the arrangement made for preserving the record

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of the evidence, all official conversations and the recitals of facts were to be recorded in the universal method of the automatic graphophone. In addition, Frame planned to preserve certain parts of prospective interviews by stenographic notes, to meet contingencies that might arise.

On the following morning Morrison, at the consulate, explained the occurrences of the day of the uprising, to which he was witness, in connection with the appearance upon the scene of Lee Sun, Chi fu (prefect) of the districts constituting the "Fu" of the locality; he being stationed at Chen-Chau.

This voluble and exclamatory witness declared: That shortly prior to the rush upon the British Consulate, and while he was endeavoring to keep the peace, Lee Sun suddenly appeared in the crowd; that while he made no visible demonstration, a near-by exhorter, recognizing the presence of the mandarin, became even more zealous in his denunciations of the Christians; that Lee Sun as suddenly disappeared—but after the fatal frenzy had doomed the consulate.

"Some of those damnable intriguing mandarins have been the real planners of these riots, sir. They were the more bent on exciting to these destructive demonstrations because they realized they were on their last legs, politically."

Morrison noted that Frame seemed looking beyond these expressions, which did not appear to impress him.

Chang Kwang, the other mandarin in question, was Chi hsien of a local district in the environments of the city—a petty magistrate. Disguised as a peasant at the uprising, he was openly urging on the declaimers. To Frame he professed ignorance of the demonstration itself; but declared he had known Morrison and Gore as "bold prophets of the war Christians would bring upon the Chinese people." While he bore an air of being unconcerned, he instinctively felt at the close of the interview that he had been rebuked by something in Frame's posture as listener.

In the afternoon Frame and his party met Lee Sun at the Yamen; Lung li and several local officials being present. Frame's function as investigator "in view of the discrepant attitudes of the two courts on the evidence as it stood," as well as his novel process, were made known to him.

He had already learned of Frame's fame in connection with the Brazilian dispute; and had explained to his compatriot that he was here "to search our souls for the truth in this rising of the people," and that his power was a mystery.

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Before his introduction, he had seemed unmoved; looked stolidly upon the floor of the Yamen. But now his demeanor at once changed. He exhibited toward him the innate reverence one feels for a superior being.

The substance of Lee Sun's statement to Frame was: He had done all in his power to quiet the uproar and to secure a peaceable ending of the excitement rife on the day in question. His denunciations of Gore and Morrison were but a repetition of his deposition. At the end, he sat staring at the American as if facing an oracle.

All members of the Peking visiting party were present. As he was closing, Lung li was called with his interpreter into another room, when he immediately turned and, addressing Soper, requested him to join him, which he did, leaving only Frame and his interpreter with Lee Sun.

As Soper was disappearing from the main conference room he turned and assured Frame that he would rejoin him in a moment, and Lee Sun was seen to rise and start toward the street door, where an attendant seemed waiting for him.

Frame sat at the inner side of the counsel-table, and was apparently following with his eyes the disappearing mandarin—who had somewhat briefly bade him his parting compliments, explaining that his presence in another part of the city was necessary, and with his attendant had passed out into the street.

Immediately behind Frame was a door leading into a third room of the Yamen.

As he sat quietly contemplating the subject of Lee Sun's recital, his interpreter, Sin lung, excused himself and stepped through the door to his rear. Almost instantly this door was reopened. Frame believed that Sin lung was returning.

Before he was aware of the fact that strangers were behind him, he was seized by the arms and shoulders by two stalwart masked men as a third jammed a heavy cloth saturated with some powerful narcotic into his mouth and nostrils, while a fourth struck him a stunning blow upon his *left ribs*.

Such resistance as came was more responsive to instinct and nervous reaction than to intelligent will-power; since Frame's body became limp, and with a half-suppressed gasp he became unconscious. He was spirited from the room through the doorway in a jiffy, the door was closed and locked, and no sound of what thereafter transpired in this rear room could be heard from the main room.

Soper—who had been complying with Lung li's request that he

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make clearer to the official a certain clause in the copy of Frame's appointment—returned within the space of perhaps two minutes to the counsel room, with the expectation of rejoining Frame and returning with him to the consulate.

Not finding him or his assistant there, he looked about toward the street, thinking they might have gone in that direction. Lung li and his interpreter had now reëntered this room. Soper turned and accosted Lung li:

"I did not see Mr. Frame—he did not go into your room?" No; he had not seen him since they had left the counsel room. "But perhaps he has gone with his interpreter to the consulate," he ended.

All at once Soper felt a concern. Thoughts of foul play engrossed him. He had theretofore received hints of surreptitious use of force, to which some corrupt provincial officials were susceptible; had even bfoached something of this to Frame before they had left Peking. But both had agreed that with Lung li present and the consulate a moral protection, one in his (Frame's) official station should be immune from possible jeopardy, even in Chen-Chau.

But the thought that Frame may have been constrained to go unexpectedly to the consulate did not silence his concern. Ah! Now he saw—he had been left alone!—but no. Sin lung, in whom all at the Legation had fullest confidence, had remained with him. Surely he would not betray him, he said to himself.

His eyes fell upon the door behind Frame's chair. "May not they have passed into this room?" he inquired, pointing toward the door.

"We will see," replied Lung li. Followed closely by the others, he stepped to the door, seized the knob—and discovered that it was locked. As he turned and met Soper's anxiously inquiring eyes, he ejaculated:

"This door is locked! I do not understand." His air and voice told of something wrong. Soper's heart began to palpitate with real alarm. Then came to mind that Frame was hatless when last seen,—that his own and Frame's headgear must be in the cloakroom, if the latter had not gone. A similar thought came to Lung li's mind.

"Let us phone the consulate and ascertain if he is there," said Soper—the two were already hastening toward the booth. The celestial's thought was of the police—to force the door. He said to Soper:

"You phone up the consulate, and I will call the police;" and

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he entered the inner room and took up the desk-phone, hastily summoning police headquarters for the chief to come quickly. The consul's assistant responded to Soper's call, saying Frame had not been seen since morning. Soper urged that the authorities search for him between there and the Yamen. Lung li's interpreter was hunting for the janitor—perhaps he could unlock the door.

A strident gong was sounding—the police were arriving. With their inrush came the janitor.

In vain. The key to this door would not operate—the keyhole was obstructed. First the janitor, then a policeman tried it without avail.

The door was then forced; revealing a wooden plug forced into the keyhole—and Frame's hat and cane gone, as was the interpreter's hat.

A short hallway led from this cloakroom to the lavatory; while at the rear a door opened upon an entry-way from the rear of the building, where was a narrow roadway leading to a side-street. A high wall flanked the roadway, and—save for the narrow opening at the exit—this wall extended at a right-angle turn to the street, to the corner of the Yamen. As usual during the day, the gate was open—but was loosely swinging instead of being fastened to the wall.

Diligent search inside and in the roadway revealed no indication of abduction of Frame—unless what resembled a fragment of a mask, found by a peace officer at the edge of the roadway and nearly opposite the rear entrance, could be said to be such.

Upon inspection, this scrap seemed freshly torn from what might have been a mask. But neither this nor slight traces of footprints at the roadway was regarded by the police as definite evidence of an attempt to spirit away Frame—or his interpreter.

However, upon reëntrance of all parties into the Yamen, a policeman recalled that at the forced door he had inhaled an odor which had reminded him of a narcotic; which remark evoked from Lung li an exclamation:

"I myself had an impression of a sickening odor as I passed you here by the door," addressing Soper. He mentioned also having noticed that the chair in which Frame had been sitting was turned partly away from the council-table. Soper, now much cast down, observed that Frame might have so turned the chair were he rising to go for his hat and cane.

An officer ejaculated determinedly:

"This man has been forcibly taken away!" At the orders of

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the chief, Fu See, all rushed to the phones to bid the police to search for "abductors of a high foreign official from the Yamen." Soper sank for a moment into a chair in a kind of dismay.

Mounted and other police were detailed to all parts of the city in search of Frame—or of traces of his abduction.

One of the under-officers—Chan lu—a man of exceptional ability, had remarked to the chief:

"No use to search for them within the city—they doubtless left by air, and have dropped down in some country rendezvous." As to why he thought so, he declared he had a theory.

"State it?" returned the chief.

"To so work upon his fears as to frighten his soul, so he will lose his power." The chief, divining the import of this suggestion, demanded how he came to think of this. Had he suspicioned beforehand? He replied:

"Many knew—feared he would use his power over the mandarins—over Lee Sun and——"

Yes, he replied to the chief's question, he had heard an employee in a certain laundry say that Me lun, foreman in Ah Sheng's junk shop, had said there was truth in this report of the American's mission.

"Let us go there," said the chief, who stepped into the phone-booth and signaled the central station that he was going to the shop. He was about to leave with Chan lu, when Lung li—who still remained at the Yamen—accosted him, saying he was thinking he should communicate with the Wai-Wu Pu concerning Frame's disappearance and the circumstances.

"Do so," replied the chief. "I feel certain that they have carried him away." No, he had no suspicion as to who was implicated. He related the information received from Chan lu, and that he was about to investigate at the junkshop.

Lung li immediately wirelessed the Peking authorities of Frame's "mysterious disappearance from the yamen," summarizing the circumstances of the cloakroom and of Lee Sun's statement "immediately before Frame's disappearance"; that the mandarin had not yet been located in town, ending with: "Police and myself believe Frame was abducted. Suggest secret service men be sent here at once."

No one at Lee Sun's apartments professed to know where he might be; no clue to where he had gone from the yamen had been discovered.

Soper's wireless to Beaumont—sent before that of Lung li to

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Peking—showed he was not yet convinced of an abduction. His conclusion was: "Believe he is either abducted or has mysteriously absented himself from Yamen with Sin lung. Police and Lung li believe former theory." Immediate aid from the Legation was requested. Beaumont's response was:

"We air for Chen-Chau immediately. Have demanded from Wai-Wu Pu protection of Frame, which is promised. Board's representative will accompany us."

Soper had just phoned Beaumont's response to the consulate, and was showing it to Lung li—who had not yet received a response to his wireless—when sound of rapidly approaching footsteps was heard. Turning, he beheld Lee Sun with two attendants. The mandarin in startled voice exclaimed:

"Sacred Heavens! We have just heard that the Honorable Minister Frame has disappeared. What is the truth?—I was in court. We have just come from there."

He was given a summary of the narrated circumstances; Lung li asserting: "We believe he has been forcibly removed."

"Abducted!—what is there to indicate—but doubtless you have some evidence?" he ended, looking alternatively at Lung li and Soper. Nothing in his general appearance or voice indicated duplicity or fear of consequences.

"A mask!" he repeated after Lung li's reference to the supposed fragment. He seemed absorbed in contemplation of that circumstance. To his inquiry regarding the wood taken from the keyhole, he was informed that the police kept it. He agreed that the circumstance of the odor was suspicious. When told that efforts to locate himself and to procure from him information as to Frame's whereabouts had been made, he replied:

"I have not seen him since I left this room with this man"—pointing to the attendant who had accompanied him away from the yamen—"nor have I heard anything concerning him, until this report came to the courtroom."

Soper's scrutinizing study of the mandarin during this colloquy discovered nothing unusual, save a slight nervousness. To Soper's soliloquy as to the part Sin lung had played in connection with Frame's disappearance, Lee Sun observed:

"If there has been an abduction, I believe he too was spirited away." He could not believe that he had been unfaithful to Frame. When informed that Fu See had gone to the junkshop, to report soon to the central station, he said, addressing his attendants:

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"We will go to the station;" and the trio left the yamen and were conveyed thence.

At the junkshop the chief and Chan lu were plying Me lun by merely suggesting that a report was out that the American, Frame, may have been sent by his government to make further disturbance by exercise of a mysterious power which he possessed—no intimation being given that Frame had disappeared; a mode of approach hit upon by the under-officer. Had he heard of such a report?

In truth, Me lun was merely the innocent possessor of information. He had heard of some such report; and his superstition had engendered fantasies regarding the American's ascribed supernatural faculties. But why were these officers coming with this inquiry? He resolved to give no information—he dreaded possible consequences to be visited upon him *by the American.* He knew nothing about what had eventuated at the yamen. But he remembered distinctly who it was that had remarked concerning the truthfulness of these reports. He replied evasively that he knew nothing of such rumors; that he had not even seen the American; he had heard that he had but just come to town.

"From whom did you hear that?" The question visibly moved Me lun—his informant was him who had declared his belief in the American's power, though the declaration was made to a third person. However, he replied that he could not remember. After a moment's conference aside by the officers, he was told that if he refused it would go hard with him. Still oriental craftiness and duplicity sought an expedient: Two men were talking together, he averred.

"As to which one said this I am not certain——"

"Who were they?" demanded the chief. He knew only one of them, he replied:

"Who was he—come, be quick. No more dodging?"

"It was—Wo Hut."

Surprise lit the exchange of officers' glances. This name called up memories of crimes.

They took Me lun to the station. There the chief's eyes met those of Lee Sun, who with his attendants sat awaiting his arrival. As the mandarin scanned the escorted one he seemed somewhat disconcerted. He was on his feet in an instant and approaching the chief, an old acquaintance, and inquired anxiously:

"Has anything developed?—any discovery of who it was?—we have just come from the yamen?" The party had halted. Me lun, bewildered, stared into the faces of officers and the mandarin

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—a total stranger. He thought: "Does he mean *me?* But the yamen—what!"

"We shall see," returned the chief, whose instant inquiry elicited the response that the mandarin had gone to the Municipal Court from the yamen. Yes, he had learned that the disappearance had occurred almost immediately after his own departure.

"And he had been in town less than two days—a short time for an abduction conspiracy to ripen," continued Fu See, straightly eying Lee Sun, "a short time, for *strangers* to his coming until they knew of his arrival?" The mandarin responded, now with more bluntness:

"His disappearance is a mystery—is there any evidence of a conspiracy?"—again he eyed Me lun.

"We shall see," repeated the chief, who suddenly assumed an air of serious responsibility as he said to Lee Sun—motioning to another officer. who came forward:

"Lee Sun, it becomes my very regretful duty to inform you that you will consider yourself under police surveillance until further orders," instructing the officer accordingly.

"What!—what can this mean? Why place *me* under surveillance? What possible shred of evidence——"

"I make no assertion as to evidence. Circumstances make my duty plain," he continued, looking commandingly at the officer; and the chief, Chan lu and Me lun passed into a sub-room. While Fu See—who had stepped to the phone-booth—was giving instructions for Soper to be safely escorted from the yamen to the station for a conference, Me lun, now more than ever confused, asked:

"Lee Sun, have they arrested him?"

"Cease your inquiries," replied Chan lu. The foreman could think only: that some high officer had disappeared from the yamen, and that Lee Sun, the great mandarin, so prominent in connection with the uprising, had apparently been taken into custody—then he wondered whether Wo Hut would be apprehended.

"And if I tell them what he said, I shall fear my *fung shuy!* —that Melican man may steal *my* soul!"

Suddenly he thought of the American in connection with the disappearance. Holy Heaven! Could it be that *he* was the "minister" that had disappeared? A perceptible tremor ran through him.

"And if he has disappeared, he may spirit away my soul!—and he, a Christian, will take it to Shang ti!" *

The chief's want of perspicacity which should have restrained him from having the colloquy with Lee Sun in Me lun's presence,

* The afterworld of the Christians, in the superstition of many Chinese.

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was unfortunate, in view of the adopted plan of keeping the latter in ignorance of the disappearance. But the controlling thought with the officer was to apprehend and secure the presence of this mandarin—whose whereabouts had been matter of anxious inquiry in the general connection—before the authorities of Chen-Chau and of Peking at all times. For he well knew that, in view of the suspicions now rife against Lee Sun, were the latter to disappear, he, the chief, would be responsible—and the terror of possible consequences had banished thought of Me lun at the moment.

"What was it, now, that Wo Hut said?" inquired Chan lu when, after the chief's return from the phone, he in response to his instructions resumed the interview.

"I do not think it was he that said it," was the stolid response. The chief, still disbelieving him, admonished him to speak the truth.

"It was said that this Melican man—was coming here to trouble Lee Sun the mandarin with his *fung shuy*—that there was truth in this report——"

"*Who* said this!"—the chief was fronting the foreman and pointing his finger——

"It may have been Wo Hut—it may have been the other"—the chief's head was savagely shaking a negative—"I believe—it may have been Wo Hut, if I knew it was him I would tell you so. May Heaven witness!"

"Describe the other man!" demanded the chief impatiently.

"A short stubby fellow. His face bloated. One eye staring and no slant!"

"How dressed?"—Fu See himself was now staring.

"For all the world, like a peasant of Hunan." Again looks told more than words between the officers.

It developed that this scene occurred the day before yesterday, about sundown; that the two men in question were standing in an alley a few doors from the junkshop, as the witness was passing by to his home; Wo Hut leaning against a wall, the other in front of him, swinging his arm and saying something about this "Melican man"; that under his other arm was "some little thing, maybe a basket, maybe a mask——"

"A mask? Are you certain?" The chief looked across to Chan lu. No, not certain, he did not see it plain, did not pay attention—and went on. Besought to try to recall what it was, Me lun stared at the wall:

"I remember now—I thought as I passed on, what a funny fellow he would be in a mask—in a play, you know?—and swing-

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ing that arm, and swaggering about"—genuine reminiscence lighted the witness' face.

"See that this man is held subject to call at any time," said the chief to Chan lu. "I am going to the yamen." He hurriedly disappeared; ascertained by phone that Lung li was still there; then phoned up all sub-stations, beginning with that nearest the well-known habitat of Wo Hut, then that not far from which Sin-le-fang the "Cross-eyed's" lair was located—and imperatively ordered scouring the neighborhoods to find if possible these two criminals—as such they had been known for years.

He now hastened by air to the yamen. A moment later Soper arrived at the station in an enclosed auto under civic guard. Finding the chief absent, they returned to the yamen.

Soper had already been assured by Lung li—of whom he had urgently inquired—that any secret service men in or about the city would be summoned to act with those en route among the Peking parties. He found that the chief and his men were now in conference with one of them; that reports from sub-stations were that Wo Hut had not been seen for nearly three days, and that "Cross-eyed" had probably disappeared from his haunts some four days ago. More important information had come—that a covered airal had been seen rising from the side street after gliding from the rear of the yamen, about the middle of the afternoon; that it flew southward—toward the river. The informant had been detained.

"That would materially aid our theory of an abduction," exclaimed Lung li, "for I have already ascertained from the attendants that no one arriving at the rear passage by air-car has, so far as known, entered the yamen to-day." This report created a sensation, while supporting as well Chan lu's suggestion.

But the motive? This had been discussed at length. The vital question was, Would they take Frame's life? The consensus of view was in the negative, upon two main grounds: Sin lung also had been abducted—for communication with Frame. But the conspirators' party itself might easily have included an interpreter. The rejoinder was, that they might have intended to make of Sin lung a communicant to the authorities—even to Lee Sun—in the dénouement of the transaction. A second ground—advanced rather insistently by the Chinese—was that of popular superstition in connection with the expected arrival of the American in Chen-Chau—known in advance to only a few local officials. This theory was crystallized in the phrase "to deprive him of his power."

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CHAPTER XXIX

IN the discussion as to motives, Lung li answered Soper's inquiry as to how the supposed outlaws could be benefited by depriving Frame of his powers, by explaining:

"First, it would satisfy their *fung shuy*"; and this was defined as a fundamental omen—something ever present in the soul-conception of all Chinese natives, and which he religiously believed concerned his welfare:

"It is frequently consulted as an admonition which must be appeased in connection with their necessities and conveniences," he ended.

"But how could this international question, of a money payment in which individuals are not interested, affect the *fung shuy* of these individual conspirators?" pursued Soper; to which the official so far responded as to suggest that Wo Hut and the "Cross-eyed" —now believed to be among the abductors—were also believed to have had to do with the riot. "They were enemies of the Christians." Then, after suggesting that he could not, with due regard to the rights of the respective governments, go further in discussing the Chen-Chau affair, Lung li stated a further reason:

"It may well have been to aid Lee Sun himself; either on their own initiative, or—I am not committed to this theory, and advance it only hypothetically—they may have acted through his instrumentality. By spiriting away Minister Frame and in some way, through working upon his fears and by awakening *his* superstition, they might believe they were depriving him of his ascribed power."

"But how could they expect to undo the process by which Frame had already analyzed Lee Sun's statement—by anything they might do thereafter?" Soper inquired.

"They might conceive of the upsetting of his soulful processes —for to them, it was what you Christians conceive as the soul, that he was dealing with when listening to the mandarin's recital," was the response.

In fine, in the minds of all, the timing of the abduction as related to that of Lee Sun's recital to Frame; the motives involved;

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and lastly, the relation of the *fung shuy* to Frame's ascribed faculties—all pointed to the mandarin as the primary beneficiary, and therefore the inspirer, of the conspiracy itself.

And as Wo Hut and the "Cross-eyed" were now implicated by more than mere inference, effort was now making to connect the fragment found in the roadway with a possible mask in the latter's possession—this although all conspirators were regarded as having worn masks. To have so adventured in the daytime without masks would have been rash indeed.

But was Sin lung utilized by the conspirators?

"How else could they have known that Frame was alone—or with only Sin lung as a momentary companion, unless the interpreter gave the signal? Who else could have notified them that Lee Sun had just left the yamen?" proposed Soper; to which Lung li replied that, on the theory that there were confederates spying upon the council room, it was not improbable that both were overpowered by the abductors after they had supposedly stepped into the cloakroom to don their hats preparatory to their departure —and that Sin lung was innocent of complicity. The chief objected to this theory; since one of the two men would have made outcry, or the scuffling have been heard, if both were being kidnapped. Soper's observation that such hypothesis did not comport with the use of narcotics, followed; he did not believe both were drugged, since physical force must have been first used.

"It reduces to this: that Sin lung was very probably a confederate," remarked the chief with emphasis. . . .

A wireless to Lung li from the Chinese party en route announced that both Peking parties would reach Chen-Chau by nine P. M., and directed that all witnesses and officers assemble that evening at the yamen; and the afternoon conference ended.

Soper was encompassed by a nameless fear for the fate of Frame. His immediate thought upon arrival at the consulate was of Frame's family. Should he wireless them at once, or await the culmination of the evening conference? He felt certain that Frame would not be accounted for that night.

"If, when his whereabouts become known—if this ever occurs —he is found alive, this is my hope," he declared to the consul. "And to inform them, without holding out probable grounds of his being rescued alive!—would prove a terrible shock to them."

It developed at the preliminary evening conference, through the witness who saw the airal, that it seemed to be swinging out of the rear areaway; that it must have come through the gateway,

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as it did not fly over the wall. He remembered nothing as to the particular make of the plane—had merely glanced at it as he passed by. Conversation turned upon its possible destination. And had "Cross-eyed" dressed as a peasant to screen him from observation and detection in town, or so as not to attract attention in the country? The chief observed that both he and Wo Hut could doubtless find places in the country to lie in wait without exposure to general scrutiny.

Lung li, in the discussion as to how far out they had flown, opined that if their purpose was to induce into Frame's consciousness some sort of obsession through resort to superstitious ceremony, some shrine may have been the destination—but he did not care to countenance the thought of a priest as a confederate. He did not believe they intended to slay Frame.

Chan lu was of the belief that both Wo Hut and Cross-eyed were in the transaction; that they had soared not less than fifty miles, and to some pre-arranged rendezvous; that they might not improbably utilize a priest through certain incantations—to the undoing of Frame, as he had previously suggested.

"We know of that disreputable haunt below the city in the jungle—where the sacrilegious Wu presides. The place is so notorious that these scoundrels would not take this high official there," he observed. He believed that Lee Sun knew, or could put the authorities on the trail of their location. In response to the chief's inquiry as to where he would scout in search of the abductors, having declared he would systematically visit every shrine in the river bottom down to Wu's place and beyond, he was commissioned to requisition and command the needed airals, policemen and civilians on an immediate expedition such as he had suggested—this although there were already a number of planes scouting in that direction. The subordinate saluted and departed on this mission.

A wireless to Soper from Beaumont announced that both Peking parties would arrive at the yamen in thirty minutes—it was now half past eight o'clock. In spite of the solace a consultation with Beaumont would be to him, he lapsed into a concern little short of gloom. His pacing of the floor with bowed head and contracted brows brought marked sympathy from those assembled.

Lee Sun, questioned by Lung li at this conference, expressed willingness to be fully interrogated; declared that his presence at the Municipal Court had been necessitated by his being a witness for one of his tenants, party to a dispute with a townsman; that

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the trial actually began a few moments after his arrival there; that he testified in the case, and was awaiting the determination of the suit when notified by an officer of Minister Frame's mysterious absence; and that he then immediately hastened to the yamen. In response to the pointed question as to whether he had possessed information of a conspiracy to remove Frame, he solemnly averred—raising his hands and eyes to heaven—that he knew nothing, had heard nothing of such a thing until the report had come to him.

Soper then interrogated him. He had seen Wo Hut:

"I may have recognized him for the man Wo Hut. Perhaps he knows who I am." He had never conversed with him. He believed he had last seen him—at a distance—several weeks ago; was positive he had not seen him since that time. Soper could not detect even nervousness in the now unmoved mandarin.

A final dispatch from the Chinese party told Lung li they were over the suburbs, and instructed that a guard be thrown around the yamen entrance. After warning the chief to have special aides reënforce the regular guard that had already been stationed there, he announced the arrival of the two delegations; and all passed out to the front to receive them.

"Beaumont, I am glad you've come!" exclaimed Soper in trembling voice and with tears in his eyes, as he grasped the dean's hand at the greeting when he emerged from the plane at the curb.

"He has not yet been found—or heard of?" inquired Beaumont, indicating his foreknowledge of what the response would be. Soper's prompt negative was coupled with the statement that every one believed Frame had been abducted.

"Let us hope that he will be safely returned!" was Beaumont's fervent rejoinder.

It was arranged that Soper should confer in private with the legationists in a separate apartment, while the Chinese remained with Lung li.

Succinctly Soper narrated to Bedloe and Scranton, secret service men of Beaumont's party, the events of the day; ending with a summary of his theory—that Lee Sun certainly and Sin lung probably were accessories; that Wo Hut and the "Cross-eyed" headed a party of masked kidnappers, and that he inclined to believe that the purpose was to deprive Frame of his "power" as conceived by the Chinese.

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Bedloe, chief detective, then informed Soper that the legationists had been in frequent communication with the Wai-Wu Pu delegates while enroute; that the Chinese since leaving Peking had been in close touch with Lung li, who had imparted to them much of information and suggestion; and that they would do all in their power to unravel the mystery and to recover Frame at the earliest moment, regardless of consequences to the mandarins or any other officials.

Beaumont's party then made a survey of the rooms and the rear grounds as related to the alleged abduction. After the party had returned to the conference room, Bedloe stated his theory: that confederates had watched at the front for the opportune moment for a descent from the rear by the masked abductors; that drugs were used—but not until Frame had been overcome by force; that the one circumstance favoring the idea of an assault in the council room was, that the odor was appreciable in the space between the table and the cloakroom door; that he deemed it almost certain that both assault and drugging occurred in the cloakroom —the extreme risk of an assault in the front room being so great; that Sin lung gave the conspirators—then to his knowledge in hiding in the lavatory—the signal by stepping into the cloakroom and inviting Frame thence; and that while Frame was reaching for his hat and cane he was set upon by them from behind—or was surprised as he was entering the lavatory from the inner end of the short hallway.

Bedloe now questioned Me lun, after examining the fragment and showing it to the witness; who could not recall whether the article he saw under Cross-eyed's arm was of lighter or darker color than this piece; "but as I think of it, it was some heavier" [darker], he added. It was not all of one color, he thought. He would not venture an assertion as to whether this fragment had been part of a mask.

Near one end of this fragment was observable a small part of a round perforation. The thought was discussed that, were the piece broken from the upper part of a mask through which a perforation for insertion of a fastening cord had been made, might not such fracture have resulted in loss of the mask by the wearer? The suggestion was regarded as within bounds of probability.

The detective then picked up the rough slit taken from the keyhole, exhibited it to Me lun, and asked:

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"What kind of timber is this?"

"It is the lacquer wood," was the response. It developed that no lacquer timber grew about the yamen parkage.

At Bedloe's request, permission was now given to interview Lee Sun in the presence of both parties; the Americans passed into Lung li's room, and the mandarin was brought forward.

"When did you first learn that Minister Frame was coming to Chen-Chau?" inquired Bedloe.

Surprised, the mandarin maintained perfect composure. To Soper he appeared more imperturbable than ever.

"I was notified by the Wai-Wu Pu that he would come here, and that I should be forthcoming to be interviewed by him at any time after his arrival," was the unhesitating reply. As to the date of the notification, he at first hesitated, then said his memory told him it was two days ago.

"Did not the notification reach you four days ago, and in the morning?"

"I think—you may be in the right; perhaps it was four days; but my memory is otherwise,"—a slight nervousness was noticeable in Lee Sun at this moment. No; he had not seen the so-called "Cross-eyed" on nor since the day of notification, nor had any communication with him, directly or indirectly. No; the Municipal Court case was not a trumped-up affair to bring parties and witnesses into court on a mock trial. He had never seen Minister Frame until he met him to-day.

A series of questions followed, calculated to show the singularity of the fact that the mandarin, though uninformed as to how long Frame would remain in town, and having seen him only in presence of others, had absented himself from the minister immediately after the interview and without having made an appointment with him as between foreign officials.

"My duty to the court compelled me to absent myself. I so informed the Honorable Minister," he explained. "I did not intend to be delinquent in extending courtesy to these honorable Americans. I believed there would be opportunity for this later. Perhaps I was discourteous in not arranging with Minister Frame for a future visit." Yes; his dignities and retinue were somewhat important. As to his usual practice concerning appointments when meeting high foreign officials, he answered:

"I ordinarily exchange felicities with foreign representatives with whom it is my privilege to become acquainted."

In response to the inquiry as to whether he desired to make any

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further statement concerning the disappearances of Frame and his interpreter, their restoration, or the apprehension of the abductors, he said:

"I regret beyond expression this lamentable affair. Being without information of the motives of the wicked abductors, I yet do not believe serious harm will result to the Honorable Minister. And if in the end they fail to account for the safe return of this high minister, the desperate men who committed this act must realize that their government will eventually apprehend them, and that certain death will be their fate." Further questioned as to his solicitude for Frame's return, he declared he had placed at the city's disposal his attendants and employees, had offered substantial reward for apprehension of the abductors, and a larger sum for Frame's discovery and safe return. He believed that all expedients had already been adopted by the authorities, etc.

Successive interrogatories brought out the following circumstances and statement: That inquiry at one or both of two shrines —the one over which the priest Wu presided, and "The Heavenly One," of high repute, about half way out to the Wu shrine— might by possibility lead to information of the conspirators. Wo Hut and the "Cross-eyed," for instance, might resort to Wu to subject the honorable minister to some fraudulent process of harrowing his soul, so as to reduce his power—"his power to apply his unknown process in the investigation of this Chen-Chau affair." Again: The outlaws might apply to "The Heavenly One," since he of that shrine "is believed to possess occult power in the highest degree"—they might believe he would deprive the honorable minister of "power."

"Why should they desire to defeat his application of his process to that affair?"

"Their *fung shuy*—you may have heard——"

"But why should *their fung shuy* be concerned in the cause of the Chen-Chau uprising?"

"Almost every Chinese in Hunan feels some concern in that strange disturbance;" and he explained: "If the omens are unfavorable, the *fung shuy* will make one trouble—that is their faith; and this Honorable Minister Frame is said to have an unknown power—to interfere with the *fung shuy,* when he enters into the souls of those who are thought to be connected with the Chen-Chau disturbance."

"Did Minister Frame's power—his process of ascertaining the facts—affect your *fung shuy?*"

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But the wily mandarin was not to be caught in this trap—for, regardless of its purpose, he instinctively shrank from exposing himself. He replied:

"I may be what you term 'superstitious.' My *fung shuy* had not been disturbed—it is not now disturbed. It has not made trouble for me in connection with the American Minister."

Asked if he believed Frame possessed supernatural power, Lee Sun's face indicated cognition of truth as a disturbing revelation —he was recalling Frame's look when he himself was ending his afternoon statement.

"He may possess this power. Who knows?" was his response. Yes, he admitted, it was reputed that Wo Hut and the Cross-eyed were connected with the Chen-Chau riot; he himself was in doubt as to this.

The Americans now withdrew to their assigned room. Bedloe's declared belief was that Frame had not been seriously injured, and would soon be returned, or left somewhere by the outlaws to be found by the authorities. Scranton had little confidence in the theory of superstition; he believed the purpose was to hold Frame for a ransom; to which view Beaumont was inclined, and was comforted by the thought that physical injury was not the motive. The immediate purpose of those expressions was to furnish Soper a basis for a wireless to Frame's family.

"In other words," Soper hastened to inquire with excited emphasis, "do we agree that he is not in serious jeopardy?" Bedloe assumed to reply in the affirmative, and "that serious injury was not intended by the abductors, nor anticipated by us." There was no dissent.

Soper penciled—with a gravity showing the heaviness that burdened his heart—a dispatch in substance expressing belief in probability of an abduction, that Frame might be held for ransom, and ending:

"Legationists unite with Chinese officials in belief no serious injury will be inflicted. Believe undue concern needless."

The timing of this night wireless meant about eleven A. M. of the same day, at destination. Within half an hour it reached the Frame family. However, earlier information had come, through transmission by Deever to Julius Frame of the import of a Chicago wireless to Wiltsburg summarizing that morning's *Mirror's* associated press dispatch, which had left Peking at about four o'clock P. M. Oriental time. Deever's wireless read:

"Dispatch from Peking in daily says Bernard probably abducted

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from yamen Chen-Chau yesterday. Details however lacking. Fact of abduction not confirmed."

Julius and Horace were just about to leave the house for field work when this news came.

Amid anxious speculations as to the real facts, the mother became semi-hysterical:

"I have had forebodings about Bernie, Julius—since that night in Japan! If they've kidnapped him—oh!" The husband endeavored to soothe her by pointing out that it did not appear that he had been forcibly removed; that if he had been, Soper would have wirelessed to that effect. Horace declared he would not believe that Bernard had been kidnapped until more definite information that he had been should arrive.

Julius went to the booth and phoned up Grampion Loor; giving him the substance of the wireless. Grampion was inclined to regard the report "an Oriental roorbach." A few hours would bring more definite news. "I do not think you should worry too much, Julius. I'll speak to Myra of this, of course," he ended.

Then Julius called up Deever and conversed with him. The lawyer believed the dispatch showed probable basis for the theory of an abduction, and expressed real concern; but declared assuringly that the Chinese government would not permit Bernard to suffer physical injury if it could possibly be avoided; detailing certain obvious reasons.

Grampion's relation to his wife of what he had heard shocked her. They sat thinking—the mother particularly of how such a report would affect Flissey. She spoke of writing to her. Grampion assured her that Flissey, by reading the dispatches, would learn the particulars of the disappearance long before a letter could reach her. Then her thoughts recurred to Mrs. Frame:

"And the poor mother! We ought to soar over there and call on them, Grampion," she suggested. He had been thinking so too. They concluded to go at once.

When they arrived at the Frame home they found Mrs. Frame greatly concerned. Her occasional sighs, which were but suppressed sobs, told of maternal distress. By way of cheering her, Mrs. Loor said she should write to Flissey and say that she ought not to believe that Bernard had really been abducted, and that she herself did not think such would prove to be the case. Grampion saw that Julius' deep concern was not much modified by his own assertion of belief that the Peking dispatch would prove a canard. Horace was still stubbornly skeptical. Julius had

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ready called up Tromple Shades, and had conversed with Cotsworth on the subject; and the latter had said he thought it would be well to await a communication from Soper before sending a wireless inquiry.

There was a long-distance signal at the phone. It was the wireless from Soper—Julius had but just now dismissed renewed thought of such a communication.

As he reëntered the sitting room from the booth and read aloud the dispatch, dismay was in his face. The mother moaned. Horace—stifling a feeling he had not previously experienced—exclaimed as if prophetically:

"There! They don't believe he'll be injured. It will all come out right, see if it don't."

"I am strongly of Horace's way of thinking," declared Grampion, looking about confidently, "and that he will yet emerge from the mystery a whole man. I wouldn't take the matter too seriously."

Julius phoned up and read the wireless to Deever; the substance of whose response was a repetition of his former expressions.

On the way home Mrs. Loor, concerned as to what she should say in her letter to Flissey, was counseled by Grampion:

"Say we're all at odds here in the neighborhood as to what has happened to Bernard. Say that I am not committed to the theory of an abduction, and that Horace Frame has doubts of it. Then let her judge for herself. Flissey Loor has a mind of her own, Myra." Then he added jocularly: "My prediction is that when the inside history of this disappearance is known to her, she will have cause to feel relief; for I believe that when he comes out into the limelight he'll be at the head of the procession. By the way, Myra," he digressed, "I wonder what Henrietta Brodein will think of this report?" The response came instantly: "She won't feel half as excited as Flissey will."

