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SKOOKUM CHUCK

A NOVEL

BY

STEWART EDWARD WHITE

**AUTHOR OF
THE BLAZED TRAIL,
THE RIVERMAN, ETC.**

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SKOOKUM CHUCK

CHAPTER I

THE ADVENTURE OF THE SUBLIMINAL QUACK

On a sunny afternoon in early May a young man strolled along a back street of Vancouver. It might have been supposed that he—or any other human, for that matter—would be savouring the fine weather that marked the break of the long winter rains, or enjoying the sight of glittering snow peaks and the twinkle of waters on two sides of the peninsula on which Vancouver is so fortunate as to be situated. But if so, his appearance strangely belied him. He looked bored. Or perhaps bored is too active a word, implying too positive a mental state. Let us substitute. He looked uninterested, indifferent, vacant.

Withal he was a young man of pleasing exterior and costly but elegant habiliments. Only a woman or the older head clerks from the best haberdasheries on Granville Street could have enumerated the detail of that elegance; but the most casual and contemptuous hand logger from the Skookum Chuck must have acknowledged—perhaps blasphemously—the altogether subdued, rich, and harmonious superiority, not only of this young man's caparisons, but also of the easy, and feline grace of his movements. As he was in addition a thin-faced, high-nosed, eyebrow-moustached, long-lashed, altogether impossibly superior and supercilious-looking person, the hand logger would probably have been strongly tempted to "hand him one." That is, unless he might suspect that this was, after all, a motion-picture actor in make-up on his way to depict the dastardly and polished individual who removes her virtue from the simple though marcelled heroine, or his mine from her uncouth but golden-hearted father.

This beautiful and exotic figure sauntered idly along the backbone street of Vancouver's peninsula for some five or six squares before it took the slightest notice of any of its surroundings. Then it came to a full stop before a certain house. At first glance the place seemed to offer no commanding elements of rivalry for attention to, say, Lion Peak soaring heavenward across the First Narrows. It was a substantial brick house set back of a well-kept lawn. The square of its respectability was furnished forth by a cupola, a porch, a bay window, and an herbaceous border. All of these things were in well-kept repair, but were obviously intended to fulfil the demands of unobtrusive decency rather than to express the stirrings of artistic aspiration. They corresponded to the "neat and well-brushed business suit" of that worthy youth who is destined to wed the rich heiress. But a second glance would have explained our own hero's interest. On a corner of the house, next the porch steps, was a small polished brass sign that read:

X. ANAXAGORAS HEALER OF SOULS

The young man contemplated this for some moments. Then, a slight smile barely lifting the corners of his lips, he pushed open the swinging gate and sauntered slowly up the walk. For some moments further he examined the brass sign at close range, though its purport and the details of its application were both plainly discernible from the street. Then he mounted the steps and gave a tug at the old-fashioned bell-pull that offered itself.

After some delay the door was opened by the sort of maid one would expect in a brick house of the kind described, and he was admitted to a hall that contained the carved-walnut hat rack, the two straight-backed Inquisition chairs, and the one steel engraving appropriate to the type of house if not to the brass plate.

"I should like to consult Mr. Anaxagoras," prompted the young man, as the maid seemed to hesitate.

The latter looked bewildered for a fleeting instant; then her face turned red with a sudden unexplained but repressed emotion. Without a word she hastily disappeared.

Sounds of scurrying could be distinguished; the echoes of a man's voice in the funereal stillness. The maid returned.

"If you will step this way, sir," she requested, apparently flustered.

They passed through a door to the left into what was obviously a parlour. The parlour also was appropriate to such a house. Its note was struck by spindle-legged chairs, a davenport, a table with a round marble top, a be-tasselled and scalloped lambrequin across the mantel front, a curtain consisting of strings of sea shells threaded on different lengths. The other details in no way were inharmonious with any of these things. Our visitor seated himself on one of the spindle-legged chairs, deposited his hat, stick, and gloves on the floor beside him, and settled himself without impatience to await the issue.

A complete silence reigned. The marble clock on the mantelpiece indicated the hour of 10:21, probably of some day in the year 1885.