Her letter to Flissey was largely a reflex of Grampion's sane and hopeful conception of the Frame episode, so far as known about Tromple Shades; its appeal in this connection ending:

"If the Frames are counseled to refrain from over-anxiety until more is known, we feel that similar advice to you, darling, is certainly not amiss."

Several hours before this letter was even begun, Henrietta Brodein was soaring on a morning jaunt from The Haunts on the western confines of the lower Hudson, with her pilot and a lady companion other than Flissey—who was now in the midst

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of a continued study of an instrumental demanding concentrated and unbroken effort, and so had declined this particular "daybreak fly," as these early trips were termed; had touched at Newbergh Rook and purchased a daily; and as she was now indifferently scanning its headlines, she came upon the word "Frame"—it was the first dispatch from Peking concerning the disappearance. With that and other catch-words were linked "Abduction," "Ransom," and "Unconfirmed."

She absorbed the purport of headlines and the body of the dispatch in a hurried sketching. Her lady companion—a member of her Dramatics—noticing her sudden attitude of contemplation, stared at her; but she was turning aside her head; withdrawing within herself—and she knew what that meant. She had become what her co-workers sometimes termed "incommunicado."

She was day-dreaming of "living" a part—with the setting in the Orient!

She seemed to suddenly emerge from her detachment, and gave instructions to fly the plane directly back to The Haunts—then to relapse into her dreaming. . . . They were nearing destination. Her silent wondering observer now touched her arm and reminded:

"We're home again, Miss Brodein."

Henrietta went directly to Flissey's room—it was breakfast hour at The Haunts—and announced to her unconcernedly that when breakfast was over she desired to converse with her in her room. Flissey acquiesced in the suggestion, then went on:

"I'm so happy, Henrietta! I see through that piece now, and oh! it's so fine. It interprets your recitative marvelously!"

Henrietta smiled her appreciation, but made no verbal response —a fact that Flissey mentally dwelt upon at the breakfast table; wondering what was in the actress' mind.

In reality, Henrietta had not been considerably stirred by this news item. She had rather assimilated the facts in a conception of the psychic possibilities connected with Frame's supposed forcible removal from the yamen. But she realized with a refinement of judgment, how those tidings when made known to Flissey would be certain to so upset her as to materially interfere with her daily services in the rehearsal work at The Haunts. And Flissey as accompanist and as daily counselor with Henrietta herself, filled a place in the Dramatics second only to that of the actress. Again, the parting between her and Frame at the Chicago station, had more deeply impressed her with the thought that he had instilled

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in her heart an increased devotion. Moreover, Flissey had confided to her from time to time with a blithesome enthusiasm, hints of his entourage—and had exhibited a startled concern betraying inward pain upon learning of his adventure below the air-battle.

"I wanted to mention to you, my dear," Henrietta began when the two were seated in her room, "something I have read in the newspaper that has set me to thinking about Mr. Frame's relations to the subject of analyzing oriental minds, under exceptional circumstances—if these circumstances were regarded as existing"—there was a perceptible smile in the placidity of her face as she went on—"something about his experience in Chen-Chau——"

"Oh, have you seen some report of his arrival there—what is it?" inquired Flissey with eager interest and enthusiasm.

"And," continued the actress, "as the report runs, he had been interviewing a mandarin, Lee Sun——"

"Yes, he is one of the Chinese government's witnesses in that affair that Mr. Frame's there to settle——"

"and he and his interpreter disappeared from the yamen, as they call it, and that perhaps they were kidnapped"—Henrietta gave vent to an incipient chuckle of sarcasm.

"Kidnapped!—what can you mean, Henrietta?" Flissey's look of mingled incredulity and fear proved that the studiedly veiled announcement had not robbed the revelation of more than the keenness of its edge.

"But just think," interposed Henrietta. "Since Mr. Frame had completed his psychic interpretation of the mandarin's account of the Chen-Chau riot, and the report says he may have been connected with the disappearance——"

"Why, Henrietta, where's the newspaper—let me see it." Flissey rose and started for the wall-pocket.

"My dear," continued the actress, waving her back to her chair, "isn't it plain that if they were to abduct him, and his interpreter too, and if this Lee Sun was instrumental in his removal, then Mr. Frame would be master of the situation——"

"But suppose they took him away to *kill him!*—oh, Henrietta, I confide in you, I *believe* you!—but where's that newspaper!"—and again Flissey started across the room, only to be again halted by the reminder that the paper had been left in the dining room.

"But remember," proceeded the apparently unfinished narrative, "that Mr. Frame has convinced the Board of Foreign Affairs in Peking of the merits of his professional process, and that the Chinese government would perform a miracle to rescue him *if*

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he had actually been abducted. But the report says the theory of abduction is not confirmed——"

"Yes—go on, I hear you"—there was a woe-begone look upon Flissey's countenance as she listened, almost hysterically——

"and if Mr. Frame has really disappeared, I believe he will emerge from the *disappearance* with more 'evidence' of the cause of that Chen-Chau riot than he possessed at the end of his interview of Lee Sun; and furthermore, my dear, that he will *unravel the conspiracy to abduct him!*"

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CHAPTER XXX

HENRIETTA'S hand was uplifted as if staying Flissey's impatience to read the report, as she proceeded:

"Moreover, those superstitious Chinese people will believe, from the action of this Peking board, that Mr. Frame possesses occult power; and their reverence for the occult will not permit them to slay him! And then, what is this mandarin's stake in this Chen-Chau affair? Simply a money payment. Would he be instrumental in injuring this 'Minister Frame,' who at most can decide that the Chinese government must stand the loss of the destroyed consulate? And that government would not require reimbursement from this Lee Sun, except he were found to have been chiefly responsible for the riot——"

"How do you know, Henrietta dear?—that that's all they could do with Lee Sun?"

"Mother wrote me all about it. She has discussed the whole matter with the Frames," was the soothing response.

"Oh, I'm so glad you *know,* Henrietta!"

"Now again," the actress pursued, maintaining her poise of comparative indifference, "we know Mr. Frame is a moral hero,—"

"Oh, yes—and he's more than a hero. He's a great man!—oh, Henrietta, *has* anything befallen him?"

"Think once more, my dear. If he were held by abductors, and were looking them in the eye with that gaze so characteristic of him *in action,* they would never dare to even seriously injure him——"

"But suppose he were *blindfolded!*"—

"I would rather imagine they blindfolded themselves. Remember, he is said to have disappeared from that public building, in broad daylight——"

"Oh, yes; I hadn't thought of that!—dear Henrietta, you are *so* thoughtful."

"Then again, this news item mentions a theory of holding him for ransom——"

"Money! Ah, yes—*brigands!* Ugh!"—

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"But if they were holding him merely for ransom, they would be bound to return him safe and sound——"

"I hope it's for money, if they've stolen him away!"

"And both governments; yes, and this mandarin himself, would give thousands if it were a matter of ransom."

"Henrietta, I'm feeling sick!—I don't want to hear any more about this—now—but that newspaper?—I'm going to read that report myself," and Flissey hurriedly left the room, entered the dining room, and vainly looked about for the newspaper. A waiter informed her it was on the hall stand. She passed into the hall, picked up the paper and feverishly sought out the headlines of the Peking dispatch; then hastily sketched the report; and in anxious thought returned to her room—measurably consoled by the thought that Henrietta had revealed to her every essential phase of the dispatch. She had but mentally ejaculated "Well, it's no worse than she said!" when Henrietta rapped at her door.

"You see the abduction theory is not confirmed?" said Henrietta smilingly.

"No; I wish I knew—oh, I'm so alarmed!" replied the rueful Flissey. The actress counseled patience until they knew more; then beguiled by remarking that they would take an extra fly after a while; and that she was arranging to defer the regular afternoon rehearsal—at which Flissey expressed her delight:

"I know you're doing this for me, but I just couldn't perform well after this—shock, that I've received."

Later the two were soaring northward over the Catskills; on to Herkimer on the beautiful Mohawk; thence eastward over the Hudson to Pittsfield; on southwestward until they settled down upon Peekskill Rook; from whence Henrietta phoned again to the Central Overwire in New York City for further news, only to learn details showing no new developments, although the response said "Shrines being watched." Beseechingly Flissey scanned Henrietta's confident face and ejaculated:

"After all, he's gone!—and these large rewards! Oh, Henrietta!"

A strangely illuminating aspect of the actress' countenance took form in words:

"If he has been taken by 'brigands,' there won't be half as much romance in it if he turns up right away."

"Henrietta! How *can* you—oh, pardon me, my dear sweet friend and comforter—oh, if I had *such* faith!"

"But I would be cruel indeed, *my* sweet friend, and *my* com-

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forter," Henrietta hastened to confide, "if I did not realize that we are not in precisely the same exigency concerning Mr. Frame," —she looked into distance as if to withdraw herself from a peculiar sacredness of relation she felt existing between her friend and him for whose welfare only Flissey could entertain deepest concern.

Suddenly Flissey clasped Henrietta's hand in tears of gratitude. She marveled at the actress' firmness.

"I think it is because I realize something of what his career in China is to be, that I am fended against suspicion of anything really dreadful happening to him," replied Henrietta. To Flissey's anxious inquiry as to what she thought the reference to shrines meant, she said it might relate to "some superstition."

"But what could it have to do with the Chen-Chau riot?"

"I am thinking, my dear; but I am not disturbed over the allusion to shrines."

"Oh, such a mystery!—I wish I knew——"

"We are home again," interposed Henrietta.

Flissey sat in her room in introspection in connection with her deep concern for Mr. Frame.

It is one of the enigmas of the human heart, that only through analysis of her experience of those harrowing hours did she discover realities as between herself and Bernard Frame. This actual alarm it was that told her he was so much to her.

She subsequently passed a sleepless night. When she called at Henrietta's room before the breakfast hour next morning, something of the forlorn aching heart was depicted in her features. Her voice bore traces of a mild wailing:

"Henrietta, I've spent a restless night. I am anxious to know if there isn't something we can learn now—if he's been found!" Her solicitous friend had already ascertained there were "no further developments." She faced her duty nobly.

"Oh, what can have become of him!"—the face she besought was still serene.

"But I can tell you what is keeping him."

"Who? *What* is keeping him? Oh, tell me, Henrietta!"

"He is in God's keeping!"

She rose and flew into the actress' arms, exclaiming:

"Oh, Henrietta, such faith!"

"But you have faith? Why not summon it?"

Flissey felt she must have faith. Suddenly she released herself

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from the embrace and returned to her chair. Lost to all material surroundings, she was in reverie over the past that held for her so much of faith in Bernard Frame, and in destiny bound up in him! It told her that if now she had not faith, then all her blissful yearnings in solicitude for him, that had been satisfied in sinking herself in the paramount issue of his quest in life, must now stand disillusioned! But she felt that that other faith was still steadfast.

"Henrietta, I've recovered it! I *have* the faith!" in sublime ecstasy she was again sitting in the actress' lap, the two again embraced:

"Whatever betides him, he's in God's keeping. *Thank* God!"

When she had read her mother's letter, which came later in the day, she sat in momentary contemplation, then exclaimed to herself:

"Yes; if they can wait, I can." She was thinking of the Frames. . . .

A fortnight had passed since that event which had now become the profound mystery of the day between two peoples. Nothing had developed save an occasional startling disclosure in discovery of a supposed scrap of evidence pointing to other parties than Wo Hut and the Cross-eyed as the real conspirators, but which upon investigation proved to be worthless. The representatives of both the Wai-Wu Pu and of the American Legation became dumfounded over the apparent imperviousness of the mystery to clarification. Meanwhile, tendency to belief was toward fear that both Frame and Sin lung had been foully dealt with, in the sense of homicidal disposal; chief among which tentative converts was Soper. On the other hand, not even a remote intimation had come to light that money was the object of the abductors; this although the offered rewards had been heralded everywhere.

Then had come about a conference at Chen-Chau of the representatives of the two governments, upon the question of offering immunity from punishment to the abductors—a suggestion first mooted by the Chinese authorities; into which conference Lee Sun—still in nominal custody—was called for the purpose of obtaining his expression upon the subject.

Here let it be said, that no trace of the absent persons or their supposed kidnappers had resulted from the midnight reconnoiter by Chan lu's party through the down-river district; although both Wu's establishment and the shrine "The Heavenly One" were

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visited and the respective priests subjected to rigid interrogation. Nor could it be learned that the disreputable Wu had been away from his shrine during the eventful day or evening.

The general belief among the legationists and the detectives was, that Lee Sun would naturally be innately opposed to an offer of immunity—such action, they thought, would be regarded by him as tending to pave the way to the conspirators' furnishing evidence of Lee Sun's guilty knowledge.

Upon this issue of offering immunity, the two governments had authorized their representatives to adopt such plan, if upon a conference of their representatives at Chen-Chau the latter should deem such course expedient. But the fact that progress had been made in this direction was not communicated to the mandarin. His response to the inquiry for his expression was:

"If a conspiracy exists, and if my government is willing to withhold punishment, it is my belief that it would hasten the discovery of the honorable American minister—under some circumstances that may be conceived to exist."

"Suppose," pursued Soper, who was interrogating, "suppose they seized him to deprive him of his faculty, and that they believe they have accomplished that purpose; would they, if offered immunity, be likely to release him?"

"It is beyond my ability to answer this inquiry. It brings me to thoughts of the *fung shuy*. They might deem it essential to their own protection to still detain him," was the response; which produced a profound impression upon the Americans. Its effect upon the Chinese was not especially marked.

"But suppose they were detaining him solely to disconnect him from pursuit of his professional inquiries into the Chen-Chau Case?" This was deemed a crucial inquiry. They would weigh the matter of rewards, as against any personal interest they might have in the cause of the Chen-Chau riot, he averred imperturbably. No; not that he assumed they had such interest; he was but responding to Soper's implied theory, he shrewdly declared.

Soper was permitted by Lung li to make the pointed inquiry as to whether the mandarin was prepared to state the course he would pursue.

"I do not find myself either prepared or disposed to indicate what course should be pursued in the present circumstances," he replied in a seeming mild yet troubled perplexity, accompanied by an aspect of furtiveness. Here the interview closed, and Lee Sun withdrew. The Americans themselves repaired to another room

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for a brief consultation before proceeding to final action in the conference.

Discussion turned upon the probable effect of an offer of immunity upon the production of the prisoners. Opinions differed widely. That superstition might deter the conspirators from producing Frame, even if so tempted, was boldly expressed by some. Bedloe believed the mandarin had simply feigned solicitude for his return, and that he was inwardly concerned for his own fate should he himself assume responsibility for advising immunity. He feared that rewards plus immunity would fail of producing the captives. Soper, who was for offering immunity, drew from Bedloe this further expression of his doubts:

"I feel that in that event Lee Sun may be of a disposition to be instrumental in disposing of Frame otherwise than by having him returned." There passed through Soper a qualm. Beaumont expressed the belief that the rewards coupled with promise of amnesty would be very likely to lead to Frame's discovery. His proposition to take that stand in the conference was not opposed. The result was that the conferees decided to offer amnesty; and a proclamation to that effect was published that afternoon.

Chan lu had protested against such course; urging that, should his clue lead to Frame's discovery, the rewards should belong to him. But Lung li had said to him:

"High purposes of state may require that immunity should be promised, in order to hasten the reappearance of this famous American."

But this additional expedient, at the end of three days, brought no visible results. The harassing vigils of the American and Chinese representatives—who still held forth at the yamen—remained unrewarded; and Soper faced another emergency in again wirelessing Julius Frame.

Lung li, knowing of Soper's new stress of mind over the present situation, had confided to him that Chan lu had declared to himself that he had discovered circumstances which "very probably" pointed to the identity of "one of the conspirators" on the night of the disappearances at a place some fifty miles down the river; that the officer had positively refused to give details, urging that disclosure to the public would probably foil his attempts to follow up the clue; and that he would not intimate whether a shrine was involved in his alleged discovery. With a feverish ardor Soper seized upon this item as a justifiable basis for the following dispatch, which he sent to the parent:

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"No material developments since immunity proclamation. Reported discovery of circumstances may point to location of an alleged conspirator near Chen-Chau on night of disappearances."

As to Lee Sun's lawsuit: Prompt investigation had shown it was bona fide; had been pending before Frame's arrival in Chen-Chau; and that there had existed a real difference between the litigants.

In a further conference, the Chinese members expressed no surprise that further light had not been shed upon Frame's fate as the result of the offer of immunity. Lung li had remarked:

"His abductors may be widely apart as to the advisability of giving him up. Some time may yet elapse before we learn of their resolve to return him, should they so conclude."

When it came to the question of Chan lu's alleged discovery, the belief was general among the conferees that either Wo Hut or the Cross-eyed was the suspected conspirator; since no other individuals in particular had been regarded as conspirators. Soper declared he believed the particular reward offered by his government (and which had long since been published) would be paid to Chan lu, should his clue when followed up lead to a rescue. Lung li rejoined that he presumed both governments entertained similar dispositions in this respect; but that a difficulty lay in so arranging as between Chan lu and other officers who might contend that they were nearer an apprehension of the abductors than was he, as that friction on that head could be obviated.

A further interview of Chan lu by Lung li found the officer still obdurate. He declined to commit himself as to whether either Wo Hut or the Crosseyed might be referred to. Under the circumstances, the Chinese authorities refrained from compelling him to disclose all facts within his possible knowledge.

This much can be here related: That the significance of Chan lu's faith that he now possessed a clue to the conspirators' identity, related to the slip of lacquer wood; that his discovery was in some mysterious way connected with the evil priest, Wu; who was an illiterate Taoist. . . .

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CHAPTER XXXI

THE faith Flissey Loor had declared had returned to her was real. But as it was drawn upon more and more as time passed, she began to feel that the event might prove it a cruel delusion.

Henrietta, on the other hand, had during this period of suspense been inwardly confirmed by force of lapse of time itself. Her conception of the situation and of its outcome was cosmic. It was of the order of Mr. Frame's destiny—a step upwards in a career itself cosmic. To her there was naught that was strange in his disappearance. If brigands held him, they were instruments of Providence!

Absence of all semblance of real concern upon her part deeply impressed the members of her Dramatics. It was little short of marvelous that the plane of action sustained from day to day in the rehearsals was so high despite the general flustration created by Frame's disappearance—for the fact that this event had affected Flissey soon became a disturbing influence in the minds of the performers at large.

But Flissey, realizing that the actress had come to regard her personal presence in spirituality as the touchstone by which the success she had dreamed of would come to the present theme of dramatics, now, even in the midst of her grief, abandoned herself anew to the muse in enthrallment of keys and working of spells upon stops and pedals—telling of her faith in the Supernal! . . .

One starlit night Henrietta and Flissey sat under the trees at The Haunts, arms entwined; their spirits intercommuning with the Infinite.

" 'And there shall be signs in the sun and moon and stars,' " said the actress musingly.

"Oh, Henrietta!" exclaimed Flissey ecstatically on the instant, "I *saw* a sign—and I heard it too! The stars seemed singing—and a bright one I was watching came right down to me—and I kissed it!"

"That is a symbol, my dear."

"You heard them too—singing?"

"Yes; and in harmony with them I heard another voice."

"What voice?"

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"It was the voice of Mr. Frame!"

On the instant Flissey sat erect, mouth agape, eyes in limitless space, ineffable love in them shining. Then she flung her arms upon Henrietta's shoulder, her head sinking upon the actress' breast, and in a wild hysterical joy that was prayer exclaimed:

"Then he's safe!"—then as suddenly raising her head, she inquired with eagerness of passion: "What was he singing, Henrietta?"

"It was 'Love's Old Sweet Song.'"

With a wild staring look into Henrietta's eyes, the harpist ejaculated:

"Singing—*that* song—to brigands!—oh, Henrietta, how incredibly strange!—and such faith!"

Then came to Flissey a new revelation. . . . The two looked into each other's eyes again. Henrietta said:

"No; not to the brigands. It must have been to you, my dear!" . . .

The Anglo-Indo-Chinese war had developed inland to the point of an impending air-fight in southern China. The British still held their marine base at Hong Kong and part of the city environments. An aërial expedition from thence had been joined inland by certain detachments from the South China Sea, and was on its way westward to give battle to the allied forces known to be rendezvoused several hundred miles away. The respective skirmish lines had been driven in. It was midnight—dark and threatening.

Like a vast low-lying blanket the vanguard of the allies rose majestically from earth, in graceful but ominous undulations stretching some three miles from front to rear and near ten from flank to flank—fronting to northeast.

Even from the respective aërial apexes only an imperfect view of either army could be seen by the other's command—the trails being at first mutually depressed. From below, the panorama bespangled with myriad electric points and attended by endless roar of motors and the opening ordnance discharges, was wrought by fancy into a growling murmur as the belching of a volcano of the universe! Not till the maneuvers of the hundred thousand "air-marines" combatants had evoked the endless chain contact from above and retirement of the disabled from below, accompanied by the rising to commanding heights in both rears of the heavy ordnance, could the mutual armies be assessed—then it was plain that the allies materially out-numbered the British.

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Details of this greatest of air-battles of the present war will not be here given; nor shall we follow its three hours' duration to the end, save to mention later the report of its outcome. Its winning by the English meant to them domination of southeastern China, its loss, probable disaster at Hong Kong.

Its theater was over the mountains on the divide between the southern sources of the Yuan-Kiang and the Wu-Kiang to westward—some twenty-five miles west of Tung-yen and above a hundred miles southwest of Chen-Chau; where for certain reasons the Indo-Chinese had virtually chosen the battle-ground.

Not far beyond one o'clock after midnight, there scouted below the level of the British forces a detachment of two airals, flying the British colors. They seemed drifting at an angle toward a third plane bearing the flag of the allies. There was an exchange by wireless; the British crafts then bearing higher, the third changing its course and soaring swiftly southward under the allied lines —this maneuver being observed by Chinese scouts, who had seen two previous similar demonstrations, and were suspecting the lone craft.

It was now ordered fired upon by the Chinese scouts, as being manned by spies. It careened, dove capriciously, then zigzagged until it struck the earth.

It happened that an instant before the landing of this stricken plane, an explosion of a projectile fired from a gun in the British rear had occurred a few yards away; its concussion tearing a large excavation in the earth with much incidental devastation.

Near this bomb-pit, but in the opposite direction, lay another and an enclosed airal. From near this latter the two occupants of the wounded plane (who were garbed in Chinese military fashion) had, just as they landed, observed three Chinamen retreating in great haste—and that the stationary plane mounted the Chinese flag.

Realizing that they had been fired upon as enemies, and having escaped personal injury, and believing that the closed airal had been deserted as the result of fear from the explosion followed by the descent of their own craft; and anxious to utilize if possible the other plane, the two emergents walked stealthily around the excavation and approached the stranger car. Discovering no trace of its recent occupants, the leader in low tone, in English, gave his companion some instructions; and, having drawn fire-arms from their belts, they flanked the car from opposite ends as with cocked weapons they moved around it.

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The aide first discovered an open door on its opposite side. Crouching to fend against possible assault from inside the plane, he stole toward the doorway, silently beckoning his chief thence—then instantly started in blank surprise at an object inside, his gun bearing upon the objective point. But in a trice his features relaxed, and a grim confused smile lighted his face as he exclaimed:

"W'y—God a'mighty, sir, 'e's bound, 'and an' foot—an' 'e's not a Chinaman, 'e's a w'ite man, as I stand 'ere!"

The leader sprang toward the door, looked inside, searchingly scanned the face and garb of the man who sat writhing his arms—then drew back in amazement as he inside was ejaculating in semi-tragic voice:

"Yes, I'm an American, and need your assistance——"

"Good God!—is this—yes, it is Mister—Mister Frame, as I'm alive!" exclaimed the leader in Britain's tongue, as in a flash the whole truth surged upon consciousness; and he rushed through the doorway, pulled from its sheath at his belt a knife, frantically attempted to shake hands with the shackled prisoner with his own free hand—his gun discarded—and almost fell upon Bernard Frame—for he it was—then gathered himself and, assisted by his aide, the two quickly cut loose his pinioned arms, then his legs from their bonds.

Frame had recognized his liberator even as he entered the car, and had exclaimed almost frantically:

"This is Mister—Morehouse!—by heavens!"—and closed his eyes as if in an ecstasy of joy and belief at deliverance from imprisonment and the distress of past incidental deprivations.

Morehouse it was—and instantly upon entering the airal he had removed his Chinese military hat; this to enable Frame more readily to recognize him. For, while Morehouse, from press reports, was cognizant of the abduction and of Frame's continued isolation, he now realized that the significance of his discovery and release of this noted minister overbore all consideration of masking from the latter his own identity in connection with his present mission.

As Frame sprang to his feet with the alacrity of an imprisoned beast suddenly liberated, the two stood gazing with strangely fraternal and astonished fixity into each other's face—both striving to speak at once.

"Why!—Mr. Frame——!"

"Well, Morehouse!"

"I knew you were abducted, but how——"

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"Yes; kidnapped by devils—and finally brought here——"

"And I saw *them* hurrying away, then—and——"

"That explosion—and my admonition, did it——"

"And they saw us as we dropped——"

"Dropped?—from where?——"

"Slightly winged by plane-shots from scouters, whether enemies or——"

"Enemies?—who?" and Frame hurriedly surveyed Morehouse's military suit from foot to shoulders in a kind of new amazement——

"Oh, let that rest—I am here, sir, and at your service."

"Oh God, how relieved I am!" ejaculated Frame, as he again realized what this rescue meant to himself; and he looked the unspeakable gratitude he owed to Morehouse and his second—for the former was saying to his companion:

"Siley, you must know by this time whom we have set at liberty?"

"Yes, sir—w'en you spoke 'e's nime—an' then I see 'im bound——"

"Friends in emergency!—this miracle of your appearance here as my rescuers—in this strange place—and in the dead of night—oh, yes, I know, you are in this battle——"

"We've *been* in it, or under it, sir." Morehouse sought the eyes of Siley. Then, turning to Frame: "Whatever the British empire may suffer from my fate, I am at your service, sir, to assist with all my power in returning you to civilization and to your legation——"

"Mr. Morehouse, my country will be grateful if you can be the means of my being returned."

Morehouse was anxiously surveying the motor, then the craft at large, as he waved aside Frame's implication of a personal sacrifice on his (Morehouse's) part, and was saying:

"If this plane could be made to soar——"

"That can be done, if we can replenish motor power," said Frame. "The storage is depleted—the ringleader robbed it, and swore he'd leave us to our fate, and they allowed him——"

"The devil?—what has happened to *them*—they fell out with one another?" interjected Morehouse.

"It's a long story—not now," returned Frame, waving a negative to thought of present revelation.

Siley, under instructions from Morehouse, had gone to the scene of the wrecked plane to ascertain if the batteries in that

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craft were available for use in the other—all these parts were usually interchangeable, but would this rule hold good as between such a swift flyer as that had been and the one that had imprisoned Frame? Morehouse had mentally inquired. Suddenly Frame exclaimed:

"Where are we, Mr. Morehouse?"

"In the mountains, sir, some ways back of Tung Yen," replied Morehouse; and, flashing from his breast a map, he by aid of an electric pocket lamp quickly scanned the sheet, and added: "We are about one hundred and twenty-five miles southwest of Chen-Chau."

"I had imagined I was several hundred miles from there!" ejaculated Frame. Morehouse was again inspecting the machinery, when Siley returned with the report that, while all the batteries were injured, there was one set in the other plane which might be available if it could be removed and adjusted to the motor of the enclosed car. At Morehouse's suggestion, all three hurried over to the Morehouse craft in order to expedite the outfitting process. On the way Frame's mind recurred to the circumstances of his first meeting with Morehouse—of which the present environments were in many respects a reminder:

"So strange!—that we should have again met in such similar circumstances," he was saying.

"I was thinking of the coincidence at the moment!" was Morehouse's interjecting response. "But here I had not dreamed of meeting you—or any other Caucasian, for that matter——"

"It is all stranger than fiction!" ejaculated Frame. Siley, already amazed at what had transpired since he had discovered the pinioned ex-prisoner in the car, was more than ever mystified by this last exchange.

In truth, the woodlands here were much more dense. The outlaw car rested beneath trees and amid foliage which screened from view from both airists' tours above and even nearby ground-stragglers—save in the one direction from which Morehouse had first observed it. The scene lay just above a narrow entering gorge, the one practical means of approach by land. There sentinels had been posted by the abductors to prevent surprise and possible capture.

In brief: A quarter of an hour sufficed to effectuate an exchange and adjustment of parts so that, in the belief of Siley, the enclosed car could fly for several hours. Incidentally, it may be stated that

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the plane had been despoiled of its wireless attachment; Frame's pocket wireless also having been taken from him by his abductors. Siley thought that by using some dismantled appurtenances of the other craft, he could improvise an operative wireless—if the other two could manage as pilots for a time.

Hurried discussion led to Morehouse's expression that the proper route to take in order to best insure Frame's return to Chen-Chau, might be via Hong Kong—this for several reasons: Siley was the only member of the party who had any knowledge of the Chinese language; he had been stationed there in the British aviation service for several years, and—if the party were driven to deal with Chinese authorities there, in the event of inability to reach the British base—he could be of service in communicating with the natives. From there Frame could be safely escorted to destination, after previous notification by wireless. But on the other hand, that port was over six hundred miles away—a four-hours soar, Morehouse believed, allowing for a breakdown or two en-route. The alternative was an attempt to fly northward as nearly directly toward Chen-Chau as was possible in view of the exigencies of the pending battle. The question of rigging out a wireless was paramount—for if they could communicate with Chen-Chau, instant aid from there would be available—provided the authorities should give credence to the report of a rescue.

Urgencies—some of which can not now be detailed—forbade lingering to offer succor to wounded of any race or army—otherwise a moaning Chinese lying within twenty yards of the car, and several British wounded within call, would have received immediate attention. One dead body lay close to the artificial crater.

"Are you hungry, sir?" inquired Morehouse suddenly, as if recalling something to mind.

"No, sir; I have been given plenty of food at all times," replied Frame. "But I have never known where much of it came from," he added grimly. "These Chinese are good cooks, even in bad company."

Morehouse impressed upon Frame the wide extent of the present battle area, and the exigencies, whatever the route taken; the peril from both combatants:

"You realize"—Morehouse looked at Frame with an inquisitive smile, then at the garb of both, "that we all face danger from contact with the British; while it would never do for us to be caught by the Chinese—especially with this combination of the

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civic and the military, and in this closed car." Both agreed that they should get away at once—and Frame was somewhat concerned lest the outlaws should return.

Siley was directed to start the motor and to try a rise, while the others remained on the ground to await the outcome. The attempt was a failure; the craft, after beginning to climb, suddenly careening and fluttering back to earth. One of the wings failed to articulate normally; a jointed shaft being bent, causing friction with its sheathing—whether this condition resulted from concussion of the explosion, or otherwise, was unknown. Duplicates of these gear-parts being found in the car's magazine, repairs were soon made and a second and successful start made; and there was an exit northward.

The ponderous roar of battle; the blinking lights of inter-passing war-planes; the erratic whizzing past them of fragments of battle-wrecks;—and above all, dread of discovery of Morehouse by Chinese scouters—all conspired to render the soar an anxious mission replete with portent of fate.

Frame's concern for himself was now merged in an anxious solicitude for Morehouse's fate—for he was convinced that he was a British spy.

The three souls aboard were of doughty men. For a time they were separated; Morehouse acting as pilot; Siley strenuously exerting his wits and hands toward establishing a wireless; Frame seated between the two, his mind, too, strained to conceive what a moment might bring forth.

But Morehouse was burdened with manifold cares and forethought. He called Siley to take the steerage while they together planned a narrative by way of accounting for themselves, to be given the Chinese military in the event of their capture.

They had hurriedly seized upon some packages of soldier's fare from the wrecked plane—but no one aboard had given this store a thought.

The ascent of this car had in fact been observed by scouters acting under orders from the planemen whose shooting had winged the Morehouse craft—and the fact that the rising was from a point where the latter had fallen was particularly noted. This is what had transpired:

An auxiliary scouter had been ordered to "spot" and to maintain watch over the fallen plane, and to report any movement indicative of its re-ascension. This report had followed: The stricken craft remained stationary; but another and a *closed*

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airal had presently essayed a flight, had failed, had again and successfully ascended, and was just now spiraling upward with at least three men aboard. The aide was now executing orders to follow and observe her, and to fire upon her and capture her men if she gave suspicion of approaching or acting in unison with an enemy scouter. He was keeping at a distance, and noted and reported that her course was northward.

Morehouse's process of thought pictured himself confronted by Chinese planemen while in company with Frame. How, then, to most wisely utilize Frame's identity as the well-known victim of supposed abduction—a fact fully understood in both armies—in connection with his own rôle of rescuer of one whose safe return was greatly desired by the Chinese government?

He earnestly approached Frame upon this subject; outlined his tentative plan of assuming that himself and Siley were non-combatants; had been traveling as American citizens; had discovered Frame, had frightened away his captors, and were now seeking to transport him to where his rescue could be notified to the Chinese and American legation authorities. But how account for absence of citizenship papers; the wearing of Chinese military garbs; and lastly—if questioned as to their connection with the stricken plane—how to evade being so identified?

These difficulties seemed at first to render it essential to adopt the fiction that he had previously traveled in an enclosed plane. But Morehouse had resolved not to invade indubitable fact as to how Frame came to be on the scene of his rescue.

An alternative expedient came to mind—a theory of the total destruction of a supposed third airal by the explosion.

"I must either feign that we came upon you while airing in this plane, or that another airal—which must be accounted for—had been our previous conveyance?" Morehouse remarked inquiringly; to which Frame bowed an affirmative. He made similar response to Morehouse's suggestion that he, Frame, had seen neither of the Englishmen until they approached the open car door, and knew nothing of what was transpiring, save from his impressions of the explosion—and the alarmed retreat of the outlaws. Morehouse then said to him:

"If we are captured, I give you to understand that my real name is Ousley, and that of Siley is Humboldt;" and immediately fell to conning. He imagined a touring plane demolished by the explosion after alighting; that while its two ex-occupants were approaching the enclosed car the outlaws presented guns, forcing

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them to exchange their outer clothing for that of two of the bandits, who divested themselves thereof and donned the citizens' garbs containing the papers, etc., and then escaped; that they then discovered that their plane had been destroyed; whereupon they reconnoitred the enclosed airal, discovered Frame——

"Mr. More'ouse, we're coming nigh a British scouter," called out Siley, abruptly ending the imperative reverie. "Shall I veer off, sir?"

Morehouse glanced through the car door and, seeing the plane approaching from northward, replied:

"Yes, curve away to left, Siley, and increase power if possible." He realized that an inspection by even British officers would prove embarrassing. Frame, while looking to rearward, discovered a scouter, and reported it to Morehouse as coming from southward —and headed toward the one Siley had sighted. Morehouse was now ordering Siley to turn again to the right and soar straight for the British scouter. He was visibly nervous and deeply concerned. He said to Frame:

"We're discovered, sir, I fear."

A shot from rearward crashed through the enclosed car, passing between Frame and Siley—just as the craft came immediately between the two scouters—the British having suddenly veered westward. Morehouse instantly seized a British flag—he had taken this and another from the wrecked plane—and flashed it into Frame's hand as he yelled:

"Show this through that left-hand doorway—quick!"—and himself grasped a white one and held it forth through the right-hand doorway to the Chinese scouts. The former was intended as a friendly signal of distress—the latter of course meant surrender!

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CHAPTER XXXII

THE closed plane was halting—all three at close quarters. When first sighted the British scouters had been about to fire upon the enclosed craft—suspicious that it vanguarded the Chinese, also seen beyond—but the sudden shift eastward arrested the act, and guns were brought to bear upon the Chinese. The counter-swerve to eastward and the shot, somewhat disconcerted the Britishers—but the displayed flag alone saved the enclosed airal from the impending British gunning; the latter being now executed against the Chinese—just as the flagging car had whisked past the line. A second shot from the Chinese hit the Englisher's hull—so was deemed aimed at her. The latter and the Chinese now broadsided and were encircling each other—machine guns rattling from both.

Morehouse had ordered a starboard turning to surrender—the truce now sighted by both scouters; the Britishers assured that the closed car contained Englishmen. Their firing momentarily ceased as that craft again came in line beyond the Chinese. Now two more Chinese scouters were rushing up from southward. Morehouse saw the inevitable. He said to Frame:

"You see? there's nothing to do but surrender to them." He was even now being megaphoned—and in perfect English—to come alongside the van-plane and surrender. His resolution combined desperation and diplomacy. Pointing to Frame at his side as the two crafts met:

"He is Minister Frame, the American, kidnapped at Chen-Chau—we discovered and rescued him in the woods"—gesturing—"we are taking him back to Chen-Chau—the Chinese government should protect him——"

The officer recognized the abduction incident—but he disbelieved the strenuous proclamation; he was motioning the three virtual prisoners into the scouter, while a Chinese aide passed into and took charge of the closed airal. The prisoners—partially separated—were not allowed to converse during the brief flight to the aërial scouting base. Meanwhile, the Chinese spying craft had been relieved by other warplanes from its conflict with the

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British, and returned to the base; the bandit car arriving soon after.

Immediately upon transfer of the prisoners to the spacious air-anchored headquarters, Morehouse addressed the chief of the allied scouts:

"This," he began, turning to Frame, "is the Honorable Bernard Frame, the recently abducted special minister of the United States of America——"

The chief surveyed Frame, then the Chinese garbs, with amazed incredulity—and looked his disdainful deprecation.

"It can easily be proven, officer. You have but to wireless the Chinese authorities at Chen-Chau, who can describe him—we found him bound hand and foot, in that car," indicating the enclosed plane, now outside, "and these uniforms, they don't belong to us, they were forced upon us by the outlaws, who robbed us of our citizen's clothes before they decamped——"

"I *am* Mr. Frame," interposed the latter, "and I demand that I be at once conducted to Chen-Chau, and that the Chinese authorities there and at Peking be immediately notified of my rescue, sir,—"

"Bah! I imagine you are seeking rescue yourselves—from that fleet flyer we shotted——"

Undauntedly Morehouse interposed: "A fleet flyer?—our plane, a citizens' airal, was grounded before it was destroyed—and by a projectile explosion, which blew it to fragments——"

"You are all likely to be dealt with as English spies," interjected the chief, waving aside this recital in disgust. Yes, he declined to communicate, or to permit Frame to communicate with the Chinese authorities or the American Legation. Frame stoutly protested, in the name of his government; demanding also permission to communicate with his government and family. The prisoners were relegated to another room, and were under surveillance.

It transpired that an aide, one of the captors, while en route to headquarters, had become impressed with the belief that Frame was a superior character; and when he had heard these protests to the chief, he ventured to suggest to his immediate superior whether the government would not be interested in investigating the truth of these representations. The latter conferred aside with the chief, upon the expediency of communicating to Peking information of the same—for otherwise reprimand would follow, should it eventuate that this prisoner was in fact the noted abductee. Result: a wireless was ordered sent to the Wai-Wu Pu,

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describing the parties, detailing their representations, and indicating location of the alleged rescue; ending with:

"Military report pending. Believe them English spies. Advices awaited." . . . .

Morehouse (now Ousley), now questioned by an officer, gave more details: They had started from Seattle; had made a general prospecting tour into central-southern China, and were returning to the coast; Humboldt being pilot and, in some sense, his secretary; were traveling late, expecting to reach Tung Yen, but danger from the battle had led to a landing. The explosion had occurred just before they saw the outlaws and while they were reconnoitering near-by; and when they had discovered—after the enforced exchange of clothing—that their airal had been destroyed, he remembered having seen at a distance an apparently dismantled plane; had seen no one about that implement, but that one or two wounded soldiers lay upon the general scene, etc. Humboldt's account differed in substantial degree in but two respects—the explosion, he averred, came after they saw the Chinamen, and the latter when seen had emerged from the brush with guns.

In connection with the fact of his abduction, Frame gave the names of the American legationists and of the Chinese officials assembled at Chen-Chau; declared he knew nothing of the occurrences near the scene of the explosion until Humboldt had pointed his gun at him.

"How were these alleged outlaws dressed?" inquired the officer.

Frame had comprehended the implications arising from Morehouse's assumed version of the uniforms—in other words, that if exchanged by the abductors, he (Frame) would be expected to be able to recognize the clothing. He had distinctly recalled that the chief bandit had alternately worn a Chinese military, then a civilian, suit, for some days preceding his rescue—probably to defeat identification if apprehended. Imagination easily conceived of other military suits at their rendezvous. But from the combination of circumstances at the moment of their disappearances, he was unable to recall the character of the ringleader's garb. Finally: he had resolved to do all in his power to protect the Englishmen from dire peril—for he believed them to be spies.

But now, instead of himself being the analyzer, his own consciousness was being probed by another. Would his psychic faculty, thus engaged, operate less unerringly in impressing truth upon the inquisitor? Would those "doubts" fail to psychically

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register in the chief's consciousness? Frame was constrained to believe that his humane effort to fairly convey certain evidence, to the end of shielding the Englishmen, probably would not avail if—as he believed would be the case—his process should operate normally in the present instance. He responded to the chief's question:

"As nearly as I am able to recall, sir, with one exception—the ringleader—they wore civilian suits; as to him, he, to the best of my recollection, was attired in military garb;" and at the officer's ejaculation of surprise that he was not more positive, he explained the circumstances; then averred he could not say whether more than one suit of uniform had been in the gang's possession. Nor could he state from what direction, or in what character of conveyance Ousley's party had come. Here he announced:

"But I decline to attempt to give further information concerning the craft, beyond adding, that I saw lying about the scene what may have been parts of several air-planes." Jan Ho demanded the reason. No; it was not because he himself was suspected, he had no fears on that score, he replied; then spoke of his obligation to his rescuers.

"Obligations!—yes, if your story of being the real Frame be true. But think of my obligations to my government!" was the officer's rejoinder. Frame further explained his unwillingness to make any statement that might be misleading and which might expose them to further peril "as suspected spies." Jan Ho's warning that such action but increased suspicion against him, was unavailing. Frame now formally demanded that, unless he had already done so, he immediately wireless the Wai-Wu Pu of his claim of identity and of rescue, and that he (Jan Ho) cause him to be returned——

"As I told you before," interjected the officer, "that there would be no communication, but an investigation——"

Frame had made a discovery. Deliberately raising his hand as his gaze was fixed upon the chief's eyes, the latter halted in his speech. Frame pointed his finger at him:

"You are dealing in duplicity, sir. I now discover the truth. You have already sent a wireless!"

Jan Ho started up from a kind of passive amazed fixity to an instant revelation of truth! He beheld a super-human actor whose power dwindled thought of race, clime or stage settings.

In the same instant was revealed to himself another astounding truth—that *he willed not to antagonize this prophet!*

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The two were now spiritually fraternizing—beaming into each other's eyes—beings. The hand of each was gradually extended toward that of the other. A strange fellowship was ripening—seconds were ages! Jan Ho, enraptured, spoke:

"I did send the wireless! I doubted. You *are* Frame!" . . .

But as regarded Ousley and Humboldt, the chief, even though disillusioned as to Frame, was convinced that they had falsified in assuming the rôle of traveling citizens—and that they were spies. Frame was not now permitted to see them; he being held to await reply to the wireless. Meanwhile further incriminating proofs against the Englishmen were being found.

The smoke, indicative of the explosion, had been noted by the aide whose scouter had winged the Morehouse plane. A reconnoitre brought report: That the craft was a "crack shot speeder," specially outfitted for the so-called "corkscrew" secret service—that of spiriting about between enemy planes in spying below the battle-area and reporting to the command at the aërial apex; that certain now illegible papers had been found aboard; that some of her power batteries and certain tools were missing; and that it was doubtful whether the few scattered fragments in the vicinity of the explosion had formed part of an air-craft. At a point between its site and the head of the gorge—also discovered—the ground bore evidence of a trampling suggestive of the locus—perhaps of the enclosed plane and its outlaw guardians.

Then had followed a remarkable discovery—that several of the power batteries in that plane were identical in type and size with those found in the stricken speeder, while differing from the remainder; that some utensils found therein were evidently parts of an imperfect set found in the other craft.

Less than two hours had elapsed since the three prisoners had risen from the outlaws' lair.

With amazement and gratitude the awakened president of the Wai-Wu Pu read the Jan Ho dispatch; and immediately wirelessed Lung li at Chen-Chau, directing him to dispatch an air-express to the scene of the battle with instructions to convey Frame back to Chen-Chau at all hazards, and to notify Jan Ho. He also answered the latter's dispatch; instructing him to regard the alleged Frame's statements as true for the time being, and to protect him from danger.

Lung li,—who with many others had remained up part of the night listening to reports of the battle to southward—first phoned up the American consulate and informed Soper:

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"Let glory reign! Frame is found!"

"Oh, God be praised!" exclamed the astounded Soper. "Found! —and where?"

"At the Tung Yen battle-ground—and by alleged British spies —wireless to Wai-Wu Pu—I am advised, and am about to expedite an express there to find and bring him here——"

"Oh, my friend!" ejaculated Soper in ecstasy.

"Come here and we will talk it over," said Lung li; and the phone closed.

Soper threw himself upon his bed in an abandon of joy and relief—only to leap therefrom and phone up Beaumont's apartments:

"Frame is found!—let's go to Lung li's quarters—I'll be with you in a moment," he announced; and immediately sped to the dean's rooms. The latter was hastily dressing.

"Found, where?" was his eager inquiry as Soper entered the room.

"By the air-fight out there somewhere," was the glad response as the two clasped hands. A conveyance summoned, they were quickly en route to Lung li's apartments. Soper read aloud the dispatch shown him. Congratulations were deeply emotional, with tears of gratitude from Soper. Lung li had perfected arrangements for speedy departure of the express, and had wirelessed Jan Ho.

Soper rushed off the following to Julius Frame:

"Bernard reported found uninjured. Rescued southward by alleged British spies. Expedition will bring him here. Congratulations."

Beaumont wirelessed the Legation, imputing credence to the reputed rescue, and suggesting advices to Washington. However, the Wai-Wu Pu had given instant publicity; Washington and all principal capitals in Asia and Europe had already received press dispatches.

The matter of sending with the express some one connected with the Chinese government and acquainted with Frame, was debated. Soper's anxiety to go was overborne by military exigence. Lung li's secretary, Lum Chang, was selected for that purpose. The express was enroute at 2:45 A. M. Before its departure, instructions had come from a military aide, directing a pre-announced approach to the battle-area from the southwest; certain signals to be displayed; and to there await a designated scouter, which would bear Frame thence for identification, etc.

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The darting plane widely circuited the now more northerly battle-space. Some twenty minutes found the officer in charge wirelessing their arrival; the airal slowed down. The scouter base was some twelve miles distant. Scattering shots from the British front occasionally descended about the waiting craft.

Smoke of battle partially obscured myriads of blinking lights—countless crashing booming sounds seemed to proceed from behind mountains and through obstructed passages—a memorable experience to the observing party. The officer's ear now caught a message:

"Scouter coming with Frame. Stand at attention."

The now visible approaching plane slowed, described a slightly descending spiral, the express falling into a conforming curve; the scouter came alongside, a man leaped over its rim and into the express with anxious expectant look; and as he caught sight of the secretary, mutual recognition accompanied Frame's wild exclamatory:

"Lum Chang, how are you!—I'm safe at last!"—and the two embraced as the Celestial ejaculated:

"Mr. Frame! All China will rejoice!"

Credentials—now regarded as superfluous—were exchanged; informal introductions followed with hurried handshakings—the express was again tearing through space in a circuit far from the danger, then angling toward Chen-Chau; arriving at the Yamen—where an assembly awaited the return—at 3:43 A. M.

Soper frantically embraced Frame as the latter cleared the express:

"Bernard, old boy!—*how* glad I am!"

"Ichabod!——"

"I wirelessed your father——"

"This is civilization!——"

"Frame, your hand!"—this was Beaumont. Lung li shouldered in with:

"The Minister is here! I am rejoiced to congratulate—my government is so happy over your safe rescue from?—abductors!"

"Yes—abductors and would-be sorcerers——"

"We believed it was so!" interjected Soper——

"But let me get to the wireless"—and, forcing himself through the crowd, Frame—Soper and others trailing,—mounted the approach by bounds, rushed through the main into the sub-room, called up long-distance and dictated a dispatch:

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"Thank God, Father, Mother and Brother. Am returned safe and sound. Letter follows."

The assembly now surged into the Yamen, until the inrush was curbed by the police. The sub-room was cleared—Frame would presently say a few words in the main room, explanatory of his return, it was announced.

To Soper's half breathless inquiry as to how the abductors forced him out of the building, and to Lung li's mention of Sin Lung, Frame responded:

"I was overpowered here in the main room—by force and drugs—pinioned, blindfolded, from behind, and dealt a fierce blow upon my injured ribs——"

"My God!" exclaimed Soper, "then Sin Lung was in it—as we thought!——"

"No, I am not convinced," Frame digressed; then explained concerning the narcotic and his unconsciousness—for how long he did not know; believed he was kept semi-unconscious for hours——

"Where?—and how did they take you there, Bernard?" interjected Soper; to which Frame replied it was impossible for him to say where—at first, or by whom, or how many, he was taken:

"I *imagined* later, and have since believed it must have been by air. . . . I had a vague and terrible impression of being set upon by three persons at least—a grappling of each shoulder and arm—then the blindfolding and the drug—and the blow, all at once, and before I could cry out,—then a blank"—the narrator with closed eyes convulsively waved his hand.

"Where—and when, did you first sense where you were—and in whose hands?" eagerly demanded Soper.

"As to when, I don't know; never shall know, I suppose"—Frame became diverted, and looked about—"When was my absence from here discovered?"

"Almost immediately after you disappeared, Bernard," replied Soper. "We looked for you—within two minutes after I passed into this room from out there—do you remember?"

"Yes, perfectly—I have thought it all—Where is Lee Sun?"—again he seemed reminded—"he had not been gone ten seconds, when I was seized——"

"Heavens!" ejaculated Soper, with an air of confirmed previous conviction.

"Some suspicion has attached," interposed Lung li.

"What did he do—or say, when he learned of my absence?"

"He heard of your disappearance—abduction, we all believed—

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he was in the Municipal Court, some half hour after—he came back here and joined in endeavoring to solve the mystery——"

Some one was clamoring to be allowed to enter; an officer was peering through—the door was forced farther open, and Lee Sun appeared—and espied Frame.

Triumphant discovery and deferential solicitude bespread his face as he rushed up to Frame, hand extended, exclaiming:

"The Honorable Minister is safe! Words can not measure my pleasure—my gratitude, Minister Frame!"

Visibly surprised, and pleased, Frame was on his feet; the two grasped hands:

"I am very glad, Lee Sun, to again meet and greet you." This was unexpected—disappointing, to the legationists. The Chinese officials evinced restrained surprise.

Importunities from the main room now prevailed; and Frame, locking arms with Soper and preceded by Lung li and his suite, was ushered into the presence of the dense assembly. The group passed to and mounted the council table; and the honorable member of the Wai-Wu Pu, holding Frame's hand, introduced him as "the distinguished American minister whose experience during the last three weeks baffles fiction!"

Greeted and cheered by a deferential roar—doubtless accentuated by sight of his now unkempt Chinese garb—Frame was about to respond through Lum Chang as interpreter, when voices cried:

"Sin Lung! Sin Lung too!"—manifesting belief that his own interpreter had reappeared with his chief's rescue.

"Men of Chen-Chau": he began, "I am glad to greet you as an American minister who can be 'safe in China' under any and all circumstances!

"I have been living half wild, half dreaming, ever since I was forcibly taken from this chair" (pointing to the chair at his rear). "I need only tell you, that I was found and rescued this very night beneath the great battle in the clouds, still raging near Tung Yen; that while not much injured, I have suffered privation.

"Long live the Chinese Republic! Long live the strong bonds of friendship between the United States of America and the Republic of the Orient!" Thunderous and prolonged cheers followed these expressions, as Frame and the attendants filed into the inner room.

The group again seated, Frame, at the police chief's inquiry as to the truth of the report that the abductors had robbed his res-

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cuers of their citizen's clothes, declared he had no personal knowledge of the alleged robbery. As to when he first realized he was a captive, he narrated:

"I was bound with strong thongs, and blindfolded; had begun to realize vaguely my surroundings. Returning sense that my side was bandaged—and feeling relieved—reminded of the Yamen—then of the assault:

"In short, I saw two Chinamen standing in front of me when the black cloth was removed from my eyes; one of whom was masked——"

"Masked!" exclaimed the chief—his looks bespoke confirmatory proof.

"I said, 'Where am I?—who are you?' Certain pantomimics and patronizing smiles from the unmasked one were the only response."

Frame informed the chief that these two men wore the usual Chinese garb, though one had on a short blue cotton ao, which, he declared, his friend Soper had once told him meant a rustic.

"Which one was he?"

"The low-statured man wearing a mask."

The Americans were exchanging startled glances; Chinese witnesses, gesticulating. No; he had never seen the face of this short man. The other he described as heavier, and somewhat taller; of rather light complexion, and having a pleasant look:

"He afterwards administered to my ribs. I believed him to be a physician." The listeners seemed puzzled.

"A few moments later there came into the hovel——"

"A hovel?—where—have you any idea——"

"I have no notion even, of where it was—I have no idea of *where* I was at any time, until I was found in an enclosed plane——"

"An enclosed plane!" ejaculated Soper; others also evincing confirmation of a pre-conceived theory.

"This strange priest—it must have been a priest who now appeared—seemed a combination of bigoted illiteracy and of weird subtlety. I believe his appearance was pre-arranged. I cannot detail what followed—the evident purpose was to terrorize me through superstition; to confront me with some preordained doom, as the sequel to my supposed faculty—the unmasked man interpreting all this, and with some facility. I gave them to understand that their incantations would not avail to disabuse me of my faculty—their evident further purpose.

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"Later—lapse of time I could not yet sense—a fourth man came in. The three produced guns and repeated various threats; while this priest——"

"Describe this fourth man?"

"A tall, wiry—a sinister looking fellow, and nervy——"

"Wo Hut!" exclaimed several Chinamen.

"I defied them all—the priest disappeared; and I remained in torture of bound limbs. Only the masked man was with me for a time—the other two having also disappeared. I was again blindfolded; was given another narcotic; was kept, probably for many hours, in some close damp place; then the other two probably returned; I was apparently carried out and into a close-by conveyance, and hurried away by air—I doubt not it was this enclosed car—and for days and days I remained blindfolded and helpless; cared for and well fed, by this physician.

"Then for some two days, just previous to my rescue to-night, they let me see part of the time. Now, under this air-battle I lay. A near-by explosion frightened the three men, who stood outside—I had endeavored to utilize the battle-din to convince them that Jehovah would avenge unless I were released. This explosion did the work—coming just as I made this appeal—and they rushed from my sight."

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CHAPTER XXXIII

ALMOST immediately thereafter," Frame continued, "two Englishmen appeared at the door of the plane; discovered, released and rescued me—I had made known my identity, they at once comprehended. They were flying this plane out from beneath the battle-area northward, when it was captured by Chinese scouters—we were all suspected as British spies—and taken to the base in the allied rear. I finally succeeded in having a wireless sent—and you know the rest."

Here Frame requested a brief conference with Lung li; in which he urged that the Peking government permit him to be heard in behalf of the two parties (as Ousley and Humboldt) who had rescued him, before they were finally dealt with as spies. The official promised to immediately communicate to his government this request.

Greetings for the night being now exchanged, and Frame having engaged to be at the service of the Chinese authorities after the noon hour, he and Soper with locked arms strode out of the door and to their apartments. . . .

This thought was now haunting Jan Ho—since the minister's psychic resolving of himself: What did this Frame know concerning the alleged rescuers, and as to how they came to the woods—and which he had withheld from the military? But reason did not silence the haunting. Again he peered deeply within himself—and recalled that there had glinted through consciousness a presence—a doubt—transmitted from the minister. Ah!—he had found it!

"Minister Frame himself doubts their innocence!"—then came the more significant revelation—his omniscience!

This trend of musing had operated subconsciously as the chief had pursued his strenuous official duties. The conviction had come: "These suspects and I are in his hands!"

Meanwhile Frame—still in the scouter's room—was asking himself: "Were my impressions as to their mission communicated to Jan Ho?" He resolved to and did ask permission to confer with Ousley and Humboldt "in presence of an officer who under-

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stands English." Before replying, the officer mentally ejaculated: "Can he communicate with this Ousley in my presence without my knowing what passes?" Doubting, he bluntly inquired:

"If I were to grant your request, would you promise upon your honor not to convey to them thoughts unbeknown to the officer?" Without guile came the quick response:

"It would depend upon the degree of responsiveness of the officer to impressions of the communication. He probably would not understand all, since he would not be a party to the conversation."

The chief stared; then reflected. Clarified intelligence and regretful responsibility attended his response that he must decline the request. . . . Yes, he might, he said, upon inspection, permit an open note to be sent to Ousley. Frame immediately penciled a note upon a sheet furnished him; in which he stated the character of the chief's wireless; that he himself expected to be returned to the civil authorities at any moment; and expressing his deep solicitude for both Ousley and Humboldt:

"That solicitude will be active in your joint behalf to the end, whatever may betide," it ended.

"That means," mused Jan Ho, when he presently read the missive, "that he will—save their lives!—and if they know what this discloses, they will not confess anything."

At this instant an aide handed him an order from the crest of the allied forces, for immediate delivery of Frame to the Chen-Chau authorities at a designated point. A craft was rigged out at once; and as Frame stepped into it he feelingly thanked the chief for kind treatment; expressing hope that the note might reach Ousley. The matter was under advisement, he was told.

Jan Ho was about to dismiss the subject with the reflection that, as to the note, there was nothing for him to do at present, when thought of the representations concerning the citizen's clothing came to mind. He wired the Chen-Chau police information of the alleged rescuers' claims, indicating also the locality, and that Frame was enroute to Chen-Chau. This dispatch had been acted upon by the starting of airmen for the scene, before the express had returned with Frame. . . .

The Tung Yen battle resulted in repulse of the English, the capture of certain divisions in their flight back to their land base at Hong Kong, and in their rout from the greater part of that base.

Immediately after Frame left the Yamen for his apartments

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Chan lu, who now knew that his return had not been induced by offers of ransom, faced and discharged the duty of immediately informing the police of the facts he had discovered but had so far withheld:

Of priest Wu, also a desultory worker in lacquer-wood basketry, one Wong, a burly Chinaman, was his sometime assistant in that artistry. Some three days after the abduction Chan lu had, through a chance remark of another neighbor, Shan yan, that one "who worked in lacquer-wood" might have been in Chen-Chau on the day of the disappearances—discovered that Wong was not and had not been at home since early on the day in question. Then he had vainly applied to Wu concerning Wong's absence.

"Why do you suspect me, Chan lu?" he had inquired; to which the officer had replied by relating the plugging of the key-hole:

"That piece of lacquer-wood resembles some you have in store—I have discovered——"

"I know nothing! Go ask Shan yan—they run together."

"Yes! He tells me Wong has not been seen since the morning before the minister disappeared. . . ."

Chan lu had indeed found in Wu's little near-by wicker-shop, part of a small rod of lacquer-wood so fractured that, upon comparison with one end of the fragment in the chief's possession, he became convinced that the two had once been parts of the same rod. This was his discovery, now disclosed to his superior.

Lung li, at the afternoon conference following Frame's return, related the substance of the evidence alluded to. In this connection the chief of police described Wong as "a big strong-shouldered man, who has a slight limp in his gait." No, Frame had seen no such person among his captors.

Now questioned regarding Sin lung, Frame repeated what he had already told Soper—he had seen nothing of him since the moment of his passing out of the council room.

"What is your belief as to whether Sin lung was a party to the abduction?"

"That he was not a conspirator. He may have been an innocent instrument, however. I have imagined that the conspirators were shadowing the three rooms; and the fact of his having passed out when to do so resulted in my being left alone—that is what I mean."

"As to the man who gave you the blow in your ribs: Have

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you any doubt that, whoever he was, he had been informed beforehand of your wound?"

"None whatever," answered Frame. As to the means of knowledge, he could only surmise. Some assistant or employee of the physician who had prescribed for him at Peking, might have conveyed it.

"Was not Sin lung also in a position——"

"I do not believe he would have been prevailed upon to disclose—I am far from convinced," was the prompt response.

At Lung li's suggestion, Frame now gave certain further details of his experience after being abducted—reserving, for reasons of state, and for the time being, still other circumstances:

"To my inquiry of him whom I regard as a physician, as to whether Sin lung also had been abducted, he declined to give an intimation. I then said to him: 'Ask this holy man'—referring to the priest—'if he knows?' The physician's interpretation of his response, and the intonations and gestures accompanying it, convinced me that the priest's profession of ignorance in the premises was but a pretense.

"My suspicions were now aroused to the fact that the purpose of my abduction was to overmaster my psychic faculties."

A more particular description was now given of the priest:

"A medium sized man; lean; of wrinkled visage; somewhat aged, yet lithe, alert, shrewd——"

"None other than Wu!" declared Chan lu. "I am sure."

"He began by scrutinizing me piercingly; then looked afar; now he fixed upon me a dreaming stare. He raised and weaved his hands; approaching me meanwhile.

" 'He is the prophet of the Taoist faith,' the physician explained in low tones; himself imitating the pantomimics, as if to confirm the work of the priest. 'He is inspired of the Heavenly One,' he continued.

"And who is 'The Heavenly One?' I inquired, without removing my eyes from the priest. 'The great prophet of the Shrine of Heaven,' he answered assuringly. 'The supreme occult!' That shrine, he informed me, was not far away.

"I had been bolstered up by the physician into a reclining position. Resolved to psychically investigate the process now sought to be applied to myself, I forgot my shackled and pained limbs.

"The priest was now looking toward heaven; he emitted a low ejaculation.

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" 'You are possessed of an evil genius'—the physician seemed repeating the priest's expression. 'The secret of your power is from above.' Again the priest spoke: 'He is commanded to announce that you should cast out the evil and be possessed of the all-powerful—through inspiration of The Heavenly One, at the Shrine of Heaven!' he solemnly declared.

"The priest paid no attention to the silent entrance at this moment of the tall man and him who wore the mask. He again spoke: 'If you decide the burning of the temple while this evil spirit possesses you, it will ever curse all who were present at the riot! Their foong shoo'—whatever that may mean—'and your foong shoo'—pointing to myself—'will trouble them and you forever!'—pronounced the physician, interpreting.

"With animation the tall one spoke: 'We know this is true!' and, as interpreted, substantiated the priest's prophecy; I would return to 'Amelica' accursed!"

Lung li explained to Frame that the term "fung shuy" meant something apart from conscience—to which disturbing influence he had compared it—that it was rather an omen.

"I made no response to these obvious overtures. The priest—now flanked by the two arrivals, and all four facing me—was again interpreted:

" 'The occult power will now enter your consciousness; your evil genius depart!' All four were now postured in joint appeal to heaven. 'The truth of the occult is mightiest. It knows no shams!'

"Suddenly all eyes were turned upon me; hands lowered toward me in pose of benediction: 'You will be moved by the new power of the Occult when you tell of the burning of the temple!'

"I gravely contemplated the priest at this evident climax of a ceremonial; making no verbal response. His further words were interpreted: 'Say you accept of the occult?'

"I then addressed the priest: 'I believe the occult can not thrive on shams.' Fixing my eyes upon the masked face, and pointing accusingly toward its wearer, I said: 'That sham! Let him remove his mask, that the truth as to who he is and why he is here may, through the occult, be revealed!'

"The tall man drew a gun from his belt, aimed it at my head, and held his pose while his exclamation was interpreted:

" 'Evil is still in you! It is not the occult. We defy you!' The priest ejaculated: 'Yes! tell us what your power discloses—there is the sham!'

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"I replied: 'I will reveal the truth in due time—in Peking!'

" 'Then you will never return there! We will kill you——'

"But the priest's hand was upon the gunner's arm: 'Since you are under the power of The Heavenly One, I will desist!' he was interpreted; evidently not fearing the priest.

"The four now seemed to fear my power. Realizing this, I advanced upon the tall man and his partner, the masked one, a line of inquiry, the upshot of which I can not, in justice to the Chen-Chau case, now make known. Suffice that I was not further molested; the partners disappeared. A moment later the masked man stepped in, the priest disappeared; I was again blindfolded; three men bore me somewhere; the narcotic was re-applied. Finally, I was borne outside and—as I said before, into what was probably a closed airal. How far we sped away I could not comprehend. It is now plain that we landed where I was found when rescued."

Frame declared he could identify the hut if again inside of the room. He described the latter as some ten by twelve feet in size; of low ceiling; he having been on a bunk at the rear.

"I noticed a device of a dragon on the wall, and a figure of a Chinese temple, or shrine," he ended.

As to his experience after reaching destination, he stated that he was kept blindfolded, but that the physician eased his confinement by assisting in frequently changing his position.

"He brought and fed me an ample supper. He was a merry sort of chap; he many times contributed to my comforts."

Two of his captors, he related, at times conversed in low tones on the way, that night; the voice of one occasionally seeming threatening. Yes; he was enabled to sleep after a while. Asked if he could explain the occasion of laughter of one of his captors on that occasion, he replied:

"It seems somewhat ludicrous—the incident that evidently caused it. But there was relaxation; my spirits revived. Before I was aware of it, imagination found me again with my friend Mr. Soper; and I was singing a familiar freak of a song——"

Soper, in tones of tremulous emotion, as tears evinced thoughts of bygone college days, inquired:

"Bernard!—old boy, what song?"

"I was singing 'Jap-and-the-Yanks,' Ichabod!"

"There was evidently a rift in the clouds," Soper merrily rejoined.

Frame reverted: "Why I was kept blindfolded so long, was

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not clear. I have thought the purpose may have been to prevent identification of myself in case of surprise. However, the bandage was removed for a few moments each day.

"One day—some ten days after I was thus secluded, the two partners came into the car; my eyes were unbandaged; and through the interpreter they made known that they proposed to desert me; would leave me there under the trees, bound:

" 'And we three will depart in this plane, the first dark night,' he told me.

"I had believed the physician was not unfriendly toward me. I regarded this covert threat but a ruse—perhaps to test my confidence in my power of escape; or that they feared detection. To my inquiry as to why so inhuman a threat was made, their reply was:

" 'If you have power to detect all truth, why ask such a question?'—a response I deemed an attempt to probe my insight into their original conspiracy. I rejoined:

" 'You will not desert me in that way.' I continued—pointing to the masked one: 'This man wears a mask because he has a deformity in his face. He fears detection.'

"While I had felt this to be true, I was not clear as to *what* the deformity was—somehow I had connected this thought with his eyes.

" 'Cross-eyed!'—as I said before," ejaculated Chan lu.

"Cross-eyed!"—Frame seemed recalling to mind some circumstance. "He seemed to have held his head slightly sideways; I had the impression that something was—well, 'out of joint.' "

"Did you notice whether the mask was perfectly whole?—whether a small piece may have been removed, from the upper edge, say?" queried the chief, producing the fragment, handing it to Frame, and requesting him to note the rounded niche at its edge. Frame mechanically threading his hair.

"If such a piece had become detached, and another eyelet were pierced in it for a new fastening, the mask might then have the effect I have expressed," he replied.

A notable sensation was produced by this statement.

Frame then related how mysteriously the three men had received his reference to a deformity; that the tall one spoke in deep concern to the masked; that his own inquiry of the physician as to its purport brought a negative shake of the latter's head.

"A quarrel ensued. The tall man aimed his gun at the masked one, while he appealed to the physician, of whom I demanded what

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it all meant, receiving only another similar negative in response. He of the mask whipped out a gun, both now turning their weapons on me. The physician gestured to stay discharge of guns, while he addressed me:

" 'They fear their foong shoo—that you are the cause. Either you or one of them must be sacrificed—that I must bid you to decide—and if it is one of them, which one?'

"I replied: 'No one should be sacrificed. But if they fear me, let them send me back to Chen-Chau; or if you all will go with me, I will pray your government not to punish you.' But again each aimed his gun at the other's head; the physician appealed to me in terror. I shouted:

"Hold!" Then they desisted. The physician came and put his trembling hand upon my shoulder, pointed to the masked one, and exclaimed:

" 'You saved his life! But his foong shoo is still unappeased. Your evil genius tells you who he is! You *know him!*'

"I rejoined: 'I know him only for a bad man, and a coward! —and that he has a deformed face.' More mysterious looks followed the interpretation. Then the tall one said to the masked:

" 'Since he knows you, why not remove your mask?' Instantly the masked one disappeared through the door of the plane; the other angrily following. Almost immediately the former reappeared as if under duress of the other. My eyes were again blindfolded; all was again quiet.

"Nothing of consequence transpired thereafter until last night, when, as I have already related, I made a last effort to overawe these two men—and the fortuitous explosion. The physician, standing close by the car door, did not stop to even say 'good-by,' but hastened away with the others."

In response to a further question, Frame declared the physician offered no explanation as to the cause of the altercation between the other two:

"He did, however, cheer me up; and gave me some refreshments as I lay there blindfolded. In fact I found myself singing another song, as I fell into detached reminiscence——"

"You sang again!" ejaculated Soper delightedly. "Of whom were you thinking"—— he stopped short, as if suddenly embarrassed by a new thought; which Frame noted, quickly responding:

"Of some dear friends in America, Ichabod——"

"And I would not be guilty of further inquiry," interposed Soper. "But what was the song?"

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"Well, it was—'Love's Old Sweet Song.'"

When another and contrasted sensation had subsided, the chief propounded this final interrogatory:

"Have you an opinion to express as to whether or not Lee Sun was in this conspiracy?"

"For further reasons of state, I deem it inexpedient to now give any expression upon the subject," was the reply.

To the authorities, the net result of Frame's recitals was to focus attention upon Wo Hut and the "Cross-eyed" as the ring-leaders, and to point to Wong as a confederate and the probable custodian of Sin lung—if the latter was still alive. Also a wireless was sent to the scene of the rescue, notifying that the kidnappers should be regarded as appareled in Chinese clothing. . . .

The experience of Flissey Loor on the night of Henrietta's revelation of the song, had filled her with a wonderment, whose mystery and joy renewed her heart.

And that it had come through the discerning actress who knew Mr. Frame so keenly! Alarm had been banished; a peace had supervened, more sacredly sweet in that no hint of jealousy had come with the message!—for Henrietta had been one with the singing spheres—the cosmic consciousness.

And Flissey's soul was radiance of such music—her dreaming of the star had conduced to the revelation. . . .

He who lay in durance, just now re-harried by strange jeopardy of life; long and far from friends and dear ones East and West—who fitter than he to revert in reaction to his first love? To re-assess the "obstacle" that yet barred not—nay, that now newly revealed to him the lamp that ought henceforth to light his footsteps? And who more apt than he to make of the spheres a pathway, of the stars a harmonium, and of this actress a mortal servant, in transmission of a psychic note to his affinity, as she and the messenger sat dreaming as one!

For in *his* dreaming in the wilds, there had come an instant when for the first time since he had known both the actress and the harpist as rival forces in his life, he saw the latter fatefully differentiated—the solitary marvel drawing him, indeed, as never before—but as the one external dominant in life-*work;* the other the one partner in *life!*

Physically enslaved, the song had emancipated his heart! He felt that it had reached destination—had been sensed by *Henrietta,* not "Miss Brodein," as glad harbinger; and that it was well with her also!

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And he would write to Flissey when he should be restored to civilization; telling her of his undying love; that she alone could have inspired the song; that he believed it had reached her soul! . . .

At the end of the afternoon conference Frame, in connection with his functions in the Chen-Chau Case, privately announced to Lung li and Beaumont that he especially desired that the ringleaders in the abduction—now assumed to be Wo Hut and the Crosseyed—be speedily apprehended, then produced at Peking upon the occasion of his forthcoming decision upon the facts:

"And whenever those two men are produced there, and the various witnesses on the record are assembled, I will announce the facts in that controversy."

"And is it to be understood that you do not desire to stipulate for Sin lung's presence?" queried Lung li.

"If he reappears, or is produced by the conspirators, his presence will be desired; but I do not regard it essential to the decision, that he be either present or accounted for," was the unequivocal response.

"And the physician?"

"His presence is not essential."

The representatives were dispersing. Frame, aside with Lung li, requested the privilege of being informed at the earliest moment of the status of proceedings against Ousley and Humboldt. The attaché made known to him that the Peking authorities had advised him that the court-martial trial would occur on the morrow at nine A. M.

Frame had later asked Soper to excuse him for the balance of the afternoon: he would write several urgent letters for the next mail to the States.

First he wrote to parents and brother—all in one; tersely summarizing his remarkable experience in captivity; tried to tell how he had realized that his jeopardy must have pained them; explained the circumstances of his rescue and return to Chen-Chau; the jeopardy of his rescuers as spies, touching briefly upon his proposed intercession;—and ardently of his expectant early return home after the forthcoming decision at Peking.

Then he wrote to Flissey.

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CHAPTER XXXIV

THE fateful missive ran:

"My Dearest Miss Loor:—

"In my recent confinement by captors in the Tung Yen Woods, a revelation came to me. It was my old love for you—in a new experience of it.

"From more durance of thongs and threat of greater jeopardy had come a respite. At night, blindfolded, in an enclosed airal, I lay oblivious of surroundings and of what had led to them.