After a considerable interval, during which the young man did not move by so much as an eyelash, the maid for the second time reappeared, and with more self-possession again invited him to follow her. She led him down the narrow passageway of the hall, past a newel post of the stairs on which a half-draped female figure upheld a gas jet, and to a second door at the end of the hall.

"You may go in," she informed him, and at once left him with a haste that somehow suggested a self-control overstrained.

The young man turned the door knob and entered.

He found himself now in a small square cubicle furnished out in blue. The rug was a deep blue, the walls were done in blue distemper, the ceiling was a lighter cerulean. The subdued light admitted by a single window was filtered through a tinted ground glass. A flat-topped desk, bare save for a pad of paper and a silver pencil, stood across one side of the room. A swivel chair was pushed against the far side of this, and a second chair had been placed in the centre. The visitor calmly seated himself in this, again deposited his hat, stick, and gloves on the floor beside him, and glanced calmly about. There was nothing to see, but his eye lingered for a moment on an ornamentally carved door, and again the slight weary smile lifted the corners of his lips. After a few moments, as nothing happened, he addressed the empty room.

"If you have quite finished examining me through the cleverly concealed aperture in your altogether remarkable door," said he, "you may come in. I am quite sufficiently impressed."

This remark producing no apparent effect, he shrugged his shoulders and resumed his impassive waiting.

At the end of five minutes the door opened briskly and X. Anaxagoras entered the room and seated himself in the swivel chair.

He, too, proved to be a young man of perhaps thirty years of age, clean-shaven, black-haired, alert, with piercing black eyes. These and his long, nervous, competent-looking hands were the features that would have first struck any observer. He was dressed in the fresh white linen of the hospital surgeon.

"I was examining you, to be sure," he said, without preliminary, in a musical voice with the inflections of an old-fashioned courtesy, "but my purpose was not to impress you."

The visitor smiled slightly and his eyes barely flickered toward his surroundings.

"Nevertheless," X. Anaxagoras went on, "the influence of external impression is underrated. This blue lighting, for example, to which your thoughts this instant turned, is not, as you imagine, for the purpose of inducing or conveying an impression of the occult or mysterious. It eliminates certain nerve-rasping properties inherent in the red end of the spectrum. I understand you are consulting me professionally?"

"Such is my intention," acknowledged the other.

"In what manner does your soul stand in need of my services?"

"It is to determine that that I consult you. I do not pretend to be an expert on souls. I am not sure there are such things. If I have a soul, it is sick: that is all I know."

"In which case you must have symptoms of which you are aware. Those I must be told."

"The justice of that is apparent," conceded the visitor. "My symptoms are simple and can be very briefly detailed. I am indifferent. When I say indifferent I mean very completely so. I am interested in nothing. That, if I am correctly informed by the precept and practice of the human race, means a sick soul."

"If you are literally correct in that statement, it would mean a dead soul," corrected the other.

"That may well be. In that case, my soul is already beyond your good offices, for my statement is quite literally and comprehensively true."

"Let us see if that is so," pursued the healer, taking up his pencil and drawing the pad of paper toward him. "And let us begin with the fairly obvious. You are, if I may judge from externals, well-to-do."

The visitor smiled a trifle sardonically.

"You are thinking of my fee," Anaxagoras followed his thought. "In that you do me an injustice; but I will point out to you that if I am, as you insist, to take your statement at its face value, the amount of my fee or my methods of arriving at it must also be of indifference to you."

"That is true," rejoined the visitor, with a shade of respect in his cool and mocking voice. "Then I will reply that your assumption is incorrect. I am not well-to-do merely; I am very wealthy."

"Should I, as part of my prescription in your case, command you to divest yourself of this wealth?"

"That is a matter of such profound indifference to me that I have already considered it fully in all its aspects. Had I been able to elicit within myself even a spark of regret or fear at the prospect, I should instantly have taken the necessary steps."

Anaxagoras surveyed him keenly for a moment, then noted something on his pad.

"I am constrained to believe in your sincerity," he said. "Nevertheless, such steps would inevitably force upon you a necessity of assuring your own livelihood in a world that demands effort if one would exist."

"Whether or not I continue to exist does not affect me in the slightest degree. In this also I am absolutely sincere, as I have proved a hundred times in the past few years, but with the details of which I will not at this time burden you."

"You would in that case abandon all effort and starve?"

"You mistake me. I should in some manner make the effort to live, but this would not be because of a desire to do so, but through a sense of the ordinary indecency of doing otherwise. That consideration," he pointed out, "brought me to a decision against the course of action you advise—or suggest."

The doctor, if such he could be called, made another note.

"Nevertheless," he continued, after a moment, "I observe your appointments, and I cannot avoid the thought that they indicate at least an interest in your own appearance before your fellow creatures."

"On the contrary, they indicate a following of the line of least resistance. With my upbringing, and perhaps the tastes appropriate to my temperament, a deviation from the perfection of the appointments to which you refer would indicate the stirrings of a purpose to which my thoughts are utterly foreign."

The other bowed his understanding of this point of view.

"In view of your statement it is perhaps useless for me to inquire as to whether you have no personal affiliations of any age—or either sex—" he paused slightly at the last, but after a keen scrutiny went on—"that intrigue even a shred of your attention."

"None, none whatever," replied the young man, firmly. "If I were to learn on indubitable authority—your own, for example—that to-morrow the entire human race was to be eliminated from this planet it so worthily administers and adorns, I should feel no stirring of either regret at the fact or curiosity over the wherefore. And if, the next instant after full belief in that catastrophe, I were to be told—on equally indubitable authority—that a reprieve had been decreed, I should not rejoice."

X. Anaxagoras nodded briefly.

"Very well," said he, "I understand your condition. Now I must ask you some questions in order to complete my data. Your name?"

"Roger Marshall."

"Your age?"

"Thirty-one."

"Other physical details can await on the physical examination. Soul and body are more intimately connected than many people imagine."

"I may state," put in Marshall, "to save time, that physically I am sound. I have been very thoroughly examined by Dr. Daniel Everard and numberless competent and expensive specialists of his recommendation. I can furnish you with their voluminous findings."

"Very good. Now as to a history of your case. How long have you been in this condition?"

"Five years."

"Five years! You served in France?"

"For four years and a half—the duration."

"I see; I see," commented the doctor, thoughtfully. He ruminated a moment, made a note, and went on. "Wounded?"

"No."

"Shell shock?"

"No, no, no. Nor any disappointments in love, or disillusionments, or frustrated ambitions, or anything of the sort. I cannot be psycho-analyzed. This thing has happened to me; that is all."

"Your occupation?"

"I have been seeking a cure."

"Obviously without success. How?"

"In every way. Business, art, writing, science, women, the so-called curiosities of travel, danger, study, philanthropy, politics. I have examined all religions—even to Holy Rollers; I have delved into the mysteries of occult things as they are offered through psychic investigation, through the occult teachings of the East, from the careful and learned and guarded experiments of what is called the new science to the barefaced fakeries of Water Street. No fraud

has been too obvious for my trial. I have allowed no preconceptions to stand in my way. That," he concluded, deliberately, "is why I find myself here."

X. Anaxagoras paid no heed to the implication of the last statement, but remained for some moments lost, not so much in thought as in some inner concentration.

"I will take your case," he said, briskly, at last, "but only under certain conditions which you will enter into of your own free will, which you will observe rigidly and honourably, and to which you will subscribe not merely your signature but your word as a gentleman."

"Those conditions?" queried the weary and elegant young man.

"As follows," enumerated X. Anaxagoras, ticking them off on the fingers of his left hand while he jotted them down on the pad of paper with his right: "You will place yourself unreservedly in my hands for the next eight months. During that time you will perform without question anything I may ask you to do; and this irrespective of whether you consider my requests sensible, desirable—or even relevant. In other words, you will be absolutely—and blindly—under orders. If I tell you to go stand on your head on Granville Street, you will do so, however distasteful such a course of action may appear to you to be."