"My revelation had borne me to kindred; then to friends nearest my heart.

"And to you—who have been so much of my life—my daily inspiration!

"Back to the days when the 'obstacle' defined in those letters of yore barred realization of my love for you, a new-born fancy had led me. Reason was freed by an intuition. The old conviction that pursuit of my quest in life meant sacrifice of your endearments, was bared as a delusion!

"I sat with you in my encircling arm!

"Then I half awakened from my daydreams; and as I found myself singing a song the moment's bliss inspired—I saw such contrast!

"There seemed another—and how sweetly different—abduction!

"Then the voice of the Chinese physician-guard: 'You Melican man have a much pleasant singee.'

"My soul rebelled at thought that this was but a dream. I felt the song had been a response. That the revelation was sealed of God, moving in cosmic things. I felt, too, that Miss Brodein was His psychic herald. She would be happy as *your* ministrant—and mine to you in such a communion!

"Whatever of jeopardy I may run in so unfolding to you this experience, I make bold to declare, that when I shall be doubly blessed in again setting eyes upon you, I will tell you the song you—no one else could ever have—awakened in me!

"How much I desire to receive your response—and that it may leave me in no doubt that the enduring bliss I long for will be mine—words fail me to tell!

"My address will be Peking—at the Legation.

"Yours as never before,

"Bernard Frame."

A certain sweet relief—with a longing to know if his prayer would be answered—came to Frame with the penning of this letter.

He had just now mailed the letters, when he was accosted by

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the chief of police; with whom he reëntered his apartment to arrange for an air-trip very early the next morning to a particular habitation below the city which it was desired if possible to have identified as containing the room in which he had been confined when the priest and others were present. Later Soper was made one of the visiting parties.

Meanwhile, a wireless from the expedition to the Tung Yen district told of discovery of what was believed to be the rendezvous from which Frame had been rescued, near the head of the gorge. In this camp had been found, among other articles, a Chinese military uniform.

Consultation there led to the belief that the captors were either still near-by in the woods, or had gone westward—since the battle was now raging far northward. Armed air-patrols with powerful down-lights, reënforced by infantry, were reconnoitering the whole neighborhood before daylight. But the entire morning and succeeding day passed without discovery of any of the abductors. . . .

Chan lu and the chief were threading the narrow secluded footpath that led from the landing-place of the down-river expedition—at a point some forty-five miles below Chen-Chau—to the home of the priest Wu, a half mile away; the trail leading by the hut of Shan Yan, some seventy-five yards distant from the objective point.

This step had been taken in order to satisfy suspicion of these habitations being a cover to which some of the abductors might now resort; the balance of the party remaining for the time being at the landing-point.

Shan Yan, early aroused by a vigorous knock at his door by the under-officer, had seen no one about Wong's near-by neighborhood, nor approaching or leaving Wu's place on foot, for many days past.

"Or by air?"—a searching look from the officer.

"Well; for that, there was a ship dropped down there last night—it was gone in a twinkling," was the response. Inquiry developed that the barking of a dog, when "the moon was not far from half over," had led to the discovery by the peasant of the alighting of an airal—he believed it was an open one—at Wu's place; coming from southward, and departing in that direction. He could not be certain, but thought he saw "two forms on the ground as it went into the air again." He had not been there to inquire, nor to Wong's to see if any of those parties may have been he. Yet he "did not understand" why Wong had been gone

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so long. The two passed on to Wu's habitation. As Shan watched them, the chief turned and beckoned him forward; the three now advancing.

Again Chan lu was alone—knocking at Wu's doorway; the chief watching against escape of any one. The priest came out.

"Where are the two men that came here by airal last night?"

"What men?—or what ship?—I know of no one——"

"Wu! Tell the truth, or it will go hard with you. I have the proof that a plane came here at about half past two in the morning, and that two men got out"—Shan Yan was now present, and had surprised the priest; he was mildly protesting that he had not been so confident—"Now tell me who they were?"

The priest looked confused; declared that if any one had come to the locality by air the night before, he did not see them. "Before heaven I declare——"

"I demand that you disclose to me who those men were—and where they are now!" Another protest: "I was asleep!——"

But Chan lu and the chief were pushing Wu aside and entering the hut—it was little more than one—Shan following at the chief's beck. A thorough ransacking of its two rooms, and aloft by ladder, brought no discovery. Both officers were now scrutinizing the floor of the front room for a possible passageway beneath; Wu protesting the intrusion and that they would find no one; Shan queerly glancing at him. They then passed into the little sub-room and began a similar search; Wu, much concerned, Shan trembling, looking on. Chan lu's eye saw in a square space a suspicious crack—a faint sign of a hinge—and conceived a trap door!

Wu, hands wringing, pictured amazed dismay—then instantly came strange light of resolute expediency. He hurried outside before the chief, rapidly pursuing, could cover him with his gun.

Chan lu commanded Shan to remain; pulled from his belt a second gun:

"I make you now an officer—take this gun and defend me and the law!"

Wu, circling the hut, emitted a shrill ejaculation.

Chan lu, with a jimmy, repeatedly but vainly endeavored to pry open the securely fastened trap door. Quickly he tore away part of the cover—a narrow opening was made; his hand passed through, the fastening below was loosened. As he now cautiously raised the lid his gun-muzzle pointed into the small cellar, at the farther end of which he imagined he saw the crouching form of a man hastily scrambling to an apparent outlet in the rear. . . .

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The chief's reconnoiter had been prolonged beyond the expectations of those waiting behind; and Frame, who had had no leg exercise of any moment for several weeks, suddenly proposed that they go on foot to some point near the priest's home and there await developments.

Accordingly, one of the two remaining policemen led the way; Frame being next to the officer, Lung li and Soper following; all now being armed. They had arrived in plain sight of Wu's when his piercing cry was heard by all. Instinctively all hastened forward with drawn guns.

Chan lu heard and divined this peculiar utterance as a signal to whoever might be in the cellar; sprang to his feet, called upon Shan Yan to stand guard over the now closed trap door, and quickly emerged from and circuited the hut to a point within a few paces of where at the moment a Chinaman with drawn gun was starting to run from a partly obscured rear cellarway—at the same instant sighting the Frame party, now running up. He aimed at the fugitive just as the latter was firing at but missed him—when the former saw the menace of the approaching four.

As the head of another Chinaman emerged from certain débris covering the rear cellarway Frame, whose eye had caught the form of the fugitive and who instantly recognized him, rushed by the officer of his party and shouted, as he faced the fugitive:

"It is Wo Hut!"

Simultaneously with this ejaculation the other policeman—now slightly to Frame's right—was firing upon but missed the outlaw —who was in fact Wo Hut, and who was now bringing his recocked weapon to bear upon his new assailant.

It chanced that Chan lu had desisted from firing, through seeing the second would-be fugitive, gun in hand, and by his line of vision being crossed by the chief in hot pursuit of Wu, who was now endeavoring to reach the cellar outlet—when he too saw the Frame party.

Then followed a scene!

Frame faced the amazed and passive Wo Hut, his gun at his heart, his left hand pointed accusingly, his gaze again penetrating the soul of the outlaw—whose arm had fallen to his side; every eye save that of the priest centered upon him.

But the priest!

Wrought into frenzy from jeopardy and by thought that Wo Hut was being killed—but disconcerted by the strange transition he saw in the outlaw's visage, he cast his eyes upon Frame—when

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frightfulness of amazement fixed his attitude as marble, hands flung high!

At this instant, when Chan lu was exclaiming "Cross-eyed!"—discovering that he who now crouched behind Wo Hut was none other—Frame, through some telepathy, realizing the obsession of him at his right, dropped his gun and pointed his right hand toward the priest, his eye following; his left still poised at the outlaw. Another gaze—the priest was resolved passivity!

"He who would conjure through power of The Heavenly One!" pronounced Frame—and though not in the vernacular, its effect was the same.

And what of the Cross-eyed!

He beheld Frame—and as the abducted! He was cautiously craning his neck as he looked by his partner's form and straight at Frame—but not in seeming; for he was in fact cross-eyed, and *seemed hiding his face!*

Chan lu's exclamation also told Frame that the two "ringleaders" now faced him. Instantly—after his words to the priest—he turned to the crouching form, and for the first time beheld the unmasked face of the partner.

Accusing finger and scrutiny worked the inevitable dissection.

"Surrender!"—this shout reënforced the gun batteries now held upon the three conspirators—for Wu was now accounted one.

But there had already been a general and abject psychic surrender. Frame, now the sole gunless one, was head of the law's behest.

Quick upon the heels of the chief's command came Frame's verbal accusation:

"He of the mask!"

Even to Lung li, who with Soper had during these brief seconds stood a few feet in rear of Frame, and who at the Peking conference had believed the American minister's faculty was a verity, his present feat of confounding the three conspirators was astounding. For he realized that these confirmed criminals had in that instant of subjective experience *seen truth itself* as the overpowering fact!

As for Soper: he a few moments later summed his impressions in the revelation:

"Bernard, I saw in you more than I had dreamed, of your 'process.' Those outlaws regarded you as the only friend that faced them!"

But to Frame, more was involved: That vengeance of heaven

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he had threatened under the Tung Yen battlefield implied a promise—that *if* released, vengeance would be mitigated! He saw Wu, a co-conspirator, embraced in that implication—for he knew the "ringleaders" had recounted to him the threat.

And still more: in that they beheld the psychic seer free—a released abductee! Nay, more than all else: The American minister, who would reveal truth underlying the Chen-Chau riot, would be the unrevengeful accuser!

Soper, as sequence to the above exclamatory, said prophetically:

"Bernard, is it possible that you have been in God's hands—that the outlaws were His instruments!"

"That is as certain as verity. I have felt it all along, Ichabod," Frame averred.

The three virtual prisoners were now closed in upon and placed in irons. Chan lu searched the cellar. Some matting for seats and bedding, and some cookery utensils were found. Then his hand came upon something over the edge of the excavation which proved to be a mask.

"Here is the proof against Sin-le-fang!"—he pointed at the Crosseyed as, after emerging, he held it up to view.

Frame's instant recognition found expression in "It is the same!" and as, at the chief's request, his aide placed the mask upon the Crosseyed's face, Frame declared his previous convictions were confirmed.

Chan lu removed the mask, extracted from a pocket cabinet the fragment, placed it in juxtaposition to an edge of the mask from which, beyond peradventure, the piece had been broken, and held the now perfectly restored article up to general inspection.

There was equivocal resignation to the inevitable in Sin-le-fang's odd but crestfallen countenance. In the stoical mien of Wo Hut there was corroboration.

The prisoners were marched inside; Chan lu explaining Shan's presence. Frame seated himself on the bunk. As he cast his eyes about the room his head nodded in recognition of quarters he had once before known. He declared that, blindfolded, he would have identified the place.

"The odor! I could never forget that!" he ejaculated; and, as the three Chinamen were ranged against the wall:

"Chief landmarks of the place!"—then suddenly recalling: "It needs but the presence of the physician to complete the array of personalities, gentlemen." Finally; his mind reverting to the subject of the cellar: "That little dungeon below is the damp place

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in which I lay for—I don't know how long. I am convinced."

"Where is the doctor, who cared for the American minister?" demanded the chief, addressing Wo Hut and pointing to Frame; Lung li supplementing with an appeal that he speak truly. Frame was contemplating Wo Hut. But Lung li, suddenly reflecting, interposed:

"You need not implicate yourself. But you will not suffer by speaking the truth."

The outlaw remained stoically silent. The chief now plied the Crosseyed, who seemed to be looking at his partner, the latter still giving no sign: Sin-le-fang's response was a cryptic shake of his head.

"Who brought these two men here—in that plane, last night?" —the chief to Wu. The priest "did not see him"; and when further plied as to what the partners might have told him, he looked for a sign from Wo Hut; then replied that he had "nothing to say."

"This interpreter—Sin lung?—what became of him? Was he too kidnapped?" looks indicated refusal to respond. The chief then sought from Shan Yan information as to why Wong was so long absent—and whether the latter did not know where Sin lung now was. His reply reiterated his former statement to Chan lu—he did not understand why he was away. Had not Wu told him something? No response. Yes, Wong was sometimes employed by Wu to make baskets—from the lacquer-wood; "in the workshop over there"—pointing to a kind of bower across from the hut. Wu had said to him that Wong was away "on honest business—'that I know,'" he had told him a few days ago.

The priest was regarding Shan angrily. Yes, Wu had said that Wong had "gone—out by the river bank." On being further plied, he was told he could not shield Wu:

"For he is already implicated in the kidnapping of this American minister," pointing to Frame. Shan was amazed—that the abducted had been mysteriously released—and that he was the keen-eyed man now confronting him. His eyes, having met those of Frame, seemed lured—then consciousness told him his thoughts were being revealed!

Finally there was wrung from Shan: that in response to his inquiry as to whether Wong was preparing wood for baskets, Wu had replied: "Perhaps Chan lu has been telling you something about the lacquer-wood and Wong. You should say nothing to anybody about Wong, he is in honest business."

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The fourth officer now hurriedly entered the room, ejaculating to the chief:

"I heard shooting, and ran out here! Is anybody shot?" A negative response caused the officer to look about him in bewilderment at the array of prisoners. He spoke urgently:

"Who was this man I just saw scurrying away into the brush?" Misunderstanding was depicted in the chief's anxious look about him.

"He came and looked in here, then hurried toward the jungle as he saw me coming up."

This officer and Chan lu were ordered to seek and apprehend the party referred to.

Frame now declared he would join the officers; and without more, passed out and hastened in the direction taken by them. They were studying the surroundings when he came up and inquired the location of the river bank—it was perhaps a third of a mile away, to southward, he was told. In response to Chan's request for the reason of his inquiry, he declared he had in mind Wong—he may have turned about and made for cover at the river bank——

"A wise suggestion, Mr. Frame," rejoined Chan lu. "We had thought it might be this doctor." Frame expressed doubt. The aide immediately started for the river, Frame remaining with the mate.

After traversing the footpath some distance and finding no subtrail to the river, Chan lu approached Wong's nearby hut; found no one there; then vainly sought to find a trail thence to the river. After plunging into the thicket he came upon an imperfect trail leading by an angle toward the river. Following this, he reached a sharp turn that led beneath a conspicuous tree—when suddenly he came upon an abandoned open plane.

Should he continue, or report this discovery?—he heard a sound as of a breaking limb near-by; glided into the copse with cocked gun; glimpsed a rapidly retreating form ahead going riverward—lost sight of it. Returning to the tree, he continued thence stealthily on the dim path toward the river; passed through an opening in the underbrush—and found himself sliding some eight or ten feet down the sharp bank; on both shores was heavy undergrowth.

Stepping along to his left on a recently used footpath, he espied an abrupt indentation in the high bank—an embowered crypt, its mouth hidden by brushwood. Pushing through to an anteroom, he beheld a small low-roofed cave behind. Some matting,

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a begrimed suit of clothes, and certain scraps of basket materials lay by.

Hastily scanning this interior, Chan lu grasped the clothes and a handful of the slender basketry woods; emerged; scaled the bank and hurried back, threw the armful of things into the plane, and successively fired his gun.

Frame, who had returned to and was now re-visiting the rear of Wu's hut, heard these shots. . . .

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CHAPTER XXXV

THE third primary member of and the originator of the abduction conspiracy was Huin fu—the physician. Briefly:

He was a close friend of Lee Sun; had learned that the American minister, who by his process was to settle the Chen-Chau dispute, was possessed of miraculous powers, transcending the occult; became obsessed that this meant dire jeopardy to his friend. How far hauntings of the *fung shuy* had had to do with his resolve to save Lee Sun through depriving Frame of his faculty, can only be surmised. Moreover, he had known Sin lung for some years before the latter had gone to Peking from Chen-Chau. And though not himself a criminal, he had known both Wo Hut and the Crosseyed since boyhood—before they had become confirmed outlaws; he was aware that Sun lung when scarcely more than a boy was in several escapades in which "the ringleaders" had figured; that he was now an attaché as interpreter to the American Legation. From him he had procured a description of Frame; something of his professional exploits; and of his experience in the typhoon—"from which," he stated, "he escaped with merely a slight fracture of one of his lower left ribs"; ending by stating: "He will be in Chen-Chau soon, and I shall probably be of the party."

The scheme to abduct Frame and to bring him into contact with the ascribed superior psychic influence of Wu—and of "The Heavenly One" as an ultimate inducing cause—whereby to overawe him, brewed in the bewitched brain of Huin fu. By this means, he conceived, Frame would be bereft of the faculty of implicating the mandarin as an inspirer of the riot, while the latter would thereby escape responsibility in damages for destruction of the consulate—for the physician knew also of his connection with that affair.

Wo Hut and the Crosseyed were enmeshed because—also to Huin's knowledge—they were parties to the Chen-Chau uprising conspiracy; and by representing to them that they stood in greater jeopardy of Frame than did Lee Sun himself. For the mandarin was powerful, they "mere criminals," he urged. And while Huin

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was a man of property, he offered them no money—his urge lay in suggestion of the terrors of the *fung shuy*.

"And if he is not subdued, what then?" asked Wo Hut, after contemplating possibilities.

"You and Sin-le-fang will be no worse off. As it is, he will doom you both!" was the grim response.

"But if we overcome him, how will we get rid of him?"

"Leave that to me. I have a plan," rejoined the physician.

Through a similar appeal, and by enlarging upon Wu's occult powers, and the aid "The Heavenly One" would render, he prevailed with the former; and through him had provided another member of the abducting party in Wong; to whom the necessity of ridding China of another "American devil" more dangerous than the missionaries, was put forward.

At first Huin thought of using Sin lung as an informer in seizing Frame. He could be induced to give the signal—for his early record was known. "Once that sword of Damocles falls, he loses his position." Or, his services as interpreter for the abductors could be utilized, if he too were seized.

And Huin had a well-laid plan to be absent when the kidnapping should occur—of that later.

In his closed plane the abducted would be borne away—then returned and left in the suburbs. Wong, ostensibly vendor of basketry, would "whisper" with his pocket aspiral when to approach the yamen. The Crosseyed in peasant sack would be near Wu's the day before. Wo Hut, hidden in Huin's barn, would bide his time.

The physician had called upon and had learned from Sin lung on the day of Frame's arrival in Chen-Chau, that Lee Sun would be at the yamen the following morning, where Frame would interview him. Wong would shadow the mandarin—whom he had already seen—when he approached, and departed from, the council room—Huin would receive the signals on the opposite side of the side street near the gate. If possible, Frame—and probably one other person—would be seized in the rear room.

Near noon on the day in question the "partners" entered the plane in Huin fu's garage, and started—Wo Hut, an experienced airman, in charge—with instructions to air-stroll near a given rendezvous not far from the yamen; that upon a wireless signal from Huin they would air to rear of that structure. Four masks were in the plane.

The seizure was to occur immediately after Lee Sun should leave

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the room—since adverse eventualities might render such coincidence of use to the conspirators in implicating the mandarin. Thus the clever celestial had even gambled to his friend's prejudice.

Truly, good fortune was to have more to do with the success of this rashly conceived abduction itself than had Huin's brain.

The entry, and the exit of Lee Sun were faithfully signaled by Wong—and the two approached the rear lawn just as the plane arrived pursuant to the counter-signal; half-spiraling and landing with head toward the gateway—the two footmen closing the gate.

The "partners," masked, emerged; the four entered the rear room; Huin and Wong with masks secreted proceeding toward the cloakroom apartment while the others faced the rear entry—Huin having planned to make an excuse to see Sin lung as a means of reconnoitering the council room.

But just as Huin was about to enter that room, the door opened and Sin lung came out—and through the doorway Huin saw Frame sitting alone. Then the door closed.

Instantly Huin requested an introduction to the minister. As the interpreter with alacrity turned to reopen the door in compliance, a menacing gesture to Wong gave an understood signal to strike Sin lung down. An immediate blow from the confederate behind the victim's ear felled him—the two caught the limp body; a strong narcotic was quickly applied as he was laid upon the floor; masks were donned—the others having now come up. Opening the door slightly, Huin looked in—and saw the way clear.

The four stepped through; the "partners" seized Frame's arms and shoulders; Wong dealt him the blow in the ribs—then bandaged his eyes as Huin was applying the narcotics.

The spiriting of the body thence through the rear room and into the plane; the plugging of the keyhole by Wong; the return and hustling out of Sin lung's body after seizing the articles in the cloakroom; the spasmodic movement of his arm at the airal doorway, which partly shattered the Crosseyed's mask; the opening of the gate and the flight—all were the work of brief seconds of time.

The flight was circuitous to Wu's place; the victims having been bound enroute, and were kept blindfolded. The interpreter was never allowed to see, or to know—save by suspicion—of Frame's abduction. But every effort was made to revive him—Huin would employ him later as interpreter, after a resort, with Wu, to the shrine of "The Heavenly One" for consultation pre-

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paratory to bringing Frame into his presence. This plan failed. Vainly did Huin (whose voice was recognized) urge upon the now conscious Sin lung—who now dimly realized he had been foully dealt with, and who had been informed that Frame would be forthcoming for such a proposed operation—that he designed no physical injury, but that his one purpose was to deprive Frame of his superior faculty, that he might not implicate the mandarin and others in the riot. To Huin's threat to divulge his past record, he replied it would not avail—he would be true to the minister—and warned the physician of the greater jeopardy in which he and his confederates now stood. He was now placed in the hands of Wong, to be hidden away until the purpose of the conspirators should be prosecuted otherwise. He was borne to the embowered crypt, and again narcotized while his outer garb was being exchanged for a rustic one. There Wong sojourned; guarding and feeding the prisoner; the priest being an irregular visitor—only speaking with Wong when aside.

As to Frame: The plying of him—already narrated—followed immediately. And when the profitless performance was ended, and the subsequent threats also had proven unavailing, he was taken out of the room and through the rear into the cellar. While so confined he was usually kept under mild narcotics.

Huin fu aired his car back by a circuitous route to his home; casually reporting his absence as part of his professional round. He gathered from a patient certain flying rumors of the abduction.

While the police were scouring the environs of the city, Huin fu was swiftly airing southeasterly to Canton to attend a medical convention there convened; leaving word at home that he might be gone several days; saw several of his relatives; conversed with certain delegates; spent the following day there, returning late that evening. Next day he by a new detour aired to the locality of the tree; walking thence to Wu's place—fear of discovery of Frame's whereabouts, and dismay at thought of returning him to town having resolved him to spirit him farther away;—moreover, he would visit the military beyond Tung Yen, there to confer with army surgeons concerning his pending entry into the government service.

Certain directions to Wu; certain warnings to Wong as to continued secreting of Sin lung—and the plane was soared to Wu's hut, Frame placed therein, and the three conspirators departed—for the gorge, Wo Hut's proposed rendezvous.

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It was mid-forenoon. Frame was removed to a nearby retreat; and, observing to the others that he would reconnoiter the neighborhood for several hours, Huin fu soared to a point outside the military lines; held the contemplated conference; was assured of needed further aid to his entry into the army medical corps; then aired straight to Chen-Chau; informed his wife he was about to visit the medical staff of that same army, but that she might say he was out of town for some time—then flew back to the gorge.

Several times thenceforward the plane was absent for a few hours—once on a trip to Chen-Chau, and during successive visits to the military camp; Frame being again borne into the airal upon each return.

Two difficulties baffled Huin's anxiety to leave Frame at some safe point where he would be found: The "ringleaders" would in the night convey him to the yamen—would not consent to leave him in the suburbs. Further harm might come to him—superstition reigned. But Huin feared detection—had heard at Canton and at the military of the "enclosed plane" and of offers of ransom. Then came thought of having to evade pursuit while Frame was in the car. How to explain its absence! He must acquire a duplicate.

To this end he soared next day with Wo Hut to near the military camp; left the outlaw inside, and soon was bargaining with a civilian owner of another plane residing farther south, for its purchase; removed its number plate and returned; sent the confederate to a distant commissary stand for refreshments; during his absence exchanged the plate on the original plane for the other; took the former to where stood the purchased car and affixed it thereto; again returning just as Wo Hut came with the refreshments; ordered him to return to the lair with the original car; he himself would return to the neighborhood with another party and would then come in on foot. He in fact soared the new purchase to near the gorge, walking thence to the rendezvous.

He now informed the confederates he would be gone a short time with a friend:

"I may wireless you," addressing Wo Hut, "to come after me. If I do,"—addressing the Cross-eyed—"we will return in less than an hour. Closely guard the minister." Returning to the purchased plane, Huin flew thence to Chen-Chau; sent the wireless; and upon returning with his wife from a brief air-stroll, remarked that as the craft had seen much wear in the south, he would leave it at home, and return thence in another. On foot he soon reached

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the appointed meeting place; and was soon speeding back to the rendezvous.

Huin now insisted that Frame be aired, late in the night of the following day—which chanced to be the night of the battle—to a place near the yamen. The tall outlaw became ominously sullen. In the present night he clandestinely detached parts of the car motor connections and hid them in a far cranny of the gorge. . . .

At the skulking away following the explosion, Huin vainly commanded the others to return to the plane. "No power can harm *him!*" was the alarmed response of Wo Hut. Determined to himself remain, he demanded that Wo Hut doff a military suit—provided by Huin for occasional wear, that the outlaw might pose as a protecting soldier in case of surprise—for his own, if he would desert the camp.

"We must remain together, but I must first go back to the plane," said Huin. "Be quick!" responded the Crosseyed, doubly alarmed. While the physician was emerging from the brush toward the plane, Wo Hut was exchanging suits at the camp.

Why had not Huin fu disguised himself in Frame's presence? In few words: He was about to join the army. Frame, released, would return to Peking immediately; thence to America after the dispute had been settled. He would never again be where he could identify him—was the controlling thought. . . .

As Huin reached the edge of the copse he almost confronted Morehouse and Siley—two Chinese soldiers! Tremblingly he watched the gun aimed—saw the hand drop as discovery of a prisoner was made; saw them cutting the thongs—and a terrible tension was relieved!

For an instant the unexplainable yet inevitable incident of cessation of noise in battle came. He heard the ejaculation, "Frame!" and the response.

"They know each other!—and these are British—in Chinese uniforms!"

Bewildered, and as came the sally from the plane for the reconnoiter, Huin shrank away and hurried toward the camp.

"You want us to believe a lie!" broke in Wo Hut on the physician's excited report, and believing Frame had freed himself. In vain Huin protested, explained their dress and English speech—and that the minister called one "Morehouse." To him it was a miracle—the minister was *free*—and by his own hand!—and Huin fu deluded. "And *we* will be captured!"—and Wo Hut started for the gorge, the Crosseyed following.

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Huin fu succeeded in halting them, to outline his plan of returning them to cover, himself to Chen-Chau. They would commandeer another plane on the thoroughfare leading from Tung Yen to the military camps. Ready accession led to hurried abandonment of the camp with but a scant supply of provisions. The road was reached; the Crosseyed left to guard the provisions. Impressment by the others of the first passing omniplane—scores of which were abroad because of the battle—was the purpose. Guns in hand they were walking westward. Around a curve came a surface auto—they let it pass. Then came another—an open omniplane. They sprang to cover, hats drawn down. Wo Hut leaped up, halted the car, Huin flanking. The occupants—two men and the wife of one—were ordered out; and as the outlaw covered them he, finger in mouth, shrilly signaled to the Crosseyed. Sidearms were being yielded as Huin added to that demand:

"We requisition this plane. It is needed over there," pointing to eastward; then drew from his pocket some funds and, without counting, courteously handed them to the husband. The Crosseyed was hurrying up, provisions on his back.

Wraps and trappings were thrown out; part of the provisions handed the frightened yet grateful victims—and the car sped away to northward, being quickly shifted to air-service.

It was now about half past two o'clock in the morning. Less than half an hour later they were slowly soaring over the stream opposite Wu's place, dropping into its waters the captured guns; and settling down under the tree. The number plate was removed and cast into the river.

Huin's plan was to have the outlaws secreted in the cellar until they should return in this same plane to the gorge—or to some other rendezvous, there to baffle detection. Arrived at Wu's place, and in the priest's presence, he adjured silence upon them concerning their and his own connection with the abduction, in case of apprehension; penalties of the *fung shuy* being hinted at. They solemnly promised.

Wu was sent to the cave to bring Wong to his own hut and to inform him that his service as Sin lung's custodian was ended: "And command him to forever keep his counsel as to having had anything to do with the American minister or his interpreter!"

Huin fu and Wo Hut hastened to the crypt. The darkness yet revealed its occupant bound and blindfolded.

"On one condition you will be left where you will reach the yamen unharmed," declared Huin.

"What of minister Frame's welfare! tell me that?"

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"So far as I have reason to believe, he is in no jeopardy——"

"What means of knowledge have you of his whereabouts?"

"None—you will be reassured though, if you are released."

"Tell me this, too. How am I to satisfy Mr. Frame and the authorities that I have been kidnapped—and have *not* been a party to a clandestine—yes, *his* abduction?" The challenge and appeal went home.

"My word of honor, circumstances will not implicate you in any wrongdoing, in the eyes of the minister."

Still suspicious, Sin lung could do no more than make his appeal. He had expected no information of the facts.

"I know your condition—not to disclose your identity with my abduction. I still care naught for your threat concerning my record. I will not promise!"—followed by an altercation over Huin's threat of indefinite captivity "or something worse." Sin lung was still defiant. Informed that no threat of personal violence was intended, but that peril after his release was meant, his amazed inquiry led to the hint that Lee Sun was suspected by both governments in connection with his disappearance; that the mandarin had but just left the yamen when he, Sin lung, disappeared; and (sarcastically) that he was also suspected of implication in the riot.

"Go on!—and what of that?"

"and suspected of having spirited you away to wring from you secrets concerning Frame——"

"Heavens! You are falsifying—I do not believe you!"

"Well: Here is my ultimatum—my 'worst', of which I admonished you: When—and *if* released, you will be left at one of two places: The yamen, if you promise; at Lee Sun's door if you *don't!*"—and after an instant's waiting for this revelation to take effect: *"Then* how will you explain away a real, a double suspicion—unfaithfulness to the minister—and complicity with Lee Sun!"

"So, after all you have done, you would rob me of my character!"

"I offered to protect it, on honorable terms you have spurned. What now is your decision?"

Two thoughts controlled the interpreter in this crisis: He must remain free to speak the truth regarding the abduction. And —Frame was not *now* in jeopardy—he at last believed this. His one doubt was: If he himself should be the sole accuser, would Frame or the authorities believe him?

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"I will not promise!"—

"Then I will put an end to your life! Promise, instanter?" —came with dread promptness.

Huin fu was at this instant a changed man—potentially a monster of crime! Yet it was to save a friend he had become enmeshed. Could he mean to slay one who seemed ready to sacrifice life for a friend!—to save himself?

Swift came thought of the alternative: To live to be forever misunderstood—mayhap irretrievably disgraced—but with one hope: that truth might some time be revealed—and himself vindicated! He could face it—with Frame saved!

"I choose not to die. Disgrace may come. But I promise!"

Wo Hut, who had been stationed at the steep turn, was now called in to silently stand guard; Huin returned to Wu's place—it was nearly four o'clock. To him the same injunction was given as had been imposed upon the outlaws.

"Remember, I am a man of influence!"

"No word will I utter—heaven witnesses!"

"I will dispose of Sin lung—then I go away from Chen-Chau."

Hurrying to the tree, he flew the plane to the river; told Wo Hut, aside, of part of his plans—he had not heard Huin's deadly threat—and that he should not speak in the interpreter's presence. The latter was gagged, borne into the car. In the fleet soar to within five miles of Chen-Chau, Huin administered that which would perpetuate for certain calculated hours a comatose state; unbound and ungagged the victim, removed the blindfolding, weighted and dropped the thongs to the water below; penciled in a hand imitative of the interpreter's, upon a sheet from his tablet, this note, which he pinned to Sin lung's coat lapel:

"I am Sin lung. Take me to the Yamen in Chen-Chau.
"SIN LUNG."

In the heather at a secluded spot near a junction of a footpath with the roadway, the limp form was laid, head upon a slight mound.

Proceeding to a given locality in the city, Huin, who had repeated his warning injunction to the outlaw, said to him as the plane was spiraling down:

"Leave Wu's with Sin-le-fang at the earliest moment. Secrete yourselves and make the best of it till this matter blows over"—the physician was handing him some money.

"We will not go near the gorge! I know a place nearer by"—

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the outlaw was in serious thought. "Where will you be?" he inquired.

"No matter—better that you do not know—and you know nothing of my whereabouts since—before that day!" He was gone.

Medicine case in hand, he walked to and entered his residence as dawn was breaking; informed his wife of his arrival from the battle scene—he had ministered to some wounded at the allied rear, he pretended.

"You know the battle is won?" she said inquiringly. He had believed it was being won, he replied; and when told the reports that the English were driven back to and from their base at Hong Kong, remarked:

"I had planned to go there immediately, to join the medical corps, after returning home. I must start at once—my services will be needed there." The wife was expostulating, as he started for the garage while hastily directing that a few things be thrown into his valise. Suddenly she remarked:

"This American, Frame, has turned up at last—had you heard that?"

"Frame turned up? Where?"—in seeming surprise.

"Here in Chen-Chau—but he was brought here by the police."

"When?—how long ago?"

"Why, a little while ago—this night—then the crowd made him talk to them—everybody was about——"

"Where did they go to get this man Frame?" he interposed.

"From somewhere near the battle—some spies found him—British spies, in Chinese uniforms, a strange circumstance. Then our scouters captured the spies——"

"And how about Sin lung?"

"He was not discovered; that is all we heard——"

"Strange enough!—nobody found with him?" He was referred to the police.

As Huin fu left the house he mused: "That explains them as spies! 'Morehouse'!—and Sin lung too, may be discovered at any moment! I must be gone."

Within five minutes he was enroute toward Hong Kong, his man-servant aboard; with whom he took occasional turns in piloting the craft. . . .

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CHAPTER XXXVI

WHEN Wo Hut—after alighting by the tree—was again at Wu's place and was making ready to depart with the Crosseyed, Wu—who was preparing a hasty breakfast—seemed much concerned. He was soon narrating to Wo Hut the substance of what had passed between himself and Chan lu regarding Wong and the incident of the lacquer-wood.

"What should I do with Wong, now that he is at home—suppose Chan lu comes again?" he anxiously inquired. "How can I account for where he has been, and what he has been doing?" Wo Hut musingly suggested, half to himself: that the peasant might have been fishing in the river; might have placed the fish in a weir—without the fact having come to his, Wu's, knowledge; that he might also have spent part of the time at some distant point, gathering materials for basketry which he had not yet brought home. In fine, he said:

"Whatever happens, if an officer turns up, you must see to it that Wong adopts one of two explanations—fishing, or basketry."

But Wu evinced obvious reluctance; insisting that Wong should be brought in and interviewed, and instructed as to the story he would give if himself plied by the officer.

"Go and bring him here, then," said Wo Hut. Wu hastened away, while the outlaws were finishing their breakfast.

Wong—who was fast asleep under the reaction from the tension of his vigils at the cave—was awakened by the priest's knocking at his door. Soon the two were in the presence of the others. An explanation followed; Wo Hut repeating to him the substance of his previous suggestions to the priest. The rustic pointedly objected:

"I have not been fishing—only caught a few for myself, once or twice. That you know"—addressing Wu. "And when have I made any baskets? Not since some time before this Sin lung was placed in my keeping!"

"But you must know you will have to furnish the police—if they find you—some account of your time, how you have spent it since you have been watching——"

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"I have a different thought of how to make good with my time. I may have been farther away from home than you know—and they will not find me!—I did not know before that they suspected me."

"But I know you haven't been farther away than right here by the river, Wong," the priest was explaining—but the peasant, with a resolute wave of his hand accompanying a negative gesture of his head, was off without another word; disappearing from the hut and striding toward home in a decidedly independent manner. As he was nearing the door Wu was pursuing him, saying:

"But we must know before these men go away, what you will say to an officer"—he was now out of hearing.

Wu was alarmed. A hurried consultation—which rapidly developed into a semi-altercation—followed; he still insisting there must be brought about an understanding between himself and Wong upon the subject in hand, before the outlaws should depart. He would not consent to being left alone with Wong that day—they must stay until next day, if necessary. By that time they might prevail upon Wong to reveal his mind.

As the upshot, Wo Hut immediately spirited himself to Wong's hut to bring him back. He could not be found. After stealthily reconnoitering the surroundings, the outlaw stole back and reported.

Consternation possessed the priest. Moreover, a kind of new fear entered the hearts of the others. It was evident to them that the priest was still suspected by the authorities.

The idea of a joint search of the neighborhood was mooted, only to be waived aside—the outlaws would not now consent to show themselves abroad, save for long enough to get to the plane with provisions for the flight.

"Then you must secrete yourselves in the cellar until tomorrow," Wu imperatively demanded. "You will be as safe there now as you were before." The Crosseyed now spoke:

"Huin fu knew what he was talking about when he ordered us to go right away. I don't feel real safe here."

But the authority of the priest finally prevailed. They could enter the cellar; he would throw some more litter and brambles over the rear entrance, to more effectually hide the outlaw—they could burrow through it experimentally from the inside, so as to provide an unseen mode of exit in case of emergency. As to the plane, he would be oblivious of its presence should he be questioned concerning it. Meanwhile, he would quietly seek for Wong.

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And so it came about that until the next morning—for Wong was not found—the outlaws were hidden in the cellar. . . .

It was Wong who peered through Wu's door; and he it was whom Chan lu had glimpsed between the tree and the river. The purpose of his early approach of Wu's hut was to ascertain if the two outlaws had gone. What his glance had discovered resolved him instantly to flee the locality. He was not again seen thereabouts by any one.

Frame, and the other officer, who was returning from the copse in the opposite direction just as Chan lu's two shots were fired, ran in the direction of the sounds, and soon arrived where stood Chan by the plane.

Frame at once identified the clothes as being, almost certainly, those formerly worn by Sin lung. The three then repaired to the cave, surveyed the scene and approaches; then returned to the hut via the plane, Chan lu bearing the clothes and the handful of lacquer-wood.

A sensation followed exhibit of these articles. But vainly did Chan lu ply the priest in an effort to wring from him an admission concerning the identity of the plane as being the one which alighted with the two men. Nor was his attempt to secure from him, by confronting him with the lacquer-wood saplings, evidence implicating Wong as the person who had stood guard over Sin lung, of avail. His bearing and evasive responses however evinced his insincerity. His refusal to commit himself in these respects was explainable: If Wong should finally elude arrest; and in view of the fact that Sin lung had never been allowed to see Wu, the latter now conceived that at most he himself could be held as having merely secreted the two outlaws as fugitives from justice—he imagined he could not be held as an original conspirator.

Chan lu and an aide were left to make thorough search for Sin lung, and to apprehend if possible, Wong. By seven o'clock A. M., the balance of the visiting party with the prisoners were at the general police station. Frame went immediately to Soper's room, and invited him to his own apartments; to which an officer had brought the suit of clothes for Soper's inspection. On the way Frame explained the circumstances of the discovery of the cave while searching for the mysteriously disappearing party, and of the articles found therein. Soper, upon closely examining the clothes, declared his belief that the coat was of the color of that worn by the interpreter.

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"But how about this doctor?" he inquired.

"No trace of him was discovered. You remember I intimated that I had a theory as to him?" was Frame's response.

Shortly after the party had returned to town, Frame had received, through the good offices of Lung li, a passport through the military lines at Hong Kong; this in anticipation of what he believed would inevitably be the result of the court-martial—a death sentence. It had also been arranged with the Wai-Wu Pu that, in that event, a stay of execution of sentence would be granted until Frame should have an opportunity to interpose. This concession came, notwithstanding Lung li was advised that Ousley was regarded by the military as being "an exceptionally successful and dangerous spy." But Frame had urged, not without force, that consideration be given the fact that, in rescuing him, Frame, Ousley had in effect relieved the Chinese government of a heavy responsibility.

He was pacing under nervous tension and in momentary expectation of tidings which would mean his immediate departure for Hong Kong, when Soper came rushing into his room, exclaiming:

"Sin lung's turned up!—right here in town;" followed by explanation that he was now at the yamen; that Beaumont had phoned that he had been brought to town by a wayfarer who had found him a few miles below the city.

A moment or two later Frame was frantically greeting the pallid and unkempt interpreter—withal, so strange in peasant's garb.

"How glad I am that you, too, have been rescued!" he cried.

"So you, too, was kidnapped? I suspected, but never knew it until Mr. Beaumont informed me," was Sin lung's return to the greeting.

On the way back to his apartments he briefly summarized the facts concerning his own abduction and rescue, the discovery and apprehension of the outlaws, the priest's arrest, and the finding of the cave in which he, Sin lung, was believed to have been imprisoned—to most of which the interpreter listened in wonderment. Then the latter was explaining his own abduction; Soper being present:

"I was in the cloakroom. I was approached by two men"—his thoughts centered upon Huin fu!—but Soper was exhibiting the clothes.

"Of course; those are my clothes," Sin lung instantly remarked.

"In fine," he resumed, "I was suddenly struck from behind—then all was a blank."

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Frame explained that *three* men assaulted him—and that he was struck in the ribs. No; the interpreter could not recall having told any one about Frame having been injured in his ribs.

A phone call from Lung li interrupted—Ousley and Humboldt had been condemned; sentence to be executed to-morrow at sunrise. . . .

Frame was at the commanding general's headquarters in Hong Kong. The military, it had transpired, doubted that the condemned men had really rescued him. Had not his abductors abandoned him at that time? Frame was now urging the fact of his real peril when rescued—and of his tremendous obligations. Nothing could be graver than his obligation to save them.

"Country!"—there was singular significance in General Linghua's eye. Frame appreciatively recognized the truism implied in the magic word and the accompanying look. However, it soon came to this reassuring utterance:

"This only is of vital significance—that you, sir, represent the two governments, upon a mission at once novel and fraught with consequences of primary importance to both countries—and to the world at large!"

Expressing his deep appreciation, Frame plead that in this intercession, all thought of his ministry was banished—gratitude that safety had come to him, and solicitude for those who had freed him, alone controlled him:

"I would if necessary gladly yield my commission, to save them!"

Newly impressed by looks that told more than words, the general replied that a decision upon the minister's intercession would come soon. As Frame was being deferentially waved toward the ante-room to await the outcome, he inquired if his wireless to Ousley—he had been permitted to send one from Chen-Chau—had been delivered to him; and was informed that it had been sent him several hours ago. Frame then craved an opportunity to see and speak with Ousley—if but a word. The general instructed an aide to conduct him into Ousley's presence for a brief interview in presence also of the aide; thence back to headquarters.

"I could never tell you how much that wireless meant!" were the words that sealed the condemned's handclasp. He had failed to reach friends who might possibly have interceded. Only his wife knew of his sentence, he declared.

"She acknowledged my message, and"—Morehouse's speech faltered. With bowed head he was vacantly staring. Slowly, re-

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luctantly, he drew from his pocket a dispatch, holding it out to Frame:

"O George! We shall meet in heaven. Rachel." It was from Victoria, British Columbia. Looking through tears, Frame inquired the street address. In a dread faltering falsetto, Morehouse informed him.

"I shall wireless her at once—with your permission," said Frame. Morehouse read destiny in the eyes now fathoming his own, as Frame told him of his interview with the commander.

"If any power on earth can change my fate—and Humboldt's?—it would be you," he said fervently.

"Good-by, Ousley; and God grant whatever may be hoped for!" . . .

He was now with Humboldt—for this privilege too had been accorded him. He informed the young soldier that he knew of his sentence.

"Can you sive us—can you 'elp me, Mr. Frime!"—he had broken down.

"Me poor mother. Awy theer in Yorkshi-er!" Frame replied feelingly, that he had urged clemency toward both himself and Ousley.

"If ever you was to sive us, sir!"—Frame was extending his hand in farewell to the grief-stricken spy:

"What may come to you and Mr. Ousley, this day, none but God knows. I know you for a true son of England, sir. Good-by."

Now back to headquarters, Frame penciled, over his signature and official designation, a dispatch to Mrs. Morehouse:

"Do not wholly despair of your husband's life. I have interceded."

The proposed message was submitted for possible censorial treatment, as it might be open to objection as indicating in advance the government's intentions concerning the condemned; but the General made no objection. As Frame was again bowing himself out, the commander detained him to say:

"I am authorized to inform you that it is now virtually certain that favorable action will be taken upon your intercession."

"General, I am unable to withhold expression of such gratitude as, I assure you, I have never before experienced!"—was Frame's joyous response to this announcement. The commander explained that in truth the matter now rested with himself and certain subordinates who had exhibited marked bravery in ap-

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prehending these "most astute and really dangerous spies"; and to whom he had interpreted Frame's justifiable solicitude for their welfare.

Frame eliminated the word "wholly," and added at the end of the message before sending it: "Very probably he will be saved."

Sitting in the ante-room, a reaction such as had not attended even his release from the abductors, came over Frame.

At last—the commander having read a message from some subordinate—he summoned Frame; to whom he extended his hand as he announced:

"Minister Frame, I have to inform you that the lives of Ousley and Humboldt are spared."

Frame, sensibly affected, ejaculated:

"This clemency is divine!" He was instantly asking, and was readily granted the privilege of again seeing the two Englishmen.

Morehouse was recovering from the super-excitement the tidings just received had awakened, as Frame again approached him.

"God be thanked!—and you, sir, for evoking His spirit!"—hands were again clasped as Frame told of the message sent.

"Oh!"—from Morehouse's ecstatic soul. He was telling how he could never forget this immeasurable service, as Frame was bidding him good-by for the present, declaring he should communicate with him in the near future.

"I know w'at you're agoin' to sy, sir, that I'm not agoin' to be shot!" exclaimed Siley, as Frame stepped into his presence to congratulate him. He had rushed up to Frame and was demonstratively holding his hand as he continued:

"An' w'at can I sy?—to tell you 'ow thankful——"

"But for Mr. Morehouse and yourself setting me free, I could not have——"

"Oh, you'll never know, sir, w'at it means to be sived, as we've been sived!"—he was giving the military salute to Frame, as he half deliriously shouted:

"I sy, long live Amuriky!"—and he broke into song; rendering in a beautiful voice a couplet from the British national air. Again he reverted.

"Them cut-throats 'adn't dursted to kill *you,* sir; seems like they was afeared o' you."

Wishing him good fortune henceforth, Frame was gone.

" 'E's an aingel—oh!"

Frame was being swiftly soared—first above, then beyond the belligerent actors—to a point over the northeasterly suburbs of

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Hong Kong; this by military courtesy and to afford him a general view of the whole field of action, land and marine. They were returning to headquarters.

Remarked an aide: "If every other sound were silenced, you could hear a faint fluttering murmur emanating from that iron-clad plant. More faintly you could sense its echo reflected from the general surface of that cluster of buildings"—pointing toward the western environments of the city.

"'Jigger-jars' enginery, no doubt," observed Frame.

"We call it 'the quaker', sir; since it is little less than an earthquake that shakes those structures to pieces. . . . But this trouble is met with: The enemy, by a sort of correlative system, detects the remaining resisting power of the structure, so accurately as that they usually begin to evacuate before it becomes untenable. Yet again: Their own measurement of this residual is made to divulge itself through a process of 'stealing' the data registered upon their mechanism; so that the same engineer reads from his seat what the engineries of both belligerents are registering. Finally," he ended, "the original attack may be neutralized by enemy's counter-manipulation of the secondary principle of vibration of the attacked structure; by which the effect of our process is measurably overcome."

"That is reducing war to a new phase of science, indeed," observed Frame.

"The same principle, as you know, is applied to enemy shipping —thus setting the vessel to rolling violently, while bombing her from above," he casually remarked.

Just before leaving for Chen-Chau, Frame was hurriedly calling upon Jan Ho at the field hospital—where, he had casually learned, he lay slightly wounded. The conversation naturally diverted to Ousley. The officer remarked that an army surgeon had just now been shown in, who had inquired of him as to where Ousley was being held.

"I remember the circumstance, since he called him 'Morehouse' —said he believed that was his true name." He had gone to the hospital phone-booth to procure leave to visit Ousley, it was said.

"I would like to meet some one who knows Ousley," said Frame, who quickly excusing himself, was shown to the booth office, and sat waiting.

Presently the occupant emerged, and rapidly neared the entrance and Frame; who arose to introduce himself—when he started back in blank surprise.

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It was Huin fu!

Shocked and alarmed at discovery of his identity by the abducted, he thought only of escape. Frame exclaimed:

"I identify you as one of my abductors!"—and motioned the aide at his side to apprehend him; he himself seizing the physician's arm.

While the soldier and Frame were grappling—the bewildered aide standing inactive—an officer summoned from outside rushed in to apprehend a supposed assaulter of a soldier. Confusion followed.

"I am Bernard Frame, who was abducted from Chen-Chau, and this is one of my abductors," Frame managed to declare. Reference to the kidnapping led the officer to demand the physician's name; he responding:

"Huin fu; and I am stationed at the main hospital—I know nothing of this man"—referring to Frame; who, however, persisted.

Huin fu was taken in custody to headquarters, Frame accompanying. On the way the physician mentally resolved to rely upon his cherished alibi.

The fact that Frame was involved in this strange resort to Linghau's headquarters soon effected an audience. The officer explained as best he could the situation. Frame interposed, declaring that he positively identified the soldier as one of the three in whose hands he had found himself after the abduction:

"And I request that he be held to answer for his crime, General."

Huin fu protested; but the officer was instructed to take him to Chen-Chau, there to be dealt with according to law; with the intimation to Frame that formal complaint be lodged against him.

"Huin fu!" Frame repeated to himself, as he was now enroute to Chen-Chau. "Where was he practicing medicine?—and why was he in quest of Morehouse?"

Again in the city, his American friends were congratulating him upon his successful intercession for the lives of the condemned men, his rescuers.

"I looked for nothing less than success, Bernard," was Soper's warm comment.

"By setting me free, they cut the Gordian knot of impenetrability of the mysterious abduction. I believe it was consideration of that fact which prevailed with the government," Frame re-

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sponded; and—addressing Lung li: "Your government, in order to be graciously just, set aside an ancient rule of war among belligerents." The official bowed his acknowledgments; then diverted; inquiring of Frame and being informed as to how it came about that he discovered the fourth conspirator.

"His being implicated is matter of amazement in town. He is said to have been a physician of some repute here—and the last person in the community to be suspected of crime," declared Lung li.

"But I perceived," Frame declared, "while he was denying his guilt and denouncing my charge as false, that he was prevaricating—and that he was conscious that I knew this. I was therefore somewhat surprised at his persistence."

On the following morning Frame filed complaint against Huin fu—the others having already been complained against. All were held for formal prosecution.

Frame had learned, through Soper, on the preceding evening, that efforts had been made by the Chinese authorities to connect Sin lung as a conspirator with the mandarin; that the interpreter was reticent concerning his experience with one of the two men who had assailed him in the cloakroom.

"I must talk with him further in the morning," remarked Frame.

Sin lung related to Frame, the following morning, concerning his own rescue: That while confined he had again been drugged, then taken to where he had later been discovered by some passer-by, who had accosted him, half dazed, and, finding upon his blouse the note, had for some reason refused to assist him, and had passed on.

"I imagine he thought I was trying to secure a free ride to town," he declared; that, having made an effort to walk, he had from dizziness sunk by the roadway in the shade of some brambles; that he was evidently discovered there by a dog, whose growl had resulted in his discovery by the wayfaring master; to whom he had made known the fact of his abduction—this had led to his being brought in.

Frame then alluded to his discovery and identification of Huin fu the physician—of which fact the interpreter had learned. No; he could not say that these facts aided him in identifying any of the abductors.

"Did you ever know any one of the men who kidnapped us?" Frame inquired searchingly.

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The interpreter, after hearing of Huin's arrest, had spent a sleepless night of concern over the present difficulty of refraining from divulging the physician's name and complicity.

And now! He had known three of the conspirators for years!

"Mr. Minister, I must desist from answering your question. Nor can I at this time state the reasons——"

"Why!" ejaculated Frame. "You are well aware that this information can be demanded by your government?"

"That is a matter beyond my control. I realize, however, that my attitude must entail your extreme displeasure—not improbably my dismissal from the legation's service."

Frame sat silently analyzing these words and the mind that prompted them. He saw in the interpreter's being a weight—coupled with innocence. His duty was plain:

"Sin lung, you should unbosom the whole truth." This without a hint of reproach. "Chinese officials suspect your complicity in my abduction—even in your own." Sin lung prayed him to disbelieve such implication:

"I am wholly innocent of any part in that vile crime!" Frame assured him that he himself had never credited such suspicion; then warned him that his course, just announced, could but intensify it with the authorities.

"I know I shall rest under a condemnatory ban that is twofold"—for he learned that Beaumont shared the views of the Chinese. A new hope, however, had suddenly buoyed him—for Frame was without suspicion!

"Minister Frame, your exoneration of me from your personal distrust is priceless! These other suspicions—let time deal with them. Circumstances may yet enable you to understand my present attitude."

Frame now saw plainly: An understanding existed between Sin lung and one or more of the conspirators. He believed it was with Huin fu.

"Duty compels me to inform Lung li of your failure to directly answer my question."

"That is expected, Minister Frame"—and the interview ended.

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CHAPTER XXXVII

TO the warning Sin lung had given him while in captivity, Huin fu jailed, and cognizant of the interpreter's rescue and suspected complicity—now faced the more appalling specter of Frame's psychic power—the searching gaze at the phone office had reminded him of dominance over the captors.

"If he is present at my trial, my thoughts will become known! . . ."

In truth, Frame had striven in the previous night, to unravel Huin fu's quest of Morehouse. "Did he know of Morehouse's presence at the plane in Japan that night? Had he learned through him, of my wound?—and did *he* deliver that blow in the yamen?" This train of thought did not impress. . . . Morehouse in the Tung Yen woods. The physician—nearby, yet fled. . . This thought persisted. . .

He was now confronting the physician; in presence of the chief, Lung li, Soper and Sin lung—the latter to act as interpreter, visibly nervous, as was Huin fu.

"You are acquainted with one Morehouse, *alias* Ousley, condemned at Hong Kong as a British spy?" inquired the chief—previously prompted by Frame.

"Do they know I was seeking him, in that booth?" he thought, taken unawares.

"It is possible—I am not certain of his identity," he replied. Next, he lamely averred he could not say he had ever met him. If he had, he thought—it was in Canton, at the medical convention; some one—name forgotten—had casually introduced him as Morehouse.

Frame detected the falsities. He was now permitted to attempt to interrogate him in English.

By words and gestures he indicated that Morehouse was in those woods—to southward; himself in an air-plane—and the cutting of thongs.

"I not know—you, some say, Melican Mlinster, you was there——"

"You do know!"—Frame's accusing finger pointed fatefully—

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then was focused upon Sin lung—"and you know *him!*"—his left forefinger now substituted for its fellow, aimed at the physician:

"And *you* know *him!*"

The shocked interpreter did not rebel against this psychic decree—and on the instant he realized in the accusation that each knew the other, that his promise to Huin had lost its virtue—and in the next he read in the physician's face transfiguration—truth *and relief!*

The "You saw Morehouse *there!*"—which followed with another gesture—registered in words what Frame had psychically "exchanged."

The words had been spoken quietly and as prophetic revelation. The physician seemed drawn; his eyes, growing in wonderment, dwelling in those of the minister.

Frame, desiring not to appear as an accuser in the sense of wringing a verbal confession, arose, and accosted Lung li:

"I am ready to return to my apartments;" and the party left the station.

This new demonstration of Frame's faculty, seemingly revealing a former acquaintanceship between Sin lung and Huin fu, led Lung li to institute another interview of the interpreter; which however proved unavailing, he being still non-committal. Lung li then suggested to Frame the expediency of taking Sin lung into custody—a course emphatically discouraged by Frame, who expressed disbelief that Sin lung had been either a conspirator or an accessory:

"His previous acquaintanceship with Huin fu is evident. Time will doubtless develop circumstances consistent with his innocence which compelled him to assume the stand he has taken." In view of these representations—and notwithstanding a rumor of such previous relations was afloat in town—the authorities refrained from arresting the interpreter. . . .

The press of all countries had teemed with details of Frame's rescue; his successful intercession for the court-martialed spies; the apprehension of the conspirators; the identification of Huin fu—and of the remarkable disclosure of his former acquaintanceship with the now rescued interpreter; climaxed by the current headlines announcing that on the morrow the American minister would pronounce the facts in the Chen-Chau Case. Incidental editorial comments referred to Frame's brief career in China as a strange mingling of novel research and of romance, in which the semi-tragic and the melodramatic alternated; out of all of which

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there was likely to emerge, as the dénouement of the international dispute, a resultant in psychology of great public value. . . .

Around a central table in a room at the official seat of the Wai-Wu Pu in the Imperial City of Peking, sat the representatives of the two governments, their counsel, and Frame; the respective witnesses and the "ringleaders" to one side.

Frame, center of the assembly, was absorbed in subconscious perception of the panorama of facts now to be revealed as the basis of what would in all probability prove conclusive of the Chen-Chau dispute.

On the preceding night, Lung li and Wu Tung, vice-president of the Board, had debated the question whether Frame, victim of the abduction and, presumably, sharer in the general suspicion that Lee Sun was at least an accessory thereto, would be free from prejudice against their government in declaring upon the facts in controversy. It soon transpired that neither could entertain the thought that this minister, who in the outset had convinced the Chinese court that he was above the dictates of prejudice, would now be susceptible to bias as the result of brigandage the government could not have foreseen—and the subject was dismissed as unworthy of serious consideration.

Lee Sun, however, notwithstanding the cordiality of the minister toward him on the event of his return from captivity, feared his prejudice:

"He believes I inspired the riot—and planned his abduction!" spoke his superstition.

Frame himself, sensible of the bearings of the personalities connected with the abductions upon the issue of the uprising, had resolved, and had communicated to Beaumont his intention to make known to the Chinese court his willingness, to resign his commission and to withdraw all connection with the case, should there exist in their minds even the suggestion of his bias. It was concluded, after discussion, that it would be expedient to first approach Lung li upon the subject, before reporting Frame's attitude to the home government; that if then the Peking court should entertain doubt in the premises, it would be in order to communicate with Washington. They had then conferred with Lung li; to whom Frame frankly stated the reasons which had constrained him; that if upon a conference of that official with his colleagues, an intimation adverse to his acting in the case should

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come, he would cheerfully resign his commission. However, he assured Lung li:

"I am not sensible of any bias resulting from any experience I have had in China."

Lung li's mission in this connection had been but perfunctory; his own and the views of Wu Tung, already related, having been promptly acquiesced in by the Board. The inevitable response came immediately.

The problem with which Frame was now to deal was recognized by the peoples of both countries as one of conflict of fundamentals —in other words, that the riot and the burning symbolized a flame which friction of Anglo-Saxon with Oriental civilization had fanned into passionate destruction.

No one—not even Frame himself—realized of what utility his forced confinement had been, as a means of analyzing Chinese character and superstition under stress of grim realism. The weeks of durance he had so spent, with physical eyes blinded, while the spiritual glowed with increased brilliance and effect, were now to fructuate in imparting new light to the torch of civilization.

He now announced his readiness to proceed:

He began with a succinct preliminary statement of facts as the background of the situation leading up to the uprising; comprehending some misunderstandings between missionaries and people, involving attacks by Chinese agitators upon the motives of the Christians, which had preceded the agitation in question; this followed by the second stage—that of sowing the seeds of internal dissension among the missionaries themselves. These were the foundations upon which the fires of this uprising were kindled.

"The fagots thus enflamed were the Chen-Chau populace who in fury burned the consulate. Who set the first fire?"

His words, promptly interpreted, were slow and deliberate. The interrogatory seemed addressed to Infinitude.

Wo Hut was alert. Had there been several fires?

The Crosseyed was amazed. "I didn't see more than one!" The official celestials exchanged grins.

But, upon the heels of that exclamation, Frame had executed a searching probe into the consciousness of each of the whole half-circle of witnesses, from Gore to Lee Sun—embracing also the "ringleader." A shock of psychic lightning was felt by every soul so visited. It told Sin-le-fang, not of the three fires he had

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imagined, but of *his presence at the one fire.* In fine, it told each what had been his part in the uprising.

Frame was now about to declare directly his findings; his eyes alternating between abstract space and the particular witnesses to whom the successive phases of his statement related.

"The primary cause that led to the uprising was what to the common people was the strange spectacle of denunciation by certain missionaries, directed against the sincerity of Christianity itself and its general propagandists." He specified Gore; referring to his prediction of war against China "in consequence of worldliness and self-seeking among the masses in Christian leadership," as tending to arouse local hatred of Christianity and its general devotees; a prejudice intensified by the more demonstrative utterances of Morrison.

"We approach the uprising itself: Certain mandarins urged on a fierce advocacy of this spirit of antagonism, already initiated among the Chinese—to fan it into rebellion. The motive, their perpetuation in power.

"Chung Kwang was one of these exhorters who, on the day of this uprising, stood at various pre-arranged stations in the city to do the bidding of their employers. He was a tool of the leader among the conspirators—Lee Sun!"

His accusing finged was pointed at the latter—who at this instant was communing soul-to-soul with Frame; astounded but enrapt.

All present were obsessed by consciousness that he, the convicted, had become lost to significance of guilt in the vaster reality of a psychic process that drew virtue from Infinity!

Looking and pointing at the two outlaws, he mildly pronounced:

"You and you were there separately in Chen-Chau, exhorting privately; and employed by Lee Sun."

Now his gaze and gestures were toward the two missionaries:

"These men plead for law and order; exhorted against destruction of property; denounced the mandarins as originators, and arraigned the haranguers as instruments of their influence and conspiracy.

"But," he continued, "what they had previously done to arouse prejudice against the missionary cause, made one of two conclusions plain to the populace: Either that they—Gore and Morrison—were false prophets, or Christianity itself was a false religion.

"If thus led to believe it false, then their ultimate conclusion

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that Christian shrines should be destroyed was logical and reasonable in their spiritual conception." He reiterated:

"Who, then, set the first fire?"—Sin-le-fang ejaculating in the vernacular as the words were translated: *"I* didn't set any fire!"

Prompted by an interpreter, Frame added—addressing Cross-eyed:

"The madness of the mob! *That* was the first fire."

"Of the state of riot," he continued, "the mandarins and their hirelings were the immediate cause.

"But of the state of Christianity in China, as understood by that populace, and as arraigned by Gore and Morrison, those missionaries were not the sole cause. . . . What was that Christianity —this worldliness, this decline from Jesus' spirituality, which Gore had denounced?" He summarized:

"The Christian dispensation, as publicly recognized the world over, substantially proves that rivalry of Christian nations in worldly prestige dominates and accentuates the polemics over the Great War. This spirit characterizes their efforts to justify their respective motives in engaging in that war. The Oriental conception of this rivalry, as is equally well known over Christendom, is an implied arraignment of that selfish spirit of worldliness. This public feeling in China it is which gives point to Gore's prediction that failure of Christianity to abide by the ethics of Jesus, itself portends precipitation of war in the Orient—such a war as, if and when it shall come, will overtop all preceding conflicts of religious faiths!

"But," he proceeded, "no one nation is responsible for Christianity in China. England, for instance, shares part of the burden with the United States." Lung li was prompted to think:

"Does this imply that China is at fault for reimbursing English missions for loss of the consulate?"

"His findings will exonerate our government!" mused Beaumont.

"But," Frame went on, "American citizens alone—Gore and his coadjutors—stirred up that *accentuated* prejudice."

Then, shifting the point of view:

"As to China: Treasonable default of the mandarins, in inciting, not quelling the mob, accounts for its devastation. The temporary impotence of a general government, from sedition of local officials, is nowadays measurably condoned by fellow-governments—an axiom of the League of Nations, whose application is not my task." He concluded:

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"It was Christianity itself, as shown to have been practiced, and as prophetically arraigned by Gore, Morrison and other American citizens before the Chen-Chau assemblies, that so aggravated the populace against the institution, as that its instrumentality in those American hands became the direct and immediate cause of the inflammatory spirit upon which the secondary mandarin influence operated. Of that agitation the American government had long been aware.

"The ultimate influence of the responsible but traitorous defection of the mandarins, which fanned that spirit to the incendiary point, was unknown to the Peking government at the time."

Willing resignation to this summary, and realization that they themselves, through a mysterious consciousness, had been participants in the process itself, dominated both Pekingese and legationists.

Seconds passed in silence; a fusing of personalities in Frame as embodiment of the assembly—and he the recognized instrument of Infinity! . . . But he was again speaking:

"I wish, in justice to the abduction conspirators, and that I may dispel all possible suspicion of my prejudice in the Chen-Chau Case, to reveal further facts." Eyes were again riveted upon him.

Pointing to the mandarin: "You were not party to any conspiracy connected with the abductions." An astounding sensation followed. Telepathy however had already told Lee Sun that Frame had not so suspected him. The outlaws were now addressed:

"You, Wo Hut and Sin-le-fang, were not the originators of the conspiracy to abduct me. You were but tools of the real ringleader."

Official onlookers marveled. Frame was now recalling to mind something absent:

"Sin lung was not a conspirator. He was abducted with myself. He refused, at great peril, to interpret between me and the priest Wu and with 'The Heavenly One' for the purpose of obscuring my faculty, about to be applied in the Chen-Chau Case—the primary purpose of the abduction. The motive of the chief conspirator was to shield Lee Sun from exposure by me in dealing with that case—a motive the mandarin knew not of. Superstitious dread made conspirators of 'the outlaws'—they were admonished of their *fung shuy*." Most thunderstruck of all was Lee Sun.

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"But," he proceeded, "Sin lung is under some spell of fear, or of honor, wrought by the arch conspirator, to baffle exposure of his complicity." Expectant wonderment awaited announcement of the "chief conspirator."

"The originator of the abduction conspiracy, and the head of the abducting party, was Huin fu." The bottom of the mystery had at last been revealed!

"And the motive of the physician was altruistic—to save his friend, Lee Sun, not to injure me"—were the final words which multiplied amazement.

"This conspiracy to save me!—and by him!"—thought the staring mandarin.

Even before the sitting was now ended, both the Chinese and the legationists recognized the vital truth at stake—that the outcome of the controversy, through application of the law to Frame's "findings," in favor of China, was a foregone conclusion. . . .

Wirelesses quickly told the world: That Frame had astounded officials and conspirators by revelations of evidences; had "found" adversely to the United States; had in his epilogue announced an undreamed-of source and motive for the abduction; had by his disclosures of Sin lung's resistance to the abductors, *discovered facts he had never orally inquired of;* and lastly and most portentous—that Christianity was responsible for the riot and the burning! Moreover, that the controversy itself had disappeared in the psychic revelation.

When on the following day the respective officials, their counsel, and Frame—who was present by unanimous desire—were convened in the selfsame room, to formally adjudicate the case upon the facts as found—facts which no one sought to gainsay—this principle was recognized as applicable: That the test of liability for the loss in question was a moral one, based upon the spiritualities involved. Upon that premise, it appeared obvious that the United States, whose citizens, in denouncing the Christian religion upon grounds recognized by the enlightened recorded admonitions of mankind as valid, had furnished the responsible cause of the burning, should in morals stand the loss; inasmuch as China, in view of other facts found and of the undiscovered sedition of the mandarins, was the less responsible.

When this decision had been reported to the respective governments, surprise was manifest in China; since the oriental public seemed to have become tentatively reconciled to the probability of an adverse result; while in America the unexpected consisted in

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minimizing Lee Sun's sedition, and in charging the government with responsibility for "acts of her bigoted citizens in bringing into local detestation Christian missions in Hunan Province"—as expressed in a leading editorial comment. Why not base responsibility upon wrongdoing of the missionaries, rather than upon supposed failings of that Christianity they had denounced? Contrariwise, the decision was upheld as righteous in its spirituality and unerring in its indictment of perverted Christian living; while the preponderance of secular and religious comment was in favor of Frame's diagnosis of the facts.

A few hours after the Chen-Chau decision Soper, discussing with Frame, told of a remark by Beaumont to Lung li he had overheard—that what Frame had accomplished was a precedent for settlement of future international disputes.

"If developments in psychology shall render the process of general application," Frame replied, "it will affect the whole principle of action, including the relations of the disputants themselves." Soper then remarked his inability to comprehend Frame's revelation of the abductors' attempt to use Sin lung as an intermediary with the priests. Frame explained:

"In captivity, I became subconscious of hints of their efforts for aid in that direction. At Wu's place, after my release, and again in conversation with Sin lung upon other phases of his experience, and here to-day while observing the outlaws, came confirmations which inspired belief. It was psychical exposition of brain-registries, Ichabod."

An overseas wireless soon came from Frame's father, telling of kindred "and the U all rejoicing" over his success. Soper—who had absented himself—came rushing in with one from his father:

"To you, and to Frame my fervent congratulations. Consequences will be cosmic."

Frame was musing over "consequences" to follow—lost to all surroundings; Soper watching him.

"I see a passion of harmonies down the future!" Frame seemed inspired by Infinitude. . . .

During three succeeding days, while Frame sought at the various legations further light regarding England's attitude toward Chinese integrity prior to the present war, he had encountered stressed discussion of the urgent question of the hour—a possible peace. Special envoys from England and the Indian insurgent government had arrived; with whom, and with the French and Belgian

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legationists (in charge respectively of the interests of those governments) he had engaged in solicitous conference, and who had besought him to urge upon the American legationists and government increased activity in promoting the cause of peace. The Wai-Wu Pu were equally solicitous.

India—China in sympathy—was for independence. England would grant a substantial form of dominion government; and would assure continuance of her jointure in guaranty of Chinese integrity. This was the issue. An English envoy had assured Beaumont and Frame that the American peoples' concern over possible invasion by England of Chinese sovereignty "in any event," was wholly unwarranted.

On the day before Frame was to leave Peking for home, a delegation representing the belligerents conferred with him upon the subject of his participation in a coming peace conference; the upshot of which was an arrangement for wireless correspondence to that end, after he should return to America.

Meanwhile, England's alleged misuse of Philippine waters—into which matter also Frame had inquired—was still the subject of lively discussion in the American press.

At the end of a final leavetaking at the legation, discussion of Lee Sun's connection with the riot having eventuated, Frame remarked to Cheshire in the general presence:

"Lee Sun is not the guilty man some of you imagine him to be."

Like a percussion shot this remark struck home, as he continued: "Defense of Chinese religion against invasion from abroad may have been the mandarin's primary motive. Moreover, in every celestial who figured in that case and in the abductions, motive was colored by a still more fundamental moving cause—the *fung shuy!*" . . .

Lung li had called and invited Frame and the legationists to be present at an audience of the Wai-Wu Pu on the following morning, in his honor. Frame and Soper were strolling toward their apartment; Frame in deep thought.

"My obligations to their government! How can I express them to the Board?"

As they ascended the stairway, Soper was remarking upon the dispatch from America announcing that the farewell reunion of the North-and-South in commemoration of the Civil War would occur on the 30th and 31st of May and the first day of June next —and at Chattanooga.

"A fitting place," said Frame. "You will recall that some of

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the Southern papers generously declared that at Appomattox Courthouse, where the great struggle ended, there should be the last formal fraternization."

"And how, with equal chivalry, some Northern papers responded that when Grant declined the sword of Lee, there fraternization began over victory for all America!" was Soper's response.

"Of course, Chattanooga means Lookout Mountain?" A foregone conclusion, Soper assented; adding: "By the way, they're going to incorporate in the reunion the idea of good-will between North and South America—and that reminds me: the ex-Confederate Committee suggested Memorial Day for the opening date—to compensate for Chattanooga."

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CHAPTER XXXVIII

THE preliminary rehearsals at The Haunts had ended—the added strain imposed upon Flissey by reports of Frame's continued captivity had resolved Henrietta to release her from the work in hand; and they had returned to their homes.

But at home unemployed, Flissey had fallen into an unnatural brooding over Frame's fate. The second day after their return, Henrietta had called upon her; had noted a change in her mental state; had again counseled her, admonishing that her health was being jeopardized. Her parents had understood as much.

Henrietta now addressed Flissey as if renewing a former discourse:

"He is in the same keeping; and God does not change."—And Flissey was again in her arms, exclaiming in pathetic ecstasy:

"Ah, he *is* safe! Your faith is mine—when I can *see* you, oh Henrietta!"

The actress perceived in this, signs of a weakening of the mental faculties. Through a hint to the mother that Flissey should take the air often, it was arranged that she would fly over to the Brodein home on the morrow.

And then—that very night—had come news of Frame's rescue.

Flissey, in transport when the dispatch confirming the rumor that Frame had been found by spies and announcing his return to Chen-Chau, was reported from Tromple Shades, had ecstatically embraced her mother; then wept for joy upon her bosom. . . . At the end of the enraptured notification of the news to Henrietta over the phone, she had exclaimed:

"Oh, Henrietta dear, your faith *is* evidence—of the unseen!"

"It will be increased when your deeper joy of his presence is realized," was the calm response. . . .

Three days later, Flissey's yearnings had been blessed by receipt of Frame's Chen-Chau letter. . . . From the convulsive cry of joy and relief which followed perusal of the initial address and paragraph, and from successive recurrences of rapture over its succeeding expressions, she had verged into a beatific calm—earnest of the ineffable reward of years of silent submissive

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yearnings!—then had rushed into her mother's presence exclaiming:

"Oh, Mother! the 'obstacle' is removed!" her eyes flashing triumph as she held up the letter; then had sunk upon the maternal shoulder with the ejaculation: "He's professed a *new* love!" . . . That night she had written the reply that told of her stressed waiting for certain intelligence of his plight; of her joy over his rescue—then of her years of inspired living in his strivings, while she "adored the 'obstacle' "; of the song and the star—then of her heart's response to his love! . . .