"I should not care to stand on my head in Granville Street," pointed out the young man, politely.

"If your self-diagnosis is correct—which, pardon me, I am inclined to doubt—it is a matter of equal indifference to you whether you stand on your head in Granville Street or in Portland Drive."

"That," agreed the patient, a trifle grimly, "I am prepared to admit. Let us waive the point for a moment and consider the other conditions."

"There are none, if this first condition is faithfully carried out. I will, however, add what might be called correlative addenda: You will go unquestioningly where I take you; you will, when once entered on the course of cure, continue with it until the expiration of the time agreed; you may discuss my methods, but you will not be privileged to argue their advisability. You will refrain, whatever your emotions, from complaint. Above all, in whatever situation I place you, you will conscientiously and honestly do the best that is in you, substituting—since every action requires a motivation—for the personal interest that would naturally actuate you the artificial stimulus of this agreement. These conditions, though you may not at present appreciate that fact, are in themselves therapeutic agents of no mean value."

The young man considered for some moments in silence, staring sombrely at the practitioner in souls.

The latter broke the silence at last.

"Had I more faith in your self-diagnosis," he said, gently, "I should not add what I am about to say. Were I convinced that your indifference is as fundamental as you believe it to be, it would be unnecessary. I will therefore assure you that the conditions are abrogated and yourself absolved from all compliance therewith if I demand of you anything dishonourable."

"And the standard of honour?" demanded the patient, with cool insolence.

"Shall be determined by yourself," replied the practitioner, unruffled.

The young man considered further—and gloomily.

"Your fee?" he demanded, shortly.

"Is, I believe—theoretically—a matter of indifference to you, as long as it is within your means, which I understand you to say are large." The young man flushed a trifle angrily, but whether from resentment at being considered a financial zany or vexation over the dialectical traps the nature of his malady had placed in his every path would be impossible to say. "But," continued the doctor, "practically, it is well to have such matters defined. You will pay actual expenses. In the

event my methods are crowned with success, the fee will be nothing; in case I fail, ten thousand dollars."

"Pardon, I cannot believe I have correctly understood you," said the young man, after an interval of astonishment.

"You pay expenses; no fee in case of a cure; ten thousand dollars if my methods fail," repeated X. Anaxagoras, briskly.

The young man leaned back with a cynical smile.

"You play safe," he observed, dryly.

"Certainly," agreed Anaxagoras. "Why not? But not possibly in the way your very natural suspicions point. I do not think I shall fail with you; indeed, I have every confidence of succeeding, and I shall certainly bend my best endeavours to that end."

"Why should I think that?"

"You should not. But of course that is a matter of indifference to you. You are at best taking a chance with any physician. You must use your judgment as to whether to take a chance with me."

The young man digested this in silence for a moment.

"That is true. But you will pardon me if I ask you to relieve, not a curiosity, but an intellectual bafflement that may prove an obstruction, by elucidating the rationale of your extraordinary proposal."

"The expenses, of course, are obvious," Anaxagoras obliged him. He looked steadily across the table at the young man, and for an instant his candid brow seemed almost to shine and his figure to swell into grandeur. "He to whom it is given to cure a human soul of aught which threatens its destruction must have entered into a place where he must stand humbly and gratefully, full-heartedly but with empty hands." He paused and something drained away as though a presence had been withdrawn. "Of course, if I fail," he added, briskly, "I ought to be paid. That is obvious."

"I accept," said the young man.

Anaxagoras evinced no emotion, whether of satisfaction or the contrary. He pencilled a few lines on his paper, then pushed a button concealed beneath the edge of the table desk. The door into the hall so instantly opened as to have lent colour to Marshall's suspicion that it had been either guarded or attended for the purpose of surreptitious observation, or eavesdropping, or both. Or this promptitude in response might be part of the "atmosphere." Marshall had no interest in either case. Nor did he raise his eyes to examine the newcomer, even when he became aware that it was a woman; and, as to that portion included in the radius of his lowered gaze at least, one not devoid of attractions.

"Please type this in triplicate at once," Anaxagoras requested her.