Frame, returned from the Legation, sat ardently scanning the missive, the identity of which among the mail at hand, had been disclosed by the handwriting upon its envelope. The portions relating to Flissey's experience before and when learning of his rescue, had been ravenously consumed; its reference to faith instilled by Henrietta and which, it declared, "had gone so far to sustain me while distress I could not unfold even to her became agony!"; its recital of "such ineffable sweetness of remembrance!" in recurrence to that past in which life "was the privilege of communing in spirit" with his strivings—his life-work—he absorbed in growing rapture.

"I even adored the 'obstacle'! for, to sit at the footstool of your aspiration to achieve, I could journey my whole life, and know at the end that *I* had achieved a priceless heritage! . . .

"Yet, dearest, at the headspring—you must know there was a deeper yearning! . . . I even seemed to live above it—in my belief that your intuition wisely decreed that you forgo love of woman at behest of that Providence which comprehended the bigness of your life.

"And Henrietta—yes! . . . For I felt that she was mysteriously linked to your life-work—that her appeal to you was cosmic. . . .

"And that song! . . . We heard it through her interpretation —as coming to *me!*"

The climax of his present ecstacy came through these concluding words:

"In all my heart has here recorded, my dearest Bernard, is my response to that in your letter which has brought me unceasing confiding bliss!—oh, when shall we meet?" A postscript had playfully added: "That unerring musician, the 'Chinese physician-guard'—*will* they cruelly convict him?"

Concernedly awaiting the hour when the fateful response should come, Frame had experienced doubts which professed love ever

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encounters. Consciousness of its possible disappointments attended his first realization of the depths of his love, as he had feverishly opened the envelope.

All doubt had vanished before he had read: "Life to me was the privilege of communing in spirit with your strivings." When his eyes had met in the succeeding paragraph the words: "I even adored the 'obstacle'!" he threw himself back in his chair at reminder of those first letters, ejaculating:

"How cruel in me!—how divinely just in her!"

Then, without marveling, he received assurance of the miraculous—the song had reached her!—the letter again lay upon the table. . . . He knew that *that* love-message had been delivered only through Henrietta's love for Flissey—he felt what this implied of the actress' soul-relations to himself! . . . And then in boundless rapture he had read the ending.

Existence for him now was but to be alone. To have had Ichabod or any one else in China come between him and his bliss meant desecration. . . . All the spiritual wealth of her after-yearnings and devotion to his strivings—all his super-inspiration of her companionship—her devoted heart to be soon upon his breast! . . . Upon his couch he lay immersed in these realizations.

He had wirelessed his father that he would leave to-morrow afternoon for home. Flissey would certainly receive the tidings —and would know he had received the letter addressed to him "at the Legation."

Intelligence of the wireless was soon dispensed about Tromple Shades. Grampion was notified by Julius; and the mother was calling Flissey to the sitting room.

"What is it, Mother?" she eagerly inquired, detecting in a quaint glad smile a hint she scarcely needed.

"He's coming home!" and they stood vis-à-vis: "Oh, Mother!" her head again reclining. "And he's received my letter! —he wouldn't leave Peking until it had come to him." And when told the hour of his departure, she quickly calculated that he would be home "about four o'clock day after to-morrow afternoon!— oh glory! . . . Mother, he'll be over here before he more than kisses his mother, and greets——"

"I think, dearest, that, being a special minister to China, he'll think he should wash his hands——"

"Oh, you bewitching old sweetheart!" . . .

Grampion was clandestinely—and ignominiously, he felt it— catching the drift of this babbling stream. Through the door-

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crack he had caught a hint of sweetheart, of kissing, and of washen of hands. . . . He was statelily standing within, regarding the opposite wall——

"You're always poking in!"

"Sh!"—from the mother; her smile was quainter still——

"And my opinion is"—he punctuated his abstractedness—"that *if* he kisses his mother first, he'll wash his hands of all guilt, by instantly flying over this way and asking forgiveness of his real sweetheart——"

"Now, you bothersome old thing, you just stop making light of his mother!"

"I capitulate!" . . . Flissey was looking up into his face; a glory in her own.

"And you won't begrudge me one, just because I couldn't resist the temptation——" Flissey was upon his neck:

"No, you kind sweet Papa!"—and kissed him with all the ardor of her enthusiastic and raptured soul. . . .

Soper, now accompanying Frame out to dinner, heard an almost inaudible and whimsical whistling. Certain of the cause, he accosted him:

"Bernard, I don't wonder at your vein of hilarity at this moment. If I were in your place I think I'd be dancing a jig right here on Legation Street!" . . .

"Ichabod, my dear boy, there are other things in heaven and earth——"

Soper stood staring blankly, as he caught a certain rapturous illumination in his eyes.

"Why! a revelation that you will bestride the world——"

"Nonsense, Ichabod. You're on the wrong tangent"—they were entering the restaurant, as Frame put his hand upon the attaché's shoulder, half whispering:

"It's not the mad ambition; it's the divine submission!"—but it was the look of his confidant that told of a diviner confidence. It mightily impressed him. . . . At table his deference to its sacredness was a silent aside—a searching for a landmark in the past. . . .

It loomed in vision—in the woman of whose genius Frame had once—and but once—spoken at the U.

"Yes!" he mentally ejaculated, "that's the woman!" . . .

The ostensible purpose of the coming audience was to thank Frame for his remarkable and singularly acceptable resolving of the Chen-Chau Case.

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All the legations and embassies were represented in honorary guests. Lung li, spokesman for the Board and the Chinese people, congratulated his government for having been party to "such a dispute so marvelously ended. . . . The disappearance of all sense of *controversy* as part of your process! . . . The consciousness that China and the United States are closer friends for its occurrence!" Disclaiming exultation that his country was winner, he spurned the pittance in money involved, as compared to the fortune of the American government and people, "to whose vast credit this performance must stand for all time." His government felt that the fateful consequences to flow from this application of the process, rendered of little consequence the right to the meager sum at stake:

"But my government will receive the money, and with a peculiar thankfulness. For it will be dedicated to the commemoration of your adjudication of an international dispute under your process—a discovery in jurisprudence meriting an international monument!

"That monument will consist of a fitting shaft, to be erected in front of the Yamen in Chen-Chau; surmounting which will stand a bronze statue of Bernard Frame."

A sensation, doubly impressive from this unexpected ending, merged in a perfect silence, the collective consciousness of the moment. . . .

The eloquent celestial again was heard:

"Upon its base will be chiseled mention of the tremendous fact, that that adjudication exalted a riot into the realm of psychic consciousness of Divinity—your strong right arm in that immense process!

"My government has inscribed upon this parchment the substance of my remarks. You are commissioned to transmit this record to the Department of State in Washington."

Frame, rising to receive the parchment, and to respond, struggled to conquer emotions this surprise had awakened. Addressing the Board:

"I stand amazed at the towering nobility reflected in these expressions of your honorable member—this revelation from the Orient! . . . I forgot country; ministry. I stood upon the shores of time, in *presence* of the Deity—into which that immortal appeal of Lung li transported me; and I saw—Eternity. . . .

"Even the thrill of unspeakable surprise at mention of a monument, found me contemplating a far greater—the pedestal upon

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which China has thus placed herself—a monument of peoples to the memory of Nations bound in psychic embrace of the Headship of Government—the Great Jehovah! . . .

"As the East, China typifies the rising sun of Universal Psychic Consciousness! . . . This parchment is prophetic of affiliation in the high court of Mutual Consciousness of Right.

"As such, it outranks the Declaration of Independence!—a document based upon Controversy; whereas, this inscription means resort to Psychic Consciousness of Truth that makes all parties one!"

The ensuing silence was an obvious tribute to genius which moves ages. . . . But Frame was giving thanks for the promised tribute of the shaft. . . .

"I may perhaps convey a truer hint of my gratitude, if I may indulge in critical allusion to the Honorable Lung li's characterization of my process as a 'discovery' in jurisprudence.

"That conception pre-supposes a discoverer. No such distinction is due me. . . . The faculty is an emanation from Divinity! . . . . My gratitude over what you have promised, merges in thankfulness to the Divine Author of my process!

"My countrymen will rejoice with me in the realization that in China, where the services which this tribute is to symbolize were performed, will rest the pillar whose broader significance is the universality of the Psychic Sphere—where all races and countries are one!"

A pervasive impulse drew all present toward him as Frame, having resumed his seat, was again on his feet, his hand gratefully extended to clasp that of the Board's president. The congratulations bestowed, and the mutual partings following this scene, were undemonstrative but singularly cordial.

A representative from India was heard to exclaim to a legationist:

"Could such a process be applied to India's insistence upon independence!"

Returning to his quarters in Soper's company, Frame seemed resolving some doubt. The propriety of proceeding directly to Washington to deliver the parchment occurred to him. Half musingly he referred to the incidental delay in reaching home. Of Flissey he was thinking: *could* he fly on beyond her!

"Christopher! You aren't forgetting your country—how the people generally are going to look upon this dedication——"

"I am not forgetful of that feature, Ichabod——"

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"See here, old chum!" interposed Soper, exhibiting an air-gram. "You were pre-occupied with the Foreign Board; or I would have shown it to you before"—Frame was reading it; from the Chicago *Mirror*:

"Get interview with Frame and flash here immediately, re monument at Chen-Chau." He turned it over and scribbled upon its back: "Frame interviewed. Says deeply grateful, but time will erect greater monument to China's credit"—and returned the paper to Soper with the remark:

"The acquiescence of both governments is the outstanding fact." . . .

"She will know: she can wait!" was his mental reflection as he sent home an explanatory wireless. . . .

Frame had arrived in Chicago, on his way to Washington.

To the assembled press men who scrambled to interview him, he in few words responded to certain inquiries concerning his abduction and his work in disposing of the Chen-Chau Case. A large crowd of citizens had gathered at the station to get a glimpse of him who had "made two nations one"; and many expected to hear him speak—a course he had not contemplated.

As he was about to take the elevator enroute to the eastbound air-express, after parting with several acquaintances who had met him there, he saw approaching a tall lank man who was signaling:

"Halt there, Frame! Why this circumvention, of your fellowmen?"

Frame was greeting Hounslow Hast; who continued: "They're justly indignant. I have been pleading with them, to reflect, that you have but just emerged, from the jungle: I have assured them, on the authority, of my mother, that them thare Chinks, that buccaneered you, from that thare yee-man, ware fouler than what them highwaymen, on Hounslow Heath, that held up my great, great, great, grandfather——"

"Hark, men! He's speaking of his mother——"

"Not *his* mother, but mine, of blessed memory——"

"To Hades with your great-great-great-grandfather!" "Retire this lunatic——" "Frame! Frame!" fell from stentorious voices——

"Take him, friends, countrymen! I was a-holding him, for you——"

"Hoist him *up!*" "Top of elevator!"—and similar cries were heard.

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A redoubled crush accompanied the hurried entry and ascent to its platform of Frame and Hast; from which Frame presently appeared on the parapet, facing a human sea now filling acres of ground below him.

Bareheaded, his quaint friend presented him with a gesture:

"Bernard Frame! The abducted; who hes abducted, a *con*troversy!"

A strange stillness supervened. A consciousness of presence of a man of mysterious power; who had induced a psychic state of reverence, akin to suddenly inspired religious worship.

From the preliminary hint of another kidnapping—by Hast—he continued:

"Here on the Lake Front, I discover the same psychic consciousness that pervades the heart and soul of the Orient!

"Controversy; long known as *combat,* disappears under psychic revelation of *Truth!* Equally in solution of the Chen-Chau dispute, and in controversy with abductors.

"This demonstration of silent listening is the inward psychic voice; its fountain head, Divinity! whose revelation is to all mortals alike; which transmutes stricken conscience into divine consciousness, that sees truth as the controlling *fact!* This is *Regeneration!*"

Frame raised his hand and bowed his respects to the great auditory. The crowd began to disperse without a sign of applause.

Seated in the express and about to depart, he said to press representatives, concerning his present views upon the pre-war policy of England toward China, that his belief upon that subject, expressed before he had visited China, had undergone no change.

Hast was pressing his hand as he related that one of Frame's lawyer friends had amazed him:

"He said, and looked solemn, that the business, of the legal profession, was being ignominiously, pulverized; just because, you had been born."

Frame smiled, as the narrator proceeded: "I says, 'You don't mean it?' He says, 'yes; they're getting together and dissolving, thare own disputes'—'What!' says I, 'how do they, by themselves, get up that thare psychic steam?' He says, 'it's faith; faith in *Frame!*'"

The newsboys were crying extras: "Frame's silent crowd!" "Thieves and angels all alike—Frame says it!"—as the aircraft sped away. . . .

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He was in Washington. Dominick was remarking:

"But I was unprepared for your finding that Lee Sun's conspiracy was not the real cause of the uprising—I remember your suggestion to Flindbraugh, that those missionaries might not have been responsible——"

"I felt at that time, Dominick, that Christianity itself was probably the underlying cause."

"Your solution has stirred all Christendom. . . ."

As Frame was awaiting an audience with Flindbraugh the following morning, a messenger announced the desire of the President to meet him while he was in the city.

Ushered into the presence of the Secretary of State, that official felicitated Frame upon having vindicated, even beyond anticipation, the great experiment involved in his mission:

"The importance of your process to the world at large, is but beginning to dawn upon the public consciousness," he declared.

"My especial good fortune, in being commissioned by both governments—this, sir, has been the subject of my deepest gratitude," was Frame's modest response.

The Chinese minister, Chian Fu, and his suite, now appeared; after introduction to whom and a semi-official exchange of greetings, Frame proceeded to present the Chinese testimonial.

"This document," he began, "and what it symbolizes, is the chief resultant of the demonstration which, as an instrument of the Deity, I was enabled to perform in resolving the Chen-Chau Case.

"And that I am impelled to the belief that China is thus made closer in spiritual union with America—is my controlling inspiration!"

Flindbraugh, in accepting the memorial in behalf of the United States, ended by saying:

"It will remain for all time a monument to its great and noble donor, and of her apperception and appreciation of psychic revealment of evidence, under a process which, happily for the two nations involved and for all peoples, awakens disputants to mutual realization of Truth, which itself dispels controversy, and leaves the parties one in fellowship and rejoicing!"

Chian Fu, responding for his government, concluded with:

"This event, to which this memorial is my country's special tribute, to be followed by another dedicated to the honorable Minister and to the world—this event cements even more firmly the bonds of friendship between the two great Republics.

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"May Minister Frame yet aid in still further strengthening those bonds!"—the last sentence being construed as significant in connection with a possible peace conference.

In parting with Frame, Flindbraugh, dwelling upon the execution of his mission, remarked feelingly:

"The consensus of view seems to be, that you have incidentally performed a great service to humanity."

His brief interview at the White House, beginning with warm congratulations, ended with these words from the President:

"I am strongly impressed with the thought that what you have accomplished in China may lead to important modifications in international relations. Your process seems to have so far affected public opinion as to suggest a new departure in diplomacy itself."

With face flushed with diffidence tempered by emotion, Frame retired.

As he strolled about the air-station awaiting his departure for home, he was mentally assessing his advance since leaving home: what it meant to himself and his country. However, absorbing as was this subject, he soon found himself dwelling upon the revelation that had so strangely come to him in captivity—through which he had re-assessed Flissey Loor!

A moment later he was about to step into the express, when Sinclair, followed by a messenger boy, came rushing up to him:

"We're just in time! Here's an overseas for you," exclaimed Sinclair. It was from Lung li:

"My government anxious you serve upon peace conference here, ten days hence. Will you accept? Early response desired."

He was rapidly penciling a reply across a page torn from a pocket memorandum book; requesting Sinclair to send it at once. It mentioned inexpressible thanks for the generous proffer, and that final response would go to-morrow from his home.

He sank into a seat as the craft moved away. For a moment gratitude toward China overcame sense of responsibility. Then instinct led his eye to the newspaper headline rumoring a peace conference—at Peking; and hinting at England as the prime mover.

"From England? That's this wireless!" he thought. . . .

High over a river of the West shot the express as sunset was nearing; the far landscape checkered with softened light and mild shadow; the silver stream in the midst; a "caterpillar" craft speeding on its bosom. There flashed up the greeting:

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"We'll picnic to-night on the old camp ground!"—then it disappeared.

Thoughts of the conference persisted. What would be Canada's attitude toward India? . . . Jeopardy to the Canadian coastline. . . . But if war between this country and England should occur?—Victoria would be safer than Seattle! . . . Victoria—and Morehouse;—and he would be my country's enemy! . . . . But with Canada represented at the conference, mayhap I could help Morehouse to his liberty!—thus nervously he mused. . . .

He was nearing home, in an airal with Horace, who had met him at Wiltsburg; where also he had shaken hands with and been again congratulated by Deever.

"What about this going back to China, brother?" Horace had eagerly inquired when Bernard had hinted to Deever such a possibility; and he had been shown the wireless. . . . Horace had with wide eyes listened to the account of the abduction and rescue.

"I suppose mother worried a good deal over my fate?"

"Oh, Bernie! she's grown old since we heard of that damnable kidnapping." . . . He longed to give his brother a hint of the now open secret—concerning Flissey. But it had been tacitly arranged not to profess knowledge of it. However, on his own account, he ventured a lead toward recognition of relations dear to himself:

"It will soon be a year, brother, since we soared over to the fair——"

"And since you met Miss Grady"—Horace was disconcerted; but rallied, and countered tactfully:

"Ah, I see! Some beauty—somewhere—has broken the ice——"

"What's happened to you!—is the day set?"

"No, sir; but if it hadn't been for that darned upsetting *adventure* of yours over there——"

But the airal was slowing down—home was in sight.

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CHAPTER XXXIX

THE parents were descending from the veranda. As the craft alighted and Bernard leaped out and hastened toward them, mother and son embraced.

"Oh, Bernie! Here at last—and saved!"—and Julius, claiming his privilege, was saying, as he rapturously clasped the son's hand:

"And you've made good, Bernie. I felt that you would." The mother again clung to him as they approached the hall door; she gently pulled him down and whispered:

"You can't measure *her* joy!"

Horace climaxed the incidental wonderment that accompanied Bernard's brief recital of his experiences abroad:

"Mother, the country's beginning to believe in Bernie's process!"

Then mentioned the wireless. Bernard produced and read it aloud.

Julius was staring at his son in wondering querulousness.

"That proves how well you've done, Bernie!" The mother remarked:

"Oh, that dreadful kidnapping! I was prophesying some adventure——"

"Adventure, Mother; even disaster, is nothing if not providential."

She gazed at the rescued son, then responded fervently:

"Yes; you believe it, Bernie!"—then suddenly was reminded; called up Mrs. Loor over the phone, said to her "He's come!"—and there passed some happy felicitations. Mrs. Loor quickly broke the news to Flissey.

Flissey had learned almost immediately of Frame's wireless from Washington; and had arranged that Henrietta should be notified of his prospective visit at the Loors, that she might be present. For Flissey had confided to Henrietta the secret of her renewed vivacity—since the letter had come.

"I have felt it would come to this, my dear," the actress had replied with warmth that was inner rejoicing.

When her mother announced Frame's arrival home, she exclaimed:

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"Oh, I am so happy, Mother!"—and the thread of blissfulness ran through her dreams that night. . . .

The next morning Grampion and Mrs. Loor were quietly discussing the inevitable call. He tried to look serious as he chaffed:

"So that I'll not be 'poking in,' Mother, you give me the tip when that airal approaches, and I'll be over there salting steers—but I'll bet my hat that *you*'ll be nigh enough to hear the immemorial smack!"

But at breakfast he gave no hint of levity. He held his head like the inwardly rejoicing knight he was. Looking lovingly across the table at the mother, then with tender filial affection upon Flissey, he remarked sententiously:

"Mother, this is going to be a memorable day in the Loor household!"

"Yes, Grampion; we all feel it!" maternal joy responded.

Serenely glowing eyes were dreaming in the distant landscape. . . .

"Bernie," said Julius, in the sitting room that morning, after an engrossing pause, "we all feel deeply concerning the relations that will mean another kind of landmark in your life. We can't express it——"

"He knows what we mean, Julius!" The brothers smiled. . . .

The airal was approaching the Loor farmstead—skirting the orchard corner.

"How strange that I then thought there was an 'obstacle'!"

He had placed the airal in the booth; was stepping toward the main walk, expectant of a form upon the veranda—when straight before him appeared Flissey; emerged from the bower, hands clasped, eyes beaming.

They stood for an instant in the unspeakable rapture of the event. Then she came forward as, moved by like impulse, he approached her. They clasped hands. Stood beholding one another in that changed light of mutual plighting of souls that comes but once in the span of life. She led him to a seat in the bower:

"Bernard! I wanted to receive you here!" . . . She lay upon his breast. . . . Now she was on her feet; they faced the bower entry.

"What relief, Bernard, when I heard you were rescued—saved!"

"And how I rejoiced, Flissey, when I began to read—your letter!"—these, his first words, thrilled her soul anew.

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"I'll tell you now, dearest, what it was!" Reverently she spoke.

"What?"

"'Love's Old Sweet Song!'"—her voice thrilled with music.

"Here's Bernard! He's come!"—to the parents waiting at the door.

"We're so glad!"—from the mother. "Bernard, we're proud of you—come right in!" said Grampion, stately and beaming.

She flew from the parlor and phoned to Henrietta; who promised to come.

After mutual exchanges upon his remarkable experiences in China, and concerning recent happenings at the Shades, Frame began thinking of the response he should make to Lung li's wireless. He made known the contents of the dispatch.

Grampion sat with wide eyes, thinking. Flissey flushed with gratitude and pride—then became sedate.

"Oh, Bernard! You won't go—right away, will you?"

"I am going to consult you, my dear, before I decide." She was satisfied now.

"Tromple Shades is still in evidence!" mused Grampion reflectively.

Frame exhibited a certain restlessness. Flissey noted the change.

"What is it, dearest?" . . . He seemed soulfully demanding of her a solution. Taking her hand as he rose, he said:

"Flissey, let us go into the sitting room." The pair spirited away in a mutual abstraction.

"He's consulting her—about that trip!"

"Yes, Grampion."

Again seated, Frame radiantly confided:

"I think I have decided—with your aid, Flissey."

"Yes, Bernard. You are going again to China. You want me to go, too!—to *consult* with you—and I said I would!" Frame smiled assentingly.

"But you have something in reserve? You want Miss Brodein——"

"*Can* she go?—dearest?"—in ecstatic yearning.

"If she can spare the time——"

"I know she can!—we're free till September 10th."

"Well; if her engagements will permit; you know how I feel——"

"I *thought* I did—oh, my dearest!"—she was caressing.

Then he told her he should lean strongly upon her, and should expect to implore Henrietta also, in case she should go with her,

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to aid him in his work in the peace conference, "by joining in a psychic function——"

Flissey was looking wonderingly into his eyes.

"When the psychological moment arrives." She understood. "I know! it's dramatics! It's 'living the part!'"

"And it's music, my dear!"

Julius and his wife and Horace were being greeted at the door. The ladies had pre-arranged for this rare visit.

When Mrs. Loor announced to the twain these arrivals, Bernard felt the delightsome responsibility imposed upon him. He declared in a passion of gallantry to Flissey:

"To feel that not I but *we* shall greet them—and in your home!"

Her eyes reflected spiritual delight of heart-contentment, as the two passed through into the parlor.

Horace blazed the way to the mutual greetings that followed, by boldly grasping Flissey's hand and exclaiming:

"Flissey Loor, my brother's running a mighty close second! There's just one girl on earth that you don't best—believe me!"

As visitors and hosts were settling into seats, and Grampion was remarking the fact that this was the first occasion of the Loors and the Frames all coming together, there was another ring at the door.

Henrietta had arrived.

That in Henrietta's estimation the success of the Brodein Dramatics depended much upon Flissey's participation, was not a motive of selfishness with the actress. Her rejoicing over the organist's revived spirits really meant comprehension of the soulful harmonics existing between her assistant and Frame. That this perception was realization of another—that her own destiny was involved; that her faculties could not potentially function without the aid of theirs—this was the mainspring of the inspiration. Frame's participation also, was essential to the solution of this postulate of fate. Hence also her solicitude for him—and her feeling of joint heirship with the others in the general felicitations of the present occasion.

After warmest greetings to the actress were over, Frame's experience abroad again was the subject of comment. Henrietta's reference to his captivity was surprisingly matter-of-course. In grateful spirit Frame said to her:

"I have reason for believing that your sustaining solicitude for Flissey while I was in captivity was a great boon to her."

"I could not but feel solicitous toward one who has become

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so much a part of myself," she replied; her glance at Flissey interpreting more than her words; then added: "Moreover, my concern was the greater because of her concern for you, Mr. Frame."

"And she had such faith!—in your safety, even in captivity!" ejaculated Flissey adoringly.

"Mr. Frame was not a captive in that sense," spoke Henrietta oracularly. "I felt that he was an agency in a providential experiment in psychology." Flissey was reminded. In a burst of accumulated joy she exclaimed:

"And he's grateful for one thing more, Henrietta!—for my solemn promise that you will go with me to China—next week."

The actress' serene look of mild surprise suggested further explanation; which Flissey promptly furnished by mention of the wireless; ending with:

"And he wants our assistance—now, please don't say you can't go. We have been thinking of some time going there, with the Dramatics, you know?"

"Pleasurable as such a trip would be, it would be far more so if it could contribute in any way to Mr. Frame's purposes? I don't understand?"

"Oh, Bernard has a plan, and he will explain to us, I'm sure, before you go home, my dear," interposed Flissey.

"Yes, Miss Brodein," said Bernard, "I have in mind a plan—if good fortune should permit of its being adopted through your favorable consideration and kindest consent."

"We shall most willingly confer with Mr. Frame concerning a brief visit to China; if we could in some way contribute——"

"I am truly delighted, Miss Brodein, that you are willing to——"

"Oh, come with me to the sitting room, my dear!" exclaimed Flissey; and, excusing herself, the two were soon by themselves.

Enthusiastically Flissey explained; ending with:

"'At the psychological moment,' he said, he desired our co-operation. I believe it is your dramatics and my—I suppose, the organ. And he is to answer to-day whether he will act in the peace conference."

Henrietta was pondering the significance of such a conference. She remarked:

"He can not know how long this conference will continue, before——"

"I'll go and bring him in!" and Flissey hastened away; the two came in arm-in-arm.

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Henrietta spoke of the rare opportunity afforded Frame through the invitation extended, for exercise of his faculties; then inquired if the conference would be likely to become somewhat protracted; to which he replied that it might prove so; but that he was now considering a certain preliminary stage of the proceedings:

"And the period when I shall desire your and Flissey's coöperation will be that immediately preceding the deliberations of the conference." He expanded his thought: There would be certain mutual veiled representations; some degree of recrimination would be likely to be indulged in. That moreover, in view of his being a participant, some representatives might hesitate, and withhold important facts concerning the real attitude of their government in the premises:

"I conceive of the probable necessity of convincing all conference members in advance, of the impartiality of my process. You ladies do not need to be reminded of the vast aid you would jointly render, through coöperation, in demonstrating that Truth is the resolvent of all differences."

Further brief discussion resulted in outlining a tentative program of mutual action in Peking, in a certain event.

Frame then wirelessed Lung li, consenting to act upon the proposed peace conference "in an endeavor to prevail for peace through suggestion of faculties applied in Chen-Chau Case. This may embarrass other governments. Advise if this basis satisfactory."

Then there was vocal entertainment to the piano accompaniment; and an impressive recitative by Henrietta, to which the harp was synchronized. It was a memorable afternoon at the Loor farmstead.

Miss Loor and Frame were to call at the Brodein home before he returned to China and in that event. She had demurred when he declared he should start within twenty-four hours after receipt of a favorable reply from Peking.

"But just think! You and Miss Brodein will be coming right on?" . . .

Frame had returned to Peking; the response to his wireless having been in all respects favorable.

In impressing upon Frame and Flissey the importance of the anticipated function as a landmark in her own life, Henrietta had explained:

"You will comprehend: that we three are associated; and the occasion!"

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Rumors were afloat that Miss Brodein would visit the Orient for recreation. Gossip in dramatic and press circles was, however, skeptical of the hint of lure of diversion to a theater of war. But no one connected the event with Frame's presence there. Publicity was to be withheld concerning the movements of the two ladies; this for reasons fully explained by Frame.

Even Tromple Shades did not know—for they departed semi-clandestinely; each by a different station; the two joining at the junction with the Overland Aërial. Efforts to verify a persistent report that Miss Loor, and probably Miss Brodein had followed Frame to China, with a view to some unity of action there, yielded no definite result for the time being. However, it eventuated, after wirelesses had vainly sought to locate Henrietta in the East, that it was taken for granted that both she and her organist had really gone to China. . . .

The Allies were still advantaged at Hong Kong; the insurgent cause in India was in the ascendent; Japanese warships in northern Chinese waters were menacing England; the Pacific Fleet of the United States was patrolling Philippine seas and inlets supposedly invaded by British outfitting craft; certain unrest was manifest in the Canadian cabinet and parliament over strained relations between the United States and the mother country, and apprehension of danger to the western coastline; Germany, complacent over India's undoing, and desiring to regain a foothold on Chinese territory; France, true to England, but courting enlarged Asiatic empire; Russia, jealous of foreign encroachment upon Chinese prestige, and suspected of a virtual entente—such were the current reports.

The United States, Russia and Japan had, at China's request, sent representatives to the peace conference. At England's request, France also was represented.

During several days preceding the conference Frame was investigating, at the legations and among conferees, the factual issues at stake between the three belligerents; as also the attitude of the Canadian government in the premises.

The Chinese government indicated its policy regarding Frame's connection with the conference, in the following notation in the *Gazette:*

"China is willing and expects to place her members in an attitude of subjection to psychic analysis. Such also, we are able to state, is the position and desire of the Indian Insurgent Government, whose ally we are."

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England opposed, not Frame's membership, but the subjecting of her conferees to his "process;" her response being that she was "disposed to keep her own counsel in accord with established rules of diplomatic discussion and communication."

The three British conferees, now in Peking, were notwithstanding, astonished at the apparent unanimity of the Chinese and Indiamen in favoring application of that process in the coming conference. To Lord Boyce's suggestion that this would place all conferees "in the same relative plight," Lord Pendrake had replied:

"But have not they nicely calculated that this 'revealment' of England's case, will outweigh the corresponding advantage to His Majesty's government of 'psychic exposition' of the allies?"

Then, how escape Frame's "analysis?" Pendrake declared:

"I will not talk—in his presence!"

"But if we decline to discuss?" Boyce suggested; which led to Pendrake's statement of this postulate: That while Frame might discuss facts "evolved normally," he should not be permitted to "psychically reveal" them, even if able to do so. That under such insistence, he would be in honor bound not to make such disclosure to the allies' conferees.

"But if he should *possess* that knowledge, he could utilize it in inquiring into other related facts?" persisted Boyce. Mr. Bruce Hipling, the third delegate, who had been listening, reminded that in the so-called "psychic exchange," Frame's process was said to "read back" to the analyzed consciousness that it had discovered. The further deduction came naturally: If he could communicate, psychically, to the opposite conferees, what he had thus "revealed," then the question of ultimate advantage would depend upon the relative susceptibilities to this process of the two sets of conferees.

"And if the Orientals *are* more susceptible; and as they have already been in contact with his faculty, and have become convinced of its efficacy, are not we placed at disadvantage?" inquired Boyce.

"But it is said," Hipling rejoined, "that the common consciousness of those who have been subjected to this 'revealment,' perceives 'the whole truth in the same sense,' and that it would remain simply to determine, from such collective consciousness, the *rights* of the respective belligerents—and that this 'sense' swallows up every other thought and consideration!"

Not without bewilderment the discussion ended. Pendrake

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CHAPTER XL

DISCUSSION between Frame and the Chinese authorities led to this expression by him as to the probable attitude of the British delegates toward his participation in the peace conference:

"They must in some way be convinced beforehand, that the application of my faculties substantially as was done in the Chen-Chau Case, will not be inimical to British interests; otherwise they will decline to deliberate if I remain in the conference."

The next day he reported to Lung li the interview by Lord Pendrake; relating the representations he had made concerning his own conditional connection with the coming conference.

The issue to come before that tribunal, as contemplated by the courts of the Allies and of England, would devolve upon granting to or withholding from India a substantial self-governing Dominion government. Moreover, the inspired press held the view that England's initiative comprehended granting such a concession. As indicative of the British attitude, a significant event was transpiring in Peking—a preliminary conference of delegates from the Indian Imperial Government, Australia and Canada; to which the Indian Insurgent delegates had been invited—the inspiration to which movement had the assent of the mother country, as was generally believed.

Following this sub-conference, one Bronson, the Canadian delegate, had approached Frame with the pointed request that he use his offices with the Chinese government in procuring Morehouse's release—a step which, he declared he believed, would conduce to the advantage of both the allies and the British government.

Frame sat apparently unmoved by announcement of this enterprise. He presently declined to even confer with the authorities, save upon two conditions: That Morehouse should continue under strict surveillance; and that some distinct advantage to the cause of the allies must be vouched in advance, if Morehouse were to become an informant.

"He is believed to possess information of certain seditious defections of certain insurgent officers at the battle of Tung Yen,"

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replied Bronson; who further pledged that, if Morehouse were produced in Peking, he would furnish indubitable proofs of his discoveries.

"To what end, as regards the peace conference?" queried Frame.

"Produce Morehouse—and you will be convinced," Bronson rejoined.

Morehouse had in fact been permitted to mail to Frame a letter suggesting that, if released, he believed he could, without prejudice to British interests, impart information gained by him while on spy duty, of value to the Chinese government—a suggestion prompted by gratitude that his life had been spared. Frame, replying, had requested more definite hints of the character of this information; no response thereto having yet come.

After the Bronson interview, Frame had conferred with Lung li; suggesting that, without informing the Canadians of the act, Morehouse be forthwith produced at the capital. The next morning—of the day preceding the peace conference—he had been aired to Peking.

Morehouse, as an ostensible air-scout attached to a northern division of the Chinese army, had learned that certain insurgent contingents stationed near Tung Yen were planning a mutiny, and were unfit for service in the Tung Yen battle; and had captured two dispatches from their commander addressed to the northern station, summarizing this treasonable defection; which papers were still in his control.

Disclosure by him to Frame and the Peking authorities, of the general nature of this information and of the dispatches, was received with skepticism by the Chinese. But when seditious Indian conspirators were found seeking to undermine the work of the insurgent peace delegates, greater credence was accorded his representations. He declined to locate the dispatches, but declared that if permitted to be at large within limits, and to be in contact with the British delegates during the peace proceedings, he would produce them; both the Canadian and Imperial governments to vouch for his return to Chinese custody thereafter. Without comment, he was continued under surveillance.

Frame believed that Morehouse knew more concerning insurgent disloyalty than he had expressed, or than had been intimated by Bronson. He had conceived also of Indian Imperial defections.

Frame counseled: That he believed Morehouse could be utilized in the conference as the source of information of value to

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the British and colonial governments; that through a further interview with him and with the insurgent delegates, he would become possessed of psychic consciousness of those facts; that, as an inducement to Morehouse's further disclosures, his request to be put in touch with the British delegates be granted—upon withdrawal of objections to his own participation in the conference; that he believed Morehouse would finally make the further disclosure. Whereupon he was authorized to make the desired pledge to Morehouse upon the basis so outlined.

Frame had discovered, in a certain ostensible insurgent, an imperial spy.

When, in the subsequent interview, Morehouse demurred to giving information of defections "among Indian Imperial troops," Frame, unmoved, replied:

"I already understand, Morehouse, that you came in contact with colonial Imperial defection on that frontier; but my present consciousness thereof is derived in part from sources other than yourself." He mentioned Morehouse's voluntary offer to disclose the dispatches.

"They have no connection with imagined Imperial defections——"

"Ah, Morehouse, these are but phases of each other. Disloyalties on one side have suggested, induced, similar conditions on the other—but what shall I report to the Chinese authorities?"

"That I decline to communicate information concerning any subject other than insurgent defections. At bottom, personal liberty is secondary, in this connection," was the prompt response. Something in the previous interview had caused him to anticipate such a request; but he had resolved against disclosure. Frame again withdrew.

His second report to the authorities conveyed this hint:

"It is this very information we are now seeking, not the dispatches, which the British authorities particularly desire." In response to further inquiries, he declared that, if Morehouse were permitted to disclose to the Canadians only, he himself, through his process, would acquire substantial knowledge thereof in course of discussion of facts in the peace conference.

Frame was again with Morehouse—authorized to close with him.

"But I must communicate with Bronson, if I carry out my part of the agreement," said Morehouse. Frame had already suspected what was implied by this declaration—custody of the dispatches. A sealed communication being inadmissible, Morehouse suggested

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that he write a note to Bronson, dated yesterday as of Hong Kong, requesting that he deliver to a Chinese agent a certain sealed package. Mutual word of honor was passed as to the bona fides of the package and the corresponding promise to Morehouse.

This tentative arrangement was ratified by the Peking authorities; Frame to become the bearer of the note to Bronson. He procured it; exhibited it to Lung li; and was soon in the presence of Bronson.

The latter was in deep concern; unable, at the end of a protracted conference with the British delegates, to report progress; as no word had come since the first interview with Frame; a disappointment intensified by Frame's announcement that he himself had brought no definite response to Bronson's proposition. His spirits revived when he was handed the sealed note (it had been read by a Chinese official).

Becoming convinced that the note was genuine, he reflected: Certainly the package would convey no intelligence of *Imperial* seditions. Morehouse's oral statement, if communicated to the government, would supply further information of *such* defections. And would Frame become a party to dissemblance?

At Bronson's suggestion, Frame withdrew to the ante-room while the delegate conferred with a colleague. Soon he was beckoned to return; Lord Boyce, also present, being introduced.

Bronson produced a small sealed package; proffered the envelope to Frame, remarking that, whatever it should prove to contain, they were all of the papers referred to in Morehouse's note. Frame received and receipted for it, and withdrew.

Soon Frame, Morehouse, Lung li and his colleague were in conference in the attaché's apartments. After inspecting the seals, Morehouse assured the officials that they were undisturbed. He then opened and extracted the contents of the envelop; declaring that these were the dispatches in question. They were read aloud as they were translated into English by Lung li. Morehouse was assured that they confirmed his good faith.

Morehouse then related, that the package had been previously "set in transit to Bronson"; that after his capture and while en route to the allies' rear, he had wirelessed to Bronson that sealed papers, which must not be opened, would reach him.

"I can not disclose how they were sent, nor my means of effecting that communication," he averred.

"Do you decline, on the ground that the process is your own?" queried Lung li.

"As to the means of transmission of the package, certain ac-

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cessories were, as I believe, my own invention. As regards the wireless, I prefer to say nothing—save that the device was special," was the guarded response. . . .

Through Lung li, arrangements had been made by Frame for certain accessories to the impending demonstration in connection with the peace conference; to the psychic bearings of which Henrietta had devoted considerable time in contemplative study. Many a conversation between herself and Flissey and the Chinese had been facilitated through the services of Enia Beaumont, the gifted young daughter of the American ambassador, and others.

One day Flissey had joined Henrietta in a secluded corner of a park, when she was alone "in the solitudes." The spiritual sisters were again in mutual embrace. Flissey was thinking. Ecstatically it came:

"And from here—in the wonderful Orient, that song was borne! . . ."

The peace conference had opened, and had recessed until afternoon.

Confusion prevailed over the military situation at Hong Kong.

Strained debate over Frame's participation in the conference was on in the British counsels.

"You have suggested that we should be informed of his conclusions before he announces them in conference, else we will be disadvantaged by his 'revealment,'" remarked Boyce, addressing Pendrake. "His response will be, that his psychic process deals with the parties, not as adversaries, but as a family, having a common, a *paramount,* interest in the one issue—revealment of the bottom truths involved in the war. Then, why not interrogate, and enforce such announcement, when we re-convene?"

"But we must not be placed in the attitude of objecting to his presence—on the heels of such a statement?"

"True—and we must not forget that it was through his mediation that we are to come into contact with Morehouse."

"And we know how the Canadians feel on that score, Boyce."

"And the Australians, too—and even one of our Imperial representatives is leaning that way——"

"No!—who is it?"

"Rangarhi—Bronson told me he was for retaining Frame in the conference at all events."

"Zounds!—obsessed, then, by the repute of his 'process!'"

"Suppose we consult the Foreign Office—as to such interrogation?"

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The matter was of such weight, that Pendrake and Hipling coincided with Boyce's suggestion. A wireless was accordingly sent, stating succinctly the situation and requesting prompt advices.

In truth, Downing Street was embarrassed by the difficulties thus confronting the office.

Meanwhile, Lung li, who had broached to Pendrake the subject of Frame's participation, had been informed by that official that the matter was still under advisement.

Preparatory to the reconvening, delegates were filing into the great balconied and acoustically perfect hall at the seat of the Wai-Wu Pu. Invited civic and military officers; legationists; celebrities, and the élite were filling all available spaces; eager to observe the personnel of the assembly, on this the formal opening of the conference proper. Oriental costumes reflected fashions from Kamtchatka to British India; while those from throughout all Christendom proved that here were met the East and the West. The famous Peking Symphony Orchestra was rendering the Chinese national air. As the conferees settled in their seats around the square of broad tables toward the stage end of the hall, successive national airs were discoursed, embracing the belligerents, then the round of neutrals, ending with "America."

Chu Yen, a noted member of the Foreign Board, was to preside. Frame sat at Lung li's right.

The British members were nervously exchanging whispered expressions with the Canadians—for no response had yet come from the Foreign Office. Bronson led those colonials favoring Frame's presence. A hasty vote sustained a proposal to move postponement.

The gavel fell. Brief words explanatory of the conference and suggestive of the momentousness of the occasion, were spoken by the president.

Pendrake—spokesman of the British and Colonials in the conference—rose to a question of the status of the Honorable Bernard Frame therein.

"Understanding that the honorable member will utilize his responsible position in exercise of his professional function of psychic interpretation of representations and discussions of facts elicited in the course of these proceedings—this question thus becomes one of such grave importance, that our Foreign Office has been consulted; to which communication of a few hours ago no response has yet come." He therefore craved the indulgence of the conference in support of a motion for a recess of one hour,

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to the end that the desired advices might be availed of. The motion was promptly seconded.

The resultant sensation sharpened expectation. Frame was on his feet.

Gravely he recognized the function ascribed to him by his lordship; and continued:

"But, as I personally assured his lordship in advance, insistence upon my entry into these deliberations will not be attempted, in the event of objection being made by His Majesty's representatives. If such is the intention of those delegates, the issue will be disposed of summarily, by my withdrawal from the conference."

A sense of imminence of finality pervaded the hushed audience.

Pendrake was wavering. Embarrassment was visible in his face and attitude, as he started to rise as if to speak. Frame's impulse was to relieve him.

"His lordship's evident concern," he went on, "is based upon a misapprehension. The statement I am about to make may seem to his lordship, and to some other delegates, incredible!"

Audience and conferees were at hushed attention—for Frame's intonation reflected a gravity approaching reverence.

"I am *incapable* of consciously injuring the rights of any adversary with whose case I come into psychic contact!"

Deeply impressed as was Pendrake by this cosmic utterance, he saw his opportunity of posing the one postulate that had burdened his mind:

"That he feels he could do no conscious injury—I believe the honorable member!" he declared in strenuous accents. "Nor would I seek to asperse the principles of this 'psychic process,' as it is appropriately termed—when applied to controversy in general.

"But whether, if it were applied in this conference, involving the tremendous issues of war and peace; and setting up, as it will, a new principle in diplomacy and in negotiation, under which no intimation of what the 'psychic revealment' of the facts will be, will come until the end of the negotiations—whether such participation by him should or should not be matter of objection, is a question concerning which His Majesty's delegates are anxiously desiring additional advices before proceeding further. Since—may I beg indulgence in venturing the suggestion—*un*consciously, an injury to one or more belligerents here represented might result."

His lordship closed with an air of inquiring disparagement

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of the idea he had drawn in question, as Frame rose to reply.

A common consciousness of the nature of the question now virtually in debate, and something of its vastness in the present connection, had bespread the general audience, now tensely awaiting a revelation in words of the innate meaning of the "process," from the famed author himself—for this they felt was coming.

"The 'process' is not suspended in its operation. It is instantaneous! Its discoveries are transmitted to the consciousness probed, and measurably to those who are interested listeners to partisan narrations of fact, as part of the process itself. All present apprehend Truth thus revealed, as the mutual benefice. There can be no partisan advantage. In this realization they become *one in interest!* All *controversy* disappears!"

"Will *belligerency* disappear!" Pendrake exclaimed, rather than inquired.

"Yes!—as *grounds* of belligerency disappear!" came sententiously.

An inspired stillness was experience of an overmastering Force. . . .

There came faintest suggestion of distant intonations. Spiritually soft yet penetrating. Now bemoaning woe's travail; now prophetic of its surcease. Wrong's despair; solace of Righteousness. Strife through Dissemblance—harmony in Truth! . . .

The volume slowly swells; tones multiply as orchestral strings tinily electrify. Bugling metals sound far alarums, with ominous vibrations of rolling snare and sonorous bass. Thunder of tubes alternating with thick vibrance of viols. Yet all hushed, subdued; and still dominant that first intonation; advancing, retreating, ever inspiring!

Suddenly all instruments are voicing agonies and chaos of War! . . .

Tones magically dwindle to those first heard. Reason is enthroned. Universal Conscience recognizes futility of Strife; all interpreted by the arch unseen performer behind the scenes; telling in reminiscence of Conflict past, of present Peace!

The rare instrumentalist emerges from rear of the orchestra, where was the grand organ of all the Orient. As she approaches the stage center, there appears from the opposite proscenium a woman of wondrous grace in contour and bearing, of expression of the faraway; soul revealed in movement!

The two stand side by side, hands clasping. Music welcoming Drama!

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Flissey Loor; she who so marvelously unbosomed the organ's soul, gracefully recognizes her companion by suggestion of obeisance, as she modestly retires and again disappears behind the orchestra.

Henrietta Brodein, the incomparable actress, stands forth in histrionic rôle in that East to which her inmost longing has beguiled her. She feels the opportunity of ages! She seems alone beneath the Firmament.

She apostrophizes to Fate upon inevitableness of War amid the woeful blindness of mankind; of harrowing wrongs to peoples and state from lack of Mutual Knowledge; of unbending Pride of Opinion and status; of strife for and repression of Light and its heritage, enlarged Freedom; of resultant resort to Arms; of unspeakable mangling of fallen in Battle, the sorer lacerations of Souls at home; of growth of Pride that hates, of Hope that sternly risks, Despair that leans on Heaven, in War's Process. . . .

Of woeful gropings in the halting steps of Intermediation that leaves untold the Inner Knowledge; of false parrying for Vantage that is vain; of Idle Fears of a cause lost from Subtlety in Disputation:

"Wanting in Manhood that dares to bare
The hidden hand in Soul's confession;
In Wisdom, in that dernier appeal
That intermediates 'twixt Man and God,

"Unlocks with subtler Keys rare caskets
Of jewels stored in Crypts Subconscious;
In Faith and Credit fair, that concede
To Error, probity; in Pondering

"That fails not—oh rare Expedient!—
To perceive Knowledge of Innate Facts
Is rarest stock in Intercourse of
States, as Self-Knowledge is Safety's Rock!"

She now interprets in subtle prophetic appeal the wondrous effect of the Mutual Revelation, through her

APOSTROPHE TO TRUTH

"But even Foes, moved by Psychic Pulse,
Resolve Disputed Fact, beholding
Through Soul's Eye glimpses of Truth Revealed!
Beholding, cling! In Discordant Arms

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"One Interest, One Great Soul is seen!
Lo! . . . *Vanishes* Discord! Chasm of Blood
Baptized in sane Fraternal Clasp 'neath
Heaven! . . . Victory Consecrate to *Truth!*"

Gazing into celestial heights, she is held in the spell, which likewise pervades the onlookers; sweeping exaltingly over the whole assembly. All are unconsciously on their feet, gazing at her; through her at a Conscious Presence—The Highest! . . .

Few had realized that the first to rise was Bernard Frame—he whose silent partnership in her soul-experience the actress had felt during her recital—and as something summoned by Deity to her aid.

Miss Loor had, through the organ, interpreted and inspired each phase of the theme presented by the actress. As Frame had come to his feet, she too had risen. As their eyes met there was more than mutual consciousness of ascension of the assembly into the psychic stage—for this intelligence became an accentuation of Henrietta's personality upon the audience; thus intensifying her appeal at the climax.

The organist moved around the orchestral space toward where, still enrapt, stood the actress—an approach which seemed to signal the closing of a demonstration which had transformed and transported an international conference.

For Henrietta is lowering her head as consciousness of environment returns to the assembly, now resuming seats; and the two artists are again together. Frame returned the joint recognition from the pair on the stage; then sank into his chair as he faced Pendrake; between whom and himself there passed an exchange of new and exalted intelligence.

As the two ladies quietly retired, the silence pervading the still composite soul of the assembly betokened the revelation:

That Revealed Truth dominates and dispels Controversy—and that Bernard Frame *would remain in the conference!*

Then broke upon the recurring sense of the delegates the astounding fact that *a recess had been taken!*—and willed by Psychic Transformation accelerated by Music and Drama!

It was while Pendrake sat enthralled by Miss Loor's initial organ appeal, that the response from the Foreign Office had come to him. The dispatch expressed confidence that the delegates would be able to arrange with the Chinese government "for some mode of preliminary disclosure of Frame's psychic knowledge prior to his final announcement."

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Pendrake's mind reverted to Frame's explanation of the instant communication of such knowledge—but now he had become immersed in the joint appeal of both organ and orchestra. . . .

Prompted by the subliminal awakening of the strange psychic visitation, Pendrake at its conclusion, approached Lung Li and Frame; explained that his delegation desired an opportunity of discussing the reply dispatch, and suggested a formal adjournment for the day; to which an affirmative response was soon forthcoming, Lung li himself being the mover of this substitutional expedient by which the parliamentary situation was clarified; and the delegates dispersed.

Frame's verbal explanation of his process, and the artistry which had exalted it into an actual demonstration of its transforming power over delegates and audience, was the all-absorbing theme of animated discussion and comment in political and social Peking. . . .

The British and colonial delegates were discussing the dispatch and the situation. Conviction seemed to be general that Frame should remain in the conference. Pendrake saw the light:

"Our course, in view of these advices, would seem to be, to request of the Chinese delegation that we too be permitted to consult with Frame from time to time during the conference proceedings;" which suggestion led to the deduction that, under such a plan, both sides would derive certain "inner knowledge" from contact with him. It was presently agreed that Pendrake and Boyce should present to Lung li this proposition.

The two were approaching Lung li's office. The subject of the pre-arranged stage enactment was broached. Said Pendrake:

"Of course the government was privy to this program?"—an observation which prompted Boyce's incidental reference to the now known fact that the three participants had similarly coöperated in America. Then, tapping Pendrake's shoulder, he confided:

"What do you think! My wife declares it is reported from America that Frame and this lady, Miss Loor, are *engaged!*"

"So it's something more than a psychic tie!" ejaculated the colleague.

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CHAPTER XLI

LUNG LI and associates readily granted Pendrake's request. It would improve Frame's standing in the conference, while dispelling concern lest the British should doubt his impartiality. A certain warmth closed the brief negotiation.

Later, Pendrake was conversing with the London *Times'* correspondent concerning another wireless from the Foreign Office, declaring the *Times* extra had announced that "Frame's musicians worked adjournment of conference."

"What did you really send them?" inquired Pendrake.

"The facts of course, your lordship. Everybody knows that that stage trick adjourned the conference"—a facetious response which, smilingly comprehended, led Pendrake, however, to suggest that himself had initiated the motion to adjourn.

"But who moved your lordship? The two women, they say—you under——"

"A capital joke, Challon—but you'll send a supplemental report?"

"One's gone already, your lordship." . . .

"Oh, it was perfect!—your appeal!" exclaimed Flissey to Henrietta, when they had retired to the stage dressing room.

"I could not have attained to that sphere without your aid, my dear," was the unaffected reply. Henrietta continued: "We know the inducement to the inspirational effect was Mr. Frame's simple explanation of his process. Then, his words seemed to crystallize in the continued effect of his presence. My own immersion became more complete as I felt the psychic influence of his conscious dwelling upon the subject. You understand, my dear: It was the total impression, that immersed the assembly."

They had returned to their apartments; when presently Frame was announced and entered.

"I knew that with the aid of yourself and Flissey, failure could not result," he declared with evident sincerity. The actress, replying, impressed the thought that, after Frame's appeal, the delegates could not have felt justified in excluding him from the conference.

"But the real demonstration—it was your dramatics, inter-

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preted and, I may say, heightened by the organ effects," he rejoined. Then, reverting to the conference:

"Pendrake has something to suggest—by the way, the adjournment was upon his initiative."

"That means the ice is broken—and you'll remain in the conference!" exclaimed Flissey.

"One thing is certain," he declared, as he departed to confer with the Chinese, "Pendrake is undergoing a change."

Meanwhile, Frame's status in the conference having been determined upon and reported to the Foreign Office, Morehouse was now in conversation with the British and Canadian delegates. . . .

Miss Brodein and Flissey remained in Peking for several days before returning to America; becoming more familiar with Chinese life, its social and spiritual atmosphere. However, they repeatedly declined invitations to formal social functions; realizing that Frame's relations to the conference would not permit of his joining in those pleasures for the time being. . . .

Frame, in parting with the ladies at the Peking station, predicted their early return, with the Dramatics entertainment—the Orientals would insist, he declared.

"Will you join us, in that event?" inquired Henrietta, seriously.

"Oh, Bernard, say Yes! It's all arranged," interposed Flissey. "*We* have a program—and you're in it!"—to which Frame responded with a facetious reference to himself in the rôle of Don Quixote.

"We believe it would add to the permanence of your fame in China——" Henrietta seemed conjuring a reality, and wholly oblivious to his self-depreciation. Then Flissey was reminded of his release—then of Morehouse:

"Strange that he was allowed to communicate with the British—so people are saying," she remarked.

"Canada was at the bottom of it; with a special object in view," he confided.

During their flight homeward, many press wirelesses came for comments upon the Orientals; to one of which Henrietta responded: "The Orient is veiled, retiring; yet so familiar." An eastern critic drew from Flissey: "Fairies everywhere—and so sincere!" And he thought:

"Now I know she's engaged!" . . .

"In the dispatches, you all three hail from 'Tromple Shades!'

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Aren't we proud!" Miss Kiteler exulted, at the reception there; which brought from Henrietta the assurance that she should soon begin soliciting for the foundation there of an art temple.

"A temple of Drama and Music at Tromple Shades!" exclaimed Miss Kiteler. It would face the West—the Orient, the actress went on:

"For, if I am not dreaming falsely, artists from the Americas, and from Europe; and, crowning all, from the Orient, will journey here!"

Actress and organist were soon again at The Haunts, in preparation for the opening appearances of the Dramatics. . . .

Of the many phases of discussion at the peace conference, certain underlying expedients in world-adjustment became vital and controlling.

That England did not comprehend the extent to which India's loyalty was undermined, and that the situation in this respect was better understood by the Australians and Canadians, soon became apparent. The efforts of the colonials to impress this truth upon the members from the mother country, became the controlling issue among her delegates.

While China's alliance bound her to stand for Indian independence; yet her members were impressed by the objective of which the colonials were the real originators—that of an Indian Dominion whose military power should be effectively under control of the local authorities.

In other words: For the first time in England's history, her colonial advisers exercised a controlling influence in determining the fate of a member of the Empire. Recognized jeopardy to the Canadian Pacific seaboard from the direction of the Orient, and a kindred concern of the Australians engendered by the same cause, decreed this policy.

This conception of the situation found sympathy in the United States and, in the conference, through her indirect influence, in Central-and-South Americas; this from motives of safeguarding the Pacific and the great circle of maritime powers fronting upon her shores.

Japan's delegate ostensibly favored the Oriental "Monroe Doctrine;" yet, in the discussion of China's purpose to exclude England from Hong Kong (during which the Russian delegate suggested that Germany had no foothold on Chinese soil), he opposed the Chinese posture.

The Russian member, however, supported China's resistance

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to the plea of England, that fortification by the latter of the Chino-Indian frontier would not violate the principle of the Hague Declarations—the British delegates incidentally insisting that the Chino-Insurgent alliance did invade them.

France's representative was in sympathy with the insurgent cause. His government's concern lest independence might engender Indian territorial ambitions to eastward (seat of the French Dependencies) however, controlled her member's attitude in withholding formal objection to a strong Indian Dominion.

A deadlock existed between the Insurgent and the Indian Imperial delegates. And when Pendrake tentatively broached the subject of an armistice, an insurgent member declared:

"Unless independence is conceded, continued warfare is inevitable!"

"England will never concede independence," replied Pendrake.

"Then, reënforcements may come to us from other than Chinese sources"—a hint attributed by some to inspiration from the Russian member.

Meanwhile, the impression that the suggestion of an armistice was prompted by colonial delegates, gained ground. Morehouse had given the British delegates new and specific information of a startling character concerning Indian *Imperial* defections—the very purpose for which the Canadians had negotiated this advantage. The British, however, in their conversations with Frame from time to time, carefully refrained from intimations of Morehouse's disclosures.

But notwithstanding the fact that secrecy was thus observed by the British and colonial members, there persisted, as pressure of responsibility grew, a certain misgiving as to whether Frame's peculiar relations of friendship and confidence to the Chinese court might not result in advantage to the cause of the allies. Again renewed discussion had resulted as before—Frame's integrity could not be doubted. In the end, Boyce declared to Pendrake:

"I am agreed, Pendrake. But one thing is certain: There is room for a real 'revelation,' in the event of his making a summary statement—his 'findings'?"

"I can not but feel that way myself, Boyce," replied Pendrake.

The peace conference had naturally developed recriminatory assertions as to the balance of advantage in the continued conflict over Hong Kong—in which English forces had alighted on the West River for a reënforced descent from the mainland; while the allied air-forces had fiercely assaulted the British fleet. Sharp

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discussion had likewise prevailed at times, concerning the real or alleged morale—or the seditious character, as the case might be—of the respective Indian armies. An insurgent member had thus concluded his summary:

"And the fact, recognized everywhere abroad, that the arms of the Allies have so far been in the ascendent, with strong prospects of ultimate victory for Indian independence, can not be gainsaid."

Meanwhile, the conference was drawing to a close. The main questions involved had been exhaustively discussed; certain proposals and counter-proposals had proceeded to tentative vote.

Lung li arose; announced briefly that he was advised that delegate Frame was now prepared to communicate to the conference his statement, "the result of his analysis of evidence derived chiefly from the various persons and officials who, during our deliberations, have spoken to facts concerning the matters and differences discussed in this conference"; and resumed his seat.

Pendrake held a whispered conference with Boyce and Hipling; then rose and requested a recess for twenty minutes—it was desired to briefly confer with the colonial members. The recess was promptly voted.

Those delegations retired to a conference room; a few obvious exchanges took place. Pendrake expressed the common disposition:

"We will listen to his summary. His psychic comprehension is beyond our ken—but we have faith in his integrity!" And as all rose to return to the conference hall, a member noted for levity remarked:

"That's what they say this lady who is to marry him told the Princess—that her friend, Miss Brodein, had *faith* in him, while the outlaws had him."

The recess being ended, Pendrake announced the readiness of the British and colonial members to join with those of the Allies in hearing the recital of facts in question; observing in conclusion:

"It is of course understood that it can be received only in an advisory sense?"

"Such understanding is mutual," assented Lung li. No comment came from any neutral delegate.

Nevertheless, the collective intuition was apprehensive of an unusual feat in unfolding the inner consciousness of the conference.

Frame had risen to request the privilege of sitting during his recital—a courtesy readily extended.

He made acknowledgments of gratitude and of appreciation in

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that his participation in the conference through employment of his psychic faculties had been acquiesced in by all the belligerents.

"What I am now to recount," he continued, "is but what I have discovered in the consciousness—sometimes in the super-consciousness—of the many individuals between whom and myself have been experienced exchanges concerning the subject of our deliberations.

"The consequent of these is of such grave importance; the sense of responsibility so great, that all consciousness of what of fate to any one nation or people may be involved, is swallowed up in the immensity of fate to the associated whole!

"For I have discovered through this process, one common interest."

Resuming his seat, he related:

That China's alliance means sympathy toward Indian aspiration; and the necessity of such course as the alternative to civil war with her border sympathizers, who had joined arms with Indian insurgents.

England has not willfully used Philippine harbors for any purpose connected with the war. Stress of weather, or mistake as to locality, have occasioned a few unpreventable acts. Persistent misrepresentations by Japan's alleged and virtual agents, in complicity with certain Filipinos, have served as the main basis of the American case against England—the purpose being to incite an American threat of war against that power; thus to reduce the probability of British invasion of China.

That an understanding with China, Russia and, more remotely, Germany, accounts for presence of the Japanese fleet in the Yellow Sea; resistance of British attack of the northern mainland being the objective. In case of such invasion, Japan and Russia intend to intervene; Germany's influence being assured. The two former powers oppose the foreshadowed British fortifications of frontiers.

Regardless of her complete recovery of Hong Kong, he proceeded, England intends to invade China wherever practicable; not intending or expecting to threaten her sovereignty or to encourage partition of her territory. Permanent retention by her, in any event, of possession of any Chinese territory save Hong Kong, is opposed by the United States, and by certain South American countries only virtually represented here by the American delegate.

While France sympathizes with the Rebellion, her government hopes it may not succeed. In this, owing to her Asiatic interests, she is in closer rapport with Australia and Canada than with the British Kingdom.

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Adherents of certain political interests in the United States, he continued, suspect England's intention of acquiring certain Philippine Islands, in the event of her success in the war. England has no such designs. Her expectation is, that such success will increase her power in the Orient, through a permanent policy involving China's future good-will.

Canada, he declared, has impressed upon the home delegates, that welfare of the Canadian Northwest is involved in the fate of India and of China; that continuance of the war will strengthen the bonds of the Allies; that this may forebode future danger to the Northwest Coast.

Australia dreads union of Oriental peoples as against Western interests bordering the Pacific; in which contest the Philippines will favor the Oriental cause—which in turn will involve the United States.

The Insurgent army as a whole is spiritually united for independence. Defections, he related, have nearly disappeared since the battle of Tung Yen. Secret British and Imperial Indian agencies have been principally responsible for those conditions. Certain devoted promoters of the insurgent cause yet advocate reconciliation to something short of independence.

Many regiments of Imperial Indian troops are seriously affected with disloyalty. Morehouse, he stated, has furnished the British delegates most convincing evidence concerning those seditions; which latter are more marked in the present struggle at Hong Kong.

China's soldiery, he declared, are religiously inspired in behalf of Indian independence. Mandarin influences are opposed; in which they are encouraged by British secret service men.

The Dominions' delegates have made strong representations to the home members, in favor of granting to India the fullest practicable measure of self-government short of independence.

The United States does not fear Asiatic preponderance as the outcome of East Indian sovereignty. The Washington government, and its delegate here, believe that independence is inevitable in Indian destiny; yet that continuance of British sovereignty under some solvable plan of extension of Indian rights will best conduce to her immediate welfare.

Japan's delegate is in sympathy with the Allies. He has declined England's request that he favor a liberalized Dominion government for India. Russia's, disclaiming complicity with Japan, is of similar attitude; but has encouraged a special conference between the opposing Indian delegates; this being seconded by

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France; while His Majesty's delegates fear preponderance of insurgent influence in such a conference.

Frame had ceased speaking. He seemed in revelation. Then he sententiously observed—as if in communion with Omniscience:

"The Associated Whole; the group of nations involved, are interested most deeply and permanently in Indian conciliation short of independence; and in the territorial status quo ante. Such is the psychic consciousness of this conference."

Realization of a vast transforming Truth pervaded the conference; in which revelation of facts previously unknown, yet not surprising, came to each member as part of a psychic whole. To England's delegates, counsel of her royal daughters as a monition—and the portent that now modified the aspect of invasion of China! To India, reconciliation of her members in apperception of enlarged freedom. To China, gratitude for such prospects to her ally; prophecy of domestic pacification, and of further guaranties against invasion.

Frame rose; sweepingly bowing to delegates his farewell respects. Instantly, by common impulse, all were standing; in perfect silence.

The president raised his hands: In universal deference to the dominant Consciousness, the conference was by silent consent adjourned.

"While I do not feel that we know we are nearer a solution," said Pendrake to Boyce, on the way to their apartments, "the pressure of anxiety—and of responsibility, is much relieved!"

"Pendrake," replied Boyce, "it is as repute says has attended his previous professional labors: All were made conscious of the same facts, and in the same *sense*. And with such consciousness, the *differences* that had existed seemed to disappear! Frame's analysis—'revelation,' let us call it—has done much to pave the way to definite action."

"I agree with you, Boyce—it must be so!"

"Furthermore," added Boyce, "responsibility is now more widely distributed; hands of neutrals are bared; the cards are all within general view——"

"And with a common estimate of their value in negotiation—a 'revelation' indeed!" rejoined Pendrake; who now, half in soliloquy, went on:

"And will China fight on to conquer Hong Kong; and for India's independence, against a common conception of conciliation, and of a Dominion government—and against Frame's virtual advice—it amounts to that?"

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"And as regards India, I hear that those delegates are at this moment holding that 'special' conference," pursued Boyce. "Aren't we making a mistake in holding off? For conciliation means something 'short of independence?' "

"Precisely," assented Pendrake, now in deep study. . . .

Frame, now in reflection upon his sofa, realized that his faculties had served normally. He was conscious of a transcendent act performed—for war, not a controversy of peace, now hung in the balance!

Beaumont and Soper entered; both in a certain informal deference. Beaumont spoke in tone of assurance of great deeds done:

"Frame, you have set a precedent for the ages! Unless Soper and myself are deluded, we discover in a new political atmosphere proof that this will be a red-letter day in the nobler art of dispelling differences among belligerents!"

Soper, unable longer to withhold utterance, grasped Frame's hand and spoke in restrained rapture:

"Bernard, old chum, this is the proudest moment of my life!"

"Even the neutrals are contemplating with bowed heads," continued Beaumont, "and the pressmen are trying to think what it all comprehends."

"And the Japanese is pacing the floor," added Soper, "looking anxious. His government has wirelessed a flat denial of your version of the Philippines embroilment—and that's what gripes him; he knows it's *true!*"

"But," resumed Beaumont, "there is humiliation among all delegates. The British, over exposition of their machinations with the mandarins and the insurgent soldiery, and of their jeopardy in northern China. The Chinese are chagrined at publication of their inability or disinclination to suppress domestic insurrection. Your delineation of the Indian military situation has upset or changed calculations on both sides. And lastly—the way we Americans have been deceived regarding British acts in the Philippines! The American press is teeming with excitement."

"On the other hand," said Soper, "the English are grateful that you enabled Morehouse to divulge to them facts concerning the respective seditions—forewarned, forearmed, and so forth; while the Canadians and Australians are pleased that their influence counts for so much."

From another brief abstractedness, Frame suddenly realized his surroundings—his face lit with ineffable pleasure.

"Well, I'm going home to-morrow!" he declared in gladsome tone, as he rose and strode toward Beaumont, his hand extended:

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"Beaumont, I sincerely thank you for your immeasurably appreciative words. Whatever the outcome of the conference, I assure you that what you have said has deeply impressed me——"

"You have earned more than my words indicate," interposed Beaumont. "Already dispatches from the American, British and Canadian press prophesy that your revelation of England's real attitude in the Philippines and toward China, will disabuse the federal government of its delusion, and aid immensely in ending the strained relations that now exist."

"For that too I am thankful!" ejaculated Frame; who now turned to Soper, as he feelingly requested of Beaumont that the attaché be permitted to return to America with him.

"Soper's leave will be a matter of course," was the cordial response.

Beaumont retired—propriety decreed that they be left to themselves.

They actually relaxed into chanting of an old college song! . . .

Frame alluded to Morehouse—as his rescuer.

"I received an intimation," remarked Soper, "that Lung li felt rather embarrassed at the liberties his government had taken in permitting him to convey information to the British members."

"Lung li, as we know, is a born diplomat," replied Frame, "and knew when and how to strike in utilizing Morehouse's services. He too had had a hint that Morehouse knew something special concerning the morale of the Imperial Indian troops—of course he did not learn this from Morehouse himself."

"I comprehend," said Soper. "I imagine the Canadians had something to do with bringing him into requisition?" Frame slowly lowered his head.

That evening, as Frame was notifying Lung li of his intended departure on the morrow, the Oriental between whom and himself had developed an intimacy which meant lifelong friendship, declared feelingly:

"Mr. Frame, I dearly prize your acquaintanceship. And whatever may be the upshot of the conference, be assured that its pendency alone postpones for the present a formal acknowledgment of your services by my government." The silent exchange in looks and handclasps that followed, told of reciprocal gratitudes.

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CHAPTER XLII

MANY conference delegates took informal leave of Frame at the station the following day—an adjournment having been taken to await the outcome of special conferences between the respective Indian members.

Pendrake, with Boyce and a Canadian member stood conversing with him as he was about to enter the aërial. Pendrake said in parting:

"In behalf of the British and Canadian delegates, permit me to assure you, Mr. Frame, that your remarkable accomplishment of yesterday has convinced us that it must inevitably constitute an advance step in the domain of peace negotiations." Feelingly Frame returned acknowledgments.

"Reminds me—begging your pardon, Mr. Frame," said the facetious delegate, "of a remark I overheard, by a respectable gentleman of the greencloth profession. He remarked, sir, that if it should happen that this great American—meaning yourself, sir—should be found sitting in a game o' poker with himself and others, he himself would be shorn of his faculty for betting on his hand, since he could not hide his secret in his 'inner consciousness,' because you, sir, would have your psychic hand, as it were, upon it!" Frame's unrestrained jubilation punctuated the explosion of laughter following this recital.

"All aloft for overseas to Japan and America!" had been sung; the great air-racer was about to move, when Frame saw rushing up the ascent a dark-visaged person whom he recognized as the Indiaman Imperial delegate, Rangarhi. As the two clasped hands, the delegate spoke feelingly:

"Good-by to your excellency—I was obliged to absent myself from our conference with the insurgent members, in order to pay my and my colleagues' respects before you depart. You will rejoice to know that, now that all is exposed to the light of truth revealed, our Indian negotiations really promise peace—and this too, within the pale of British sovereignty!"—to which Frame's "Thank God!" was the grateful response. . . .

The overseas had reached a locality in Minnesota; Frame and

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Soper were preparing to disembark at a nearby junction, from whence the southward trip home would be taken; when a messenger handed Frame a wireless.

It was from the mayor of Chicago, inviting him to come via that city and be her guest. A delegation was enroute in a municipal yacht to meet him, it said.

In some confusion of surprise, he held the wireless out to Soper.

"Of course you'll accept—and heavens! but the country *is* astir over your feat in the conference——"

"If I accept, Ichabod, I'm going to say 'Soper accompanies me' —of course they will know what that means——"

"It'll mean—the demonstration!" was the joyous assent.

When aboard the municipal craft some two hundred miles out of Chicago, the guests were informed that a civic demonstration had been arranged; that seldom had press and people been so moved as over the news from Peking:

"The dispatches concerning impending peace are regarded as virtually vouchsafing some immediate definite arrangement," announced the spokesman. To Frame's demurring suggestion that the public must have anticipated psychic results similar to those in the Chen-Chau Case, the Chicagoan replied:

"They were not prepared to *believe* what has actually eventuated. Indeed, your remarkable revealment has reacted upon all America as a new revelation in shaping national destiny. Again: Universal comment seems to point to the Western Hemisphere as the determining factor, in the final peace compacts. It is Canada's influence, supplemented by that intangible American prestige in Oriental affairs which has marked diplomacy and world-development since the days of Burlingame and Hay;—but on top of all these, sir, it is your personal equation in this conference, that has given accent to American influence in this particular world-emergency."

"Rather, let us suppose," rejoined Frame, "that America's prestige in the peace conference is the consequent of her traditional policy in the Orient, supplemented by her dominant position in the deliberations ending the Great War."

Music heralded approach of a plane bearing the Chicago Municipal Orchestra; which would head the civic escort into the city.

It was explained to Frame: That the idea of a municipal reception had dawned in a number of great centers, from New York to Saint Louis; rapid exchange had gone on; Chicago being delegated to head the country's manifestation, many other cities however being

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represented—the whole arrangement having developed in half a day.

His countenance of flushed yet restrained exultation, and his look of amazed gratitude and comprehension, told why speech failed of utterance.

In a grand curve to rearward floated bearers of representatives of other cities; beginning with New York and Washington, and embracing the great centers westward to the Rocky Mountains.

As the head of the cavalcade neared the municipal Air-Temple, it ascended and spiraled in an inner circle about and over which the after parts trailed in an outer one; then the cornucopia descended toward the City Hall.

But twin planes are cleaving the sky from northward; their occupants waving banners, fanfares are trumpeted, a megaphone signals:

"Canada's fleet! The Dominion sends greeting!" The answering phone said: "Welcome to Canada! Fall in line!"—the "tip" for this accession had gone from Chicago to Bronson—who had wirelessed Winnipeg and Ottawa.