The woman took the sheets of pencilled memoranda and disappeared.

The two men sat in an unembarrassed silence during her absence. Marshall gazed at the floor rather blankly; the Healer of Souls stared off into some distant space that contained his thoughts. The room must have been deadened; at least, no sounds penetrated from outside.

Again the door opened and closed. Again the feminine figure crossed the room to the side of the desk. Again Marshall's eyes, too heavy in indifference to rise, became aware, nevertheless, of high-heeled slippers, slim silk-clad ankles, a cloth skirt and a hand. The hand was tapering and brown. It wore only one ring, on the middle finger—a curious thing of beaten silver, remarkable in itself but altogether remarkable in its present situation.

The papers passed across the desk. The woman turned to go. No word was exchanged. The little shoes and the silk-clad ankles passed Marshall's chair, disappeared from his radius of vision, on their way to the door. He heard the door open.

But it did not immediately shut, in the regular sequence. Marshall's dulness of indifference was penetrated in spite of itself by the uneasy feeling that he was a subject of scrutiny. He stirred uneasily. And then, fancifully, he seemed to become aware, somehow, that the compact hard substance of his personality was being slowly permeated by something from outside itself, an exploratory vague searching with a distinct quality of its own. It was an impression whose life was momentary, for he thrust it from him as he would have thrust out an intruder from his private room. But instinctively prompt as was his action, still his subconscious had caught and registered the nature of that distinct quality. It was amusement. And amusement echoed back from the delighted chuckle that preceded the closing of the door.

But X. Anaxagoras was claiming his attention.

"Here," said he, "are triplicate memoranda of our agreement. These we will sign, for form's sake, and in order that we may each be enabled at any time to refresh our memories. This other paper contains your directions. You will kindly follow them. You can consult them at your leisure."

He pressed again the button beneath his desk and arose from his seat.

"I will wish you good-day," said he; and without further ceremony disappeared whence he had come.

Marshall turned with a gleam of interest as the hall door again was pushed ajar. The maid who had admitted him stood in the opening. It was to be noted that she wore shoes, that her ankles were clothed in lisle, and that the fingers of her square and competent hand were unadorned.

"This way, sir, if you please," said she.

Marshall retrieved his hat, gloves, and stick, and so shortly found himself again in the street.

To his annoyance he discovered a desire to unfold the paper which he still held in his hand, in order to ascertain the directions for his conduct prescribed by the Healer of Souls. This impulse he sternly repressed as threatening the sacredness of his indifference. When, however, he had reached a small strip of parking that offered the accommodation of a green-painted bench, he permitted himself to be seated thereon. The strip of park had been cunningly chosen. It was completely sheltered, and the sun poured in on it a concentrated elixir of its subtler essences. A great concourse from among the little peoples had been made aware of that fact, and had there gathered to receive of that elixir of sun warmth and to render back their hummings and buzzings and chirpings in cheerfulness of gratitude. Nevertheless, outside, it could be seen, a lively breeze was blowing. The waters of English Bay were aflash with the stir of it, and the blue of the open gulf beyond showed dark. The lighthouse on Point Atkinson, miles away, stood bravely white and clear. And beyond it, over the edge of the world, were great mountains like soap bubbles, and the hint of many islands urging the spirit to wing farther than the eye could leap.

Marshall snatched his eyes away almost with impatience. For a single shining instant his spirit had spread its wings.

He unfolded the paper disdainfully, a slight sneer sketching its lines about his nostrils, and read:

To-night you will take the 11:40 "W" westbound car in front of the Vancouver Hotel, debarking at the first street the other side of the old Armory building. Proceed down the alleyway directly opposite. You will come to two floats. Go to the end of the one on which stands a barrel. At the end of this float you will find a gas-boat cabin cruiser. Bring with you only warm stout garments suitable for an extended outdoor excursion. Come alone, and see that you are not followed. Provide yourself with ten thousand dollars, some of it in small bills. Arrive promptly at midnight.