As the procession circled above the City Hall, colossal letters bulletined the legend:

"London greets America in honor of Frame!"

It was early twilight of an early September day.

The crush for blocks away; of ticketed visitors inside; pandemonium of hawkers telling of the scheduled event; the introduction by the eloquent mayor; the wirelessed tributes to Frame announced from the congested stage; the interspersed music; the response of Frame as he inly struggled to meet in just measure the behest of the hour, and his final magnetic discharge of the function; the singularly profound silence attending his allusion to the simple yet potent process of psychic resolution of assembled minds; his apostrophe to Ominscience as the fountain of psychic revelation—the soundless hush at the ending, when every attendant became a conscious part of Divinity—all must be left to the imagination of the reader.

Yet listen! . . . Entrancing notes—not of the orchestra!

Frame is seated. Continued stillness—expectant of further miracle. Inspired by distant harmonics, a woman rises and moves from auditorium to flank of proscenium; disappears; emerges upon the stage.

It is Henrietta Brodein! . . .

She impersonates the War-god; lives the fury of his carnage;

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embodies his hate; is enjoyment of his gloating exultation. She visits his tyranny upon mankind; bespeaks his brutal inhumanities; stalks his lust of power. She is his incarnation!

How the onlooking listeners loath war!—the more for those organ revelries in accordant shrieks of the dying; stark desolations; supplications, despairs—that accompany and lend reality to the dread recital.

Slowly, through modified recitatives, attitudes and aspects, comes affinity between War's grimness and some incredible leaven of Light; the organ interpreting its subtle dawning of heraldry of Peace. Henrietta becomes some marvelous Duality. She is the god mollified—and now she is that Light!

The vast audience is one in auditorium and stage—transported in this transition. It lives with Henrietta and the organist. Delusion wanes; Truth ascends. Antagonism dissolves; Props of War crumble. The Presence, Peace. The President, Jehovah!

As Henrietta's hands ascend, Divinity again moves all to their feet. Sweet Peace is *lived,* as immortal intonations render the living ineffable delight!

From behind the confines of the stage emerges another form; gracefully passes to Henrietta's side.

Frame, unsurprisedly, beholds his Flissey Loor!

In restrained rapture he beams, hastens to her side.

The cosmic spell is broken. Comes recognition of another Verity—she who had wrought upon the organ is his betrothed!

For Henrietta has retired—she is in Frame's chair.

Soundless ovation! Yet how hearts speak with Silence!

But now returns fullness of reality—the orchestra chants of Love!

The Mayor came forward, spread his hands in unison with his bow of dismissal—and the immemorial reception to genius was ended.

But to memory, the incomparable trio it was who gave the reception.

Frame, through some apperception, had realized that Henrietta was present. When therefore she began to move toward the stage, he anticipated the dramatics—and as unerringly, that Flissey was at hand to accompany with the instrumental.

During the brief levee following the reception, held on the stage in honor of the four guests—for the ladies were by all so regarded—a hint to Frame from the head of the reception committee delicately explained:

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"We knew they were to be guests, but we desired them, not our delegation, to spring the delicious surprise."

It initiated thus: Henrietta had been wirelessed by a professional friend, of the civic program, and to come without fail and bring Miss Loor.

But beforehand, fancy had fashioned the inevitable reception.

Jointly they had conceived and rehearsed at The Haunts an interpretive recitative—and were thus prepared for the event, wherever it should transpire.

The social at the drawing room of the ladies' hotel, after the reception, had been the occasion of sundry reminiscences between the three.

And Bernard and Flissey had entered into certain tentative domestic confidences not to be here bereft of their sacredness.

This much may be predicated: When she should have completed the coming season's engagement with the Dramatics, she would be free.

Then on a day in May next spring. . . .

Latest wirelesses from Peking announced an armistice practically arranged for. Expressions of certain delegates indicated that Frame's "findings" had broken the spell of war. The London *Times,* relating the scene attending their deliverance, as reported, declared:

"No one not there present can adequately sense the experience of members—only those who saw and heard—who in fact were participants."

The *Mirror* commented: "The befogged conception of England's real attitude is clarified. The celebrated 'haul-in-horns' amendment to certain party resolutions was, it seems, prophetic of what is now revealed—an amendment, be it remembered, lustily supported by Frame. The wily if not downright hostile trick of Japanese agents in the Philippines is exposed—her virtual apology is made. . . .

"He has added priceless laurels to his hitherto fame and utility to mankind; and to his country's girth and stature as an instrument in attaining and preserving permanent world-peace."

At the station next day, Frame, in taking leave of the ladies, was endeavoring to express his obligations for the setting they had given the reception. In response to his tribute to Henrietta, she said:

"I appreciate your kind words, Mr. Frame. But I am thinking how thankful I should be that my belief in a great future in store

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for you, has been more than realized. To have been connected, however remotely or feebly, with your development and high purposes, is to me a boon unspeakable."

A parting kiss as Flissey passed into the airal; an exchange of adieus as the clipper shot into distance—and Frame was alone with his thoughts.

Soper, in taking leave of Frame and the ladies when the levee ended, expressed appreciation for the privilege accorded him as one of the city's guests; and left to take the next tram for home, promising to visit Frame before returning to Peking. . . .

Within a week after Frame's departure from China, negotiations in the peace conference had reduced all save a question here of safeguarding boundaries; there of the precise demarkation of local pseudo-sovereignties, and of imperial power under the very liberal scheme of a Neo-Indian Dominion—the real dream of farsighted English and conservative Indian statesmen for a generation.

The really difficult question, finally satisfactorily determined, was that of safeguarding the new régime against internal dissension and uprisings; relatively, the extent to which British military authority should enter. . . .

Soper had returned to Peking. In a letter to Frame, he stated that Morehouse would receive a commission in the new military establishment; his proven superior knowledge of the seditions having inspired confidence in the Indiamen of both parties in his ability to aid in administering the provisional establishment.

For himself, he generously ascribed to Frame a certain availing influence in connection with his own recent promotion as an attaché at the Legation. Sin lung, he related, now stood exonerated and was again with the Legation.

Meanwhile, press dispatches told that the apprehended abductors had plead guilty—Huin fu, after learning of Frame's revelation at Peking, having made a full confession, and implicating Wong; the latter, however, having baffled the authorities as to his whereabouts. Unconfirmed rumor said he was in hiding with some Taoist prophet over the border in Hu Pei province. Lee Sun, arraigned and condemned to imprisonment as a riot conspirator, had been fined only moderately as part of the sentence.

That none of the condemned had been given the law's limit, had inspired belief that Frame had interceded in securing leniency —a well-founded surmise. In keeping with the spirit of his expositions at Peking, he had in fact interposed with the authorities in behalf of the conspirators, as regarded both the abductions and the riot.

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Soper's letter related, concerning Sin-le-fang's sentence:

"As 'Cross-eyed' was being conducted from the courtroom to his cell, he raised his erratic eyes to heaven, and with uplifted arms exclaimed: 'Mlinister Flame, Chlistian man! Blig head! Blig heart! *Me* blig heart too!'—hand to his heart as he ended. . . ."

Edam had been elected to the legislature. Frame had participated near the close of the campaign; and had assisted in drafting a proposed bill for reënforcement of the rural social-civics.

On the stage, "Muses of the Ages" was developing in its creator a profounder art. Her even intenser devotion and resignation was ascribed by some critics to the transcendent conceptions of the famed production itself. But Flissey declared to a member of the Dramatics:

"It's the deeper impression of life's spiritualities imbibed from the Chinese, for one thing." To herself she said: "And it's that she's nearer Bernard's life-work!—and through my nearer heart-relations to him!" Henrietta herself had thus explained:

"My dear, it is also because of a deeper inspiration you have imparted to my work of late. You do not need to be reminded of the source of your increased devotion."

"Yes; it's because I'm linked to Bernard—and to his life!—and to *your* life, oh Henrietta!" The actress made this further significant observation:

"After our experiences with Mr. Frame in Peking and in Chicago, I became impressed as never before, with the possibilities of psychic communication between mortals and the celestial spheres——"

"I knew it—I felt it!—for there's where he dwells, as we know, when he's inspired!" responded the organist in spiritual transport.

At the end of the season's Dramatics they sat discussing:

"When the group impersonated 'Mythology's Dawn,' and you recited:

> "'Out of the Past men rise as gods of men;
> Goddesses strive, rescue, and worshiped be.'

and then:

> "'We spring from loins of Human and Divine.
> Celestials' lives proclaim of Faith Beyond!'—

the audience instinctively conceived of that Sovereign of Heaven we found so inevitable when the climax of all the Ages was being presented," said Flissey devoutly.

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"In every scene, from 'The Creation' onward through 'The Rennaissance' to 'Souls' Rebirth,' at the end of the Great War, I sought to convey the conception that the 'One First Cause' we interpreted in the initial scene, presided over every Age of Man from the beginning; and that the Muses ever sang of Him," replied the actress. "The secular has reflected that 'Religious Spirit' impersonated in the group 'Arts of Greece' in the age 'Mythology's Dawn.' It has ever presided over all that is worthy to live."

The fame of the Brodein Dramatics, though presented only at the Thessalian, had spread throughout the land and into foreign lands. . . .

During the following winter Frame, contemplating further development of his faculties when applied to disputes between Oriental peoples, had through correspondence with the Chinese authorities—eager to encourage his plan—arranged to continue there his efforts to master the springs of Oriental consciousness and interaction.

Meanwhile, the American Congress, in view of Frame's responsible connection with the Oriental Peace, had adopted a resolution declaring that thereby he had "laid not only China, the British Empire and the American governments under lasting obligations of gratitude, but that all peoples owe him praise and thanksgiving for services whose beneficence to mankind only posterity can estimate."

Overtures similar in character to those from China, had come to Frame from the Brazilian and certain other South American governments, contemplating his study of the amenities in mutual relations of those peoples; his responses foreshadowing action there in the remoter future.

In the farmstead sitting room one evening he was poring over some correspondence from foreign officials, and an engrossed copy of the resolution of Congress. Horace, whose wedding in the preceding October had made Alice Grady his bride, had brought her over from their present home; and the parents were enjoying the reunion. Julius remarked:

"Bernie, I little dreamed, before you came to be known abroad, that officials from your own and foreign countries would ever be paying you such compliments as these. Mother and I feel that we cannot appreciate what it means. By the way," he digressed, "what is this I heard Mother say about your having received an invitation from this reunion committee?"

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"It is from the Lincoln Reunion Committee," he replied. "They have extended to me a rather urgent invitation to make an address on the closing day of the celebration on Lookout Mountain."

"Well!"—and Julius' face was aglow with paternal and civic pride.

The urge of the invitation was "in the name of the whole country, whose renewed glory you have done so much to revive in a season rich in the joys of Oriental Peace and of retrospect in the cause of American Union"; the subject assigned to him being "Fraternity between Nations." He gratefully accepted the invitation, after confiding to Flissey what had transpired. She was glorified.

"Oh, Bernard! How can I express my joy! It is because you deserve this high distinction," she wrote him in rapture. "And Henrietta must be with us?"—to which suggestion he replied: "I conceive it quite probable that her presence will be solicited by the committee;" for he had believed that both Flissey and the actress would be linked with his own personality in the eventual arrangement. However, he did not learn of any such move on the part of the committee; nor did Flissey's future letters mention the subject. . . .

The social event of the neighborhood of Tromple Shades for many a year—the forthcoming marriage of Bernard Frame and Felicia Loor, near the end of May—was in its simplicity a disappointment to many.

Inevitably Henrietta was present. Equally fitting was it that Frame's old classmate should share the honors of seconds in the happy affair. But aside from them and the youthful dispensators at the nuptial repast, only few of such close friends as Miss Kiteler, from Tromple Shades and Rosedale Townships, were invited to the Loor homestead to witness the ceremony. This function, however, was supplemented by a half-hour's sojourn of the wedded couple at the Shades; where were gathered the whole community for exchange of felicitations, as the pair started eastward on their wedding tour.

Under the florals beside Bernard stood Flissey; ethereal in white; radiant with ineffable glory in realization that her once sacrifice of self in devotion to his career, now known to him for what it meant to both, was cherished as the jewel that would fitly crown it.

Piano and harp paid fealty of her one-time pupils.

When convention had joined them forever; and in that Nature

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was reminder of their first fateful meeting, the twain were conducted by kin and friends out beneath the selfsame boughs where occurred that fortuitous surprise of yore. There on the sloping sward, the sun-rays flecking the scene, the wedding dinner was dispensed in a presence which the spirit of renewed blossoms transformed into a perfumed temple of light.

Flissey was in tears of joy tinged with regret at the leavetaking when, after return of the party to the house, the departure for Tromple Shades was being arranged. Bernard said to her:

"My love, my heart, too, enshrines this memorable home!"

"It's because you are taking me—and because I'm so happy!"

Henrietta, standing near with Soper, beamed as she spoke:

"Mr. Frame, how she will grace the new home!"

"Oh, sweet Henrietta! Your visit will make it complete!"

"Yes, we both understand!" echoed the bridegroom.

"And, Mr. Soper," said Flissey with grateful fervor, "there'll be no man in this world, outside of our home, who will be so welcome as you! Bernard can never forget how much he owes to you—and to Doctor Soper!"

"And may the visits not be widely separated, Ichabod!" . . .

At the close of the informal reception at the Shades, Miss Brodein, announced for some brief remarks, spoke from the summer platform:

"These two dear friends, whom kindest fate has joined in wedlock, I hold among the most prized of my professional associates. God be with them! And, aside from my home, this place is the dearest spot on earth. Next year, if I live, I expect to dedicate it as such, by beginning the construction of the Temple of Dramatics."

Acclamation, half subdued, half jubilant, greeted this heralding whose consummation was to immortalize Tromple Shades.

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CHAPTER XLIII

THE third and last day of the memorial celebration of the final reunion of the remnants of the federal and confederate veterans of the Civil War, popularly known as the Farewell Reunion, was dawning on Lookout Mountain. It was June 1st, 1939—roundly three quarters of a century after the close of the fratricidal conflict ending in rededication of the great American Republic to the principles of liberty and fraternity.

Veterans of the adversaries of the Spanish War; vastly larger ranks of ex-campaigners in the Great War; and contingents from the soldiery of every foreign country, their dominions and dependencies, who had fought on either side in that colossal conflict against oppression and for Democracy, had marched and counter-marched over Mission Ridge, Chickamauga and the Mountain, at intervals; honors of grand headquarters being shared by Chickamauga and the mountain top.

These and their drum corps, buglers, and the countless variety of other instrumentalists of the respective units, represented nearly every corner of the habitable globe. Contrasts in garb and color; headgear; tactics; diversity of voices—wrought mutual wonderment in fraternizations and among onlookers. Dominant were the Sammies, Poilus, Tommies! There comes a truly percussion chorus-ending—the response: "A Jack Johnson!"

But back through the horrors of the West Front; touching lightly upon the drama that freed Cuba, went thought and sentiment to the dénouement that meant Reunion and doom of Slavery —the Civil War.

For all had heard of Lincoln; to confines of Ethiopia, Mesopotamia. The Himalayas had reëchoed, the Siberian plains had hearkened to that far voice.

Hence every detachment passing the great Temple of Fraternity, upon whose veranda sat, venerable in decrepitude, hallowed in memory, the six surviving veterans of that war able to attend the celebration, halted; with uncovered heads stood in reverential awe at attention, saluted, then silently passed on.

But not alone the valor that had preserved Union against that

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other valor which stood for home in Dixie under a doomed though sincere conception of a federal state, accounted for this wondrous fealty to America now being paid upon the Mountain.

For in another and by far the greatest war of all time, fought a half century later, the United States, through her mighty men-at-arms, in a pilgrimage to Europe that paled in achievement the Crusades of old, had turned the tide for justice to crushed neutrals and for free government everywhere!

Hence martial valor from all fields of earth was here met in a rededication which should embrace with the Civil War its logical sequence—Liberty pervasive of the Globe!—the Return Pilgrimage of the former oppressed of the Old World now part of the All-embracing New.

The South American representations, attended by but meager military escorts, were substantially of civic character—a tribute to the Perpetual Peace between the two great Americas symbolized and prophesied in the floats and banners of their delegations. The Central Americas were in virtual harmony with these.

Draperies of the mammoth memorial structures that had sprung up in a year, were of the national colors, intertwined with which here and there were those of the Confederacy as in fraternal submission.

In the Memorial Museum were grouped all manner of ordnance whose voices had been lifted in that fateful combat on either side. Uniforms; cavalry accouterments; transportation; musicians' implements—here the time-worn snare of that masterful drummer-boy "Hero of Fort Hudson";* there Hendershott's "Greely Drum"; yonder a rare bugle of Confederate fame. Precious specimens of battle-torn colors, rallying-points in many a crucial onset; priceless old parchments in dilapidated orders of opposing commanders, telling of Vicksburg, Antietam, the Wilderness.

Eloquence had held sway from the Ridge to Chattanooga and on Lookout; the old, old issue had been re-threshed in the milder seasoning of three generations; and by common consent he who had touched the hearts of listeners most deeply in praise of Lincoln was Lotus, the negro poultryman from Kentucky. Wilson's greatest expositor had been the blind parson, Whilpot, of Massachusetts; and the greatest heart in any Civil War general had been discovered by the senator from Georgia to have humbled the breast of Stonewall Jackson—an effort regarded as rivaling that of the President in his formal opening address.

* Hosselton, of the Federal Army.

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Notable theatricals; on the first night presenting phases of the Civil War ending with the scene at Appomattox; on the second, the North-and-South united in the Spanish War and later in the campaigns on the West Front, had incidentally dedicated the wondrous Music Hall. On to-day's afternoon would occur the grand finale in the music-drama "Time Reconciles."

Diversion in the national game, turf contests and air-racing had held carnival. To-day the specials between nags and automatons; in divers beautiful yet perilous air-pageants; crowned by the breath-taking feat of the "Drop-Rescue."

The two culminating addresses were to take place in the Amphitheatre, and in the Music Hall at the conclusion of the drama. Elaborate phone-fans were installed, noiselessly manipulating delicate curved surfaces in a system which carried the voice with marvelous clearness throughout those inclosures and, through reënforcements, into every neighboring structure—even to the camps at Chattanooga.

The apparent cloud-pall that in the early forenoon of each day had obscured the sun and tempered its rays, at and southward from Chattanooga, represented ever-renewed sections of air-borne visitors whose journeys ranged from a few miles to literally the ends of the earth—less than ten per centum of the two millions who fared thence having traveled by rail or tram. One of the specks in the unending swarm was the special that brought Mr. and Mrs. Frame and Miss Brodein.

The honeymoon had embraced a brief sojourn at The Haunts as Henrietta's guests; where details of the tentative program in dramatics, a hint of which had been given Frame by the ladies when about to return from Peking, were confided to him. The production was entitled "Soul of the Levant"; expanding the theme of the conscious spiritual aspiration of the United East. Henrietta was to be principal in the enactment; the staging to begin in Peking in the succeeding autumn. Frame's allotment in the presentation would employ his conception at certain climaxes, in joint interpretation by the trio.

In connection with the conclusion of the Reunion at Lookout Mountain, Henrietta had been engaged to give a dramatic interpretive, as supplemental to Frame's address. Through her solicitation, Flissey's services as organist had been secured—earnest of which was implied in her letter to Frame. The public had learned of the forthcoming presentation of the subject "Fraternity," in which those famed artists would assist him—which the vast ex-

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pectant audiences construed to mean another characteristic demonstration.

The soldiery, save military attachés of government officials, had retired to their various tent-quarters. Attention, outside the Music Hall, was much centered in the colossal throng which, long before the final address there to begin, filled the Amphitheater—the overflow masses lingering in adjacent outer spaces, or leisurely suspended in sight-seeing trams and aërial floats throughout the grounds.

Even more densely congested had become the areas within the Music Hall and its immediate exterior.

The afternoon was calm; the sky beautifully cloud-flecked.

The racings were over. Millions of eyes were upturned while suspense awaited the last of the aërial feats—that of the "Drop-Rescue."

Down, down fell the plane—to imminent destruction—when from invisibility above shot a flitting shadow vainly seeking escape from its hissing tail—a lurid meteor; incredibly slowed at the instant of its capture of the plane it seizes; halts, ascends with the rescued, circles about and swings down into the center of the Amphitheater amid a roar as of a vast waterfall!

Upon the heels of reaction from amazement of the moment, from the rostrum of the amplest assembly inclosure of America, began the eloquent speech that was to close the revealed array in greatness of South America, in fealty to the North—by Broche of Brazil. From the Amazon's boundless realm the conception expanded to all the republics of the sister continent—and on to the new empire time should rear in wealth material to dim the fables of Peru; spiritual, to embrace and affiliate with that of the North until . . . the Two Americas shall be one!

Meanwhile, "Time Reconciles" was being enacted at the Music Hall.

The cast was from Boehm's; and to balance the scales in national representation, the orchestra was Fanlopen's unrivaled scheme of strings and brass from New Orleans.

The spirit of every nation and race was in this wide audience. North America the host, all the world her guest. The dramatist who had wrought for this production had anticipated all this and more. Its appeal was for world-reconciliation through common consciousness of Fact and resultant Truth. The interplay of characters began with estrangement born of prejudice; ended in revelation of mutual psychic knowledge and intercourse which dispels prejudice and reconciles disputation.

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The dénouement had inspired the audience to consciousness that here the nations sat in communion as never before in history.

But another spectacle was to crown the auspices in closing this immortal ceremonial;—but for the Civil War this coming together had not been.

The orchestra was playing "Battle Hymn of the Republic," to an adaptation through minor chords suggestive of deferential restraint. Expectancy had reduced a pervasive murmur to profound silence.

In slow halting but measured step there emerged from each wing of the stage a file of three hoary wrinkled veterans; bent with nigh a hundred years to the weight of service done; each leader bearing the colors of his respective cause in the great bygone combat; their followers, the make of gun and sidearms he had used in service. A crutch assisted one of the ex-Confederates; canes, a corporal in blue.

The squads mutually salute at the center; face the audience; marking time as colors mingle aloft. Backstepping, they wheel, again facing; right oblique and mutually pass, to opposite sides; front about, saluting; each leader meets the other, hands clasp; they pass, each joining the ranks of his enemy of yore. The two ranks thus composed intermingle as they pass; about face—there is new fraternization. Backstep—again they approach in curves to rearward; ranks mingle—alternate blue and gray, flags in center. They salute the audience at the stage front; then backstep to seats. Bared heads lend new aspect of venerated valor and brotherhood to the grizzled and now "tuckered" band.

Decrepit age restrains to silence the concourse of beholders of this token of Fraternity begotten of War!

Music ceases. Expectancy again is alert, as if presaging another presence—a figure appears, moving to the stage center.

It is Bernard Frame.

A strange pent-up stillness pervades the great auditorium.

Outside, throngs near and far seem conscious that telepathy now is to hold sway, as intelligence comes that the silencer of dispute with Brazil, the psychic prodigy in the Chen-Chau Case, and who pioneered Oriental peace at Peking, is about to speak.

In camps outskirting the city below; through barracks on the verge of the Mount; where faiths retire through catholicity of hearts, and repose from arduous parading is musing of other prodigies—image of the pillar by day that thrice shut out the sun, revelation that races are lost in an Incredible One—there comes to all the leaven of a psychic unity—reminder that something por-

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tends which shall dissolve this far sojourning in some stupendous miracle!

Frame, gazing beyond the sea of faces; sure that his words will reach remotest camps; reminded of their interpretation to many tongues, resolves to speak slowly.

He began with a rapid sketch of man's experience from the prehistoric age down to the modern day; in proof that Force was the early rule and is the latest guaranty of governments to peoples. He declared that the Powers who negotiated at the end of the Great War "builded a peace which should curb autocracy, and curb the victors," but that despite their paper platitudes and guaranties, the League of Nations, Hague Declarations, reduced armaments and the general good-will of mankind, rebellion had come—Providence had decreed it should be in India.

"But Force—still couchant in man—could not stay the uprising.

"It will not stay a greater, foreboded now on time's horizon. The Powers will rebel their own decree—for still the guaranty is Force!

"Countrymen! Men from over seas!

"The Gettysburg Address was Force!"

One of the veterans feebly groaned assent.

"Government of the people, by the people, and for the people, *will* perish from the earth, as sure as Force remains the arbiter!"

Audiences awaken to revelation. Astoundment clarifies it.

"The grand platitude of Wilson, flung to the world, and worshiped of the world for that, backed by Force, it would save Democracy, will go down in defeat if Democracy's guardian shall continue to be Force.

"Not Force shall save nations, peoples. But Fraternity!—through Truth revealed between Adversaries!

"The world's Cantonment is here. Vaunting of Force! In psychic revealment of Truth, involved in *that* Fact, will come its disarmament!

"Here"—he turned to the forms behind him—"in this last Reunion of the Old Guards, Force, with poisoned weapon of Prejudice—the behest of the Civil War—is dissolved in Fraternity!

"And pilgrims from earth's ends, responsive to America's call, are assembled on this Mount and at her feet—to witness Reconciliation from War.

"In the Subconscious of the Sections is Truth. Of the North, that Patriarchal Slavery and the Compact Theory were sacred to

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their protagonists; revolt against Reconstruction, God-given. Of the South, that New England tradition that all men are created equal, is eternal in the heart; that Lovejoy's quest was divine; that John Brown's soul 'goes marching on'!"

His tone is softened into assurance:

"The last lingering trace of that Irreconciliation is passing, in the 'finding' of Truth—the psychic perception of Facts in the same sense!"

He raises his hands and looks to heaven:

"It is Truth Revealed through Omniscience! The long Controversy is ended. The Sections are One!"

The consciousness that pervaded audiences in Hall, Amphitheater, and everywhere outside, was that of Divine Presence. This cognition had been rendered more perfect by beholding of Frame's form, through the telephote and diffusion of its effects to observers; accentuated when he had appealed to Deity.

Alone to some of the foreign soldiery, ejaculations of ecstasy or of religious inspiration had punctuated the otherwise rapt silence. For to them, thoughts of war had been bread of life—panoply of Faith. To those from the Far East, superstition had strengthened mysterious awe, in that he who was sending this message had ended strife in the Orient!

An Arab had exclaimed in suppressed awe:

"Allah! Is thy sword to be dulled by stroke of Love!"

Frame remained on the stage for a brief space, silently facing the audience.

Now over the pervasive stillness crept a faint sweetly celestial intoning; as of some Divine Harmonics; Creation at peace with itself, and spiritually rejoicing over some new and wonderful Affiliation; Unity commemorated in Music.

A lady was being ushered from the body of the auditorium to a wing of the stage.

Simultaneously the orchestra was heard in strings, in accompaniment to the now slowly swelling chords of the organ.

It is the classic symphony "Strife's Atonement"; adapted to accentuation of the recitative.

Frame bows to the audience and retires from the stage—a movement recognized as the prelude to another presence, advent of the finale.

From the opposite side of the stage appears she who is to assume the rôle succeeding that which Frame has executed.

All know that she is the world-famous Retta Brodein; that the

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soul now breathing in spiritual richness of organ chords, is she who is said to have unlocked the most latent faculties of the great actress—the "Flissey Loor" of the Dramatics; who is the new-made wife of him whose psychic power is even now swaying the composite mind. She too has lent inspiration that sustained and bore Frame into rapport with the Divine in Fraternity.

New fealty comes in tenser silence. Applause of the spirit only, befits this closing of the Memorial Matinée.

Henrietta, with folded drooping hands, is hearkening to voices.

With eyes and arms now upturned, she perceives and radiates a welcome to an approaching concourse; whose voices and the rustle of whose wings are the strings and the pipes in initial strains of the symphony "Light is Unity."

She is in presence of the Sprites. She speaks:

"Earth rises inspired! her Reconciled to link
In spirit with these Messengers from Empires
Of Heaven! Exalted are her children to drink
Sweet nectar of Communion, as the lyres

"Celestial attune these voices to the Spheres
Harmonious. Most gloriously in that Thou,
Oh Gracious God! Mightiest in beneficent tears
Of Love! to be reconciled hast taught us how."

She turns about, watching and listening in pent-up rapture, as the Messengers circle above—a choristry whose harmonics, registered in the strains of the instrumentals, are dedicate to Reconciliation. . . . Again they are nearing.

Anew she is inspired to utterance:

"Regents of The Highest! we see, we hear thee
Rejoicing with us, in that the pulsing heart
Of our America, once in agony
Of Civil Strife that left of dire Hate the smart

"That but Fanaticism, Aristocratic Pride,
White-heated to war for that Ideal, Country!
Could reap in harvest—that heart is now denied
No joy that Reunited Souls could envy!"

As again she yearns the heavenly train, whose sympathetic response is heard in farewell chorus, Henrietta, expectant of their departure, is transfigured into beseechment.

She falls upon her knees; is in attitude of yearning prayer. Flight of the ethereal band is stayed. They listen in deepest solicitude, while thrummed strings faint into silence.

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Before the High Jurist she becomes a living plea for Final Disarmament:

"Oh, Thou Aides-de-camp of the Great Captaincy!
Tented on this Mount and its environments
Are panoplied Force of all Earth's Armory!
Welcomed hence to celebrate Concilements

"In formal last Reunion of Arms in Hearts
'Tween North and Southland—now and forever sealed
In this Commemoration! When Force departs
From hence, America prays that sword and shield

"Be forever flung aside as arbitrant
Of quarrels that trouble Nations, Polity!
That o'er their grave may spring the flower resplendent
Which, scented, reveals to Discord, Unity!"

As the actress rises to her feet, the winged hosts, whose assuring response to her prayer she recognizes through an ineffable smile of gratitude, disappear in the receding notes of the instruments; which now render the closing theme of the symphony, "Resurrectio in Pacem," as an anthem to Jehovah in thanksgiving.

The symphony ends.

The organ is heard; in low rumblings prophetic of cosmic convulsion. Now it is dynamic in reverberations of internal conflict. The crisis passes; subsiding tones die down to restfulness. Now they seem to foretell a coming miracle in soul-conversion, to beholders of the passing spectacle of Force—an impending consummation!

The great artist whose genius has subordinated the orchestral parts while the organ enthralled and converted, has ceased to preside at the keys. Countless thousands everywhere are expectant of a view of the form of the diva.

Meanwhile Henrietta—after the orchestra had ceased—had stood as if spell-bound; drinking of the prophetic spirit of the organ. To her, something inevitable was impending.

Two forms emerge from where Frame had disappeared.

"Flissey Loor," on the arm of Frame!

They step to the side of Henrietta; he is between the actress and his wife.

The universal consciousness, at sight of the three personages whom destiny had made one in art, moved every seated concourse, civilian and military, throughout the wide grounds, to their feet. Heads are bared in voiceless recognition and reverence—silent acclamation of Dramatics of Man and Deity!

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The sun is well on from zenith toward the western horizon.

As the universal spell is breaking, a Mohammedan soldier at the Chattanooga camp, beholding the sun, ejaculates:

"In all the world there is but one God! He sits on the Miraculous Mountain! The sun descends upon His throne!"

But hark! . . . The drama is not yet ended.

As the wide masses in Hall and Amphitheater remain standing, there come cries:

"They're throwing down their arms! They're going home in citizens' clothes!" . . .

Yet another and last act now holds the stage in Music Hall.

All eyes are again upon the veterans, who likewise are standing —actors and the trio having retired to the wings.

In process of clearing the stage for the formal exit therefrom of the veterans as the closing incident of the Reunion, excited whispers between managing committeemen concerning remarkable events at the camps, were exchanged; some of which had been overheard by the veterans.

"So they're going to hang the foreign veterans' uniforms and arms up here in the museum, they say," said one in gray in wavering sub-tone, to his comrade in blue.

"Jehosaphat! What a medley that will make! Our boys won't know where to find their own, then," exclaimed in response the ex-Federal in thin falsetto tremblant with emotion.

"I knew that was comin'," solemnly croaked in split voice another ex-Confederate. "It was that woman with the organ. I felt it acomin'. Says I to myself, somethin' heavy's goin' to drop out there in them foreign camps."

A muffled drum is heard outside to the shrill notes of the fife.

It is "Yankee Doodle." It ends as the players enter and slowly with martial tread file down to where the orchestra is playing "The Sorrows Odes"—a popular American folksong combining the melody of somber ecstasy of the negro youth in contemplation of triumph over ages of oppression, with the mournful plaint of the Indian maiden whose race, driven from sea to sea by destiny, is becoming apotheosized as the characteristic source of the Music of America.

He who stands with sticks at attention to the impending notes of the wood-wind that shall herald the opening roll, is Hamm of Florida, the crack solo drummer of the American Army. His mate with lips to fife and eyes flashing signal, is Famer, the dark-eyed, hailing from Idaho.

It is "Dixie," to orchestral accompaniment.

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Heads are still bared—but now in fealty and deepest gratitude to earth's most sacred and passing symbol of the old strife now hushed in wakeless sleep of Time! The visible monument is tears —to ties this spectacle endears and enshrines in the National Soul.

The shadow of those olden cavalcades has faced from frontal to southward—for the farewell departure in pantomime is to be to that Southland whence the big heart of America, oblivious to mere local sectionalism, turns in deference to the dominant fact that there, where defeat at arms ensued, is accentuated the deathless tradition that only out of physical defeat can most exalted spiritual victory come!—a tradition that has to-day been given even deeper meaning through revelation of the "Process" in Reconciliation.

Gravely, and with short and hitching step they march to the jubilant staccato in slow time of the old classic of the Southland, now all but out-rivaling other pretenders to the throne of the "National Air," and whose appeal at the moment seems a providential relief from what might otherwise have assumed somewhat the character of obsequies.

The fife and drum! What memories rise startled in those all but addled old brains; sending telepathic messages to feebly palpitating hearts, whence spring cherished ideals—or shades of bitter despair for Lost Cause—or resurrection of savage reproach of Abolitionist——

Ah, but no! 'tis "Dixie!"

They turn at the wing; march back to opposite, stand at salute to the North; then as slowly backstep with deferential inclination of heads, as if regretful to end this tribute. The near flank advances, the far recedes; again they front audience from the stage center. Mingled colors dip to the floor in keeping with the last salute to Country! Colors again aloft.

The orchestra—the fife—are silent. Silent are the hosts from Hall to remote corners of the Reunion Grounds and Annexes. All are sensibly beholding for the last time this Reminiscence—venerable ruins of the Castles of Valor, erected on the field of honor in America's most redoubtable strife for Freedom and for Home.

How plumb they try to stand! That daring but softened snap of light gleaming from under variant eyebrows—defiant of a century's assault!

The drum!

Hamm is executing "the most difficult rôle of the long roll." It is "Strife's Court-Martial."

The background is one continuous muffled roar—of Time.

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From the Oriental conflict just ended, imagination is borne in retrospect, till from the Great War mount waves from the level of that ocean of sound to mountain heights—thence to the skies, as air-battles are depicted.

He recedes to the whitecaps of the Spanish-American contest; then back for a third of a century—where is dramatized the Great Civil Strife.

What is that scurrying away from battle-line? . . . Bull Run!

Now he stages in quick succession the various phases of that warfare: Volleys alternating with cannons' booms—the storming—rushes where lines break—variations from tear of shrapnel to far detonations of deep-mine explosion that lacks energy of a grumble; slow poundings of the siege.

Is that dual execution on opposite edges of the drumhead a suggestion of the Vicksburg-Gettysburg crises? . . . Mission Ridge. . . . Atlanta. . . . Antietam. . . . Wilderness—and Appomattox;—the recession to Peace.

Finally: Summary judgment of conviction—Strife is condemned and shot!

There bursts forth incipient hand-clapping—restraint long sustained is relaxing under the combined influence of the dramatics and its dénouement in the camps; of this incredible martial masterpiece; the spectacle on the stage—and the fact that the end has come.

There is confused mingling of hand-concussions; then suppressed exclamations, shaking and tossing of hats, umbrellas, parasols—anything in or at hand—it swells like some ubiquitous sweep of wind swiftly rushing into gale, then hurricane—while stentorious shouts here and there cleaving the air act as commands of officers, in concentrating and hurling the whole commotion into one torrential roar:

"Amer-r-r-r-ica!" "Ah-mer-r-*ri*-cah!" "Hip-hip-hurrah—for—Amer-r-r-ica!—hurrah—hurrah—hur-r-r-r-ah-h-h-h!" . . . To farthest camps. . . Five-eight-ten minutes have passed.

Fitfully it subsides; is dying out. Again stillness.

The veterans' hands are at caps: They are receding to renewed playing—now of the National Air. They revolve as with backstep the line once more faces southward:

"Halt! Mark time! March!"

At the wing they face about:

"Salute! Reverse! March!" . . . They disappear! . . .

"O'er the land of the free and the home of the brave!"

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