He read this document slowly, the cynical lines deepening. The old weariness blanketed his soul. Back to nature: old stuff! Midnight mystery; bunkum of the cheapest sort! Ten thousand dollars—— He paused, then shrugged his shoulders: what matter? A great cloud hurrying down the wind grayed the waters of English Bay. Its shadow chilled the strip of park. The little peoples fell silent out of the sun.

Roger Marshall cursed himself for a fool, not once but many times—and did as he was bid! His baggage he packed and laid away in the hotel cellars; his kit bag he filled with such garments as had been prescribed. Long he hesitated over the ten thousand dollars, some of it in small bills. Only a reperusal of the last clause in the agreement he had so carelessly signed tipped his decision. After briefly reciting the terms of the association, the thrice-damned document ended as follows:

It is specifically agreed and understood that this contract has no legal or moral force whatever, and that either party thereto shall have the right to break its terms at any time. It is to be considered merely as a memorandum intended for the double purpose of (a) reminding the parties thereto of the original terms of compact, and (b) as a barometer of moral evaluations.

A barometer of moral evaluations, forsooth! No legal or moral force!

The stroke of midnight found Marshall stumbling down an incredibly steep and littered alleyway that led between ramshackle crazy-roofed little buildings whose motive for existence was obscure. It was black-dark save where the sky showed murk-wreathed stars; and the half-glimpsed water of Coal Harbour below him stirred guardedly as one who lurks. The night was deathly still. No faintest breath of life came from the buildings at either hand, no slightest stir even of a vagrant paper fluttered by a vagrant wind. The half-guessed boats and launches, crowded along the floats below, lay as though set in glass, their mastheads unbreathingly motionless against the sky. In spite of himself Marshall felt a faint stir of adventure. In spite of himself he moved furtively. When, on the pavement of the street above, a belated pedestrian klooped by, as loud and profane as a whistle in a church, he flattened himself against a wall with a certain gusto. Two phrases popped into his brain: "Come alone and see that you are not followed" and "Once aboard the lugger and the girl is mine!"

"Oh, thrice-born ass of asses!" he apostrophized himself, disgustedly; and stepped deliberately and openly and defiantly down to the level of the floats.

From this new vantage point he became aware of a single guarded light at the end of the float. Toward this he made his way.

It proved to reveal a portion of the midships of a small cabin cruiser, casting into clarity only a section of her subtrake and rail, and into a penumbra only a little less obliterating than the darkness all other details. A dark figure stood erect near the stern of the craft. Another dark figure could be dimly discerned on the forward deck. A third, Marshall made out as he approached, was holding the guarded light, which seemed to be either a powerful flashlight or a hooded extension of some sort. For a blinding instant his eyes were dazzled by its direct glare as it was elevated to his features.

"All right," said the voice of X. Anaxagoras, in low tones, and the hand of X. Anaxagoras was extended to assist Marshall and his kit bag to the deck. From forward came the slithering of a rope's end and its soft *plash* as it touched the water and was drawn aboard. The figure on the forward deck disappeared. Almost immediately a throttled engine began its smooth, low murmuring, and the inert fabric of the craft became vibrant with awakened life. The figure popped up again from below and took its silhouetted place on a low bridge back of the pilot house.

By a touch on the arm the Healer of Souls guided his patient along the narrow channel to the triangle of a small after deck where stood the third figure.

"Wait here a few moments," he whispered, dropping the kit bag; then to the third figure, in a low tone, "All right, cast off."

The third figure deftly flipped the line it had been holding, and the loop, disengaged from some low pile head, in its turn plashed and was drawn swiftly aboard. A boil of phosphorescence, a mounting tremor of life—the low building of the float glided quietly by. X. Anaxagoras snapped off the light he had held. But his doing so swept for a brief instant the

planks of the little deck and a portion of the figure stooping to coil the line. Marshall caught a fleeting impression of a short mackinaw coat, of stout laced boots. Only one thing the beam of light struck sharply across his vision—a ring of beaten silver on the middle finger of the left hand.

X. Anaxagoras slipped forward to join the man on the bridge. As the craft glided in a long curve out into Coal Harbour the two could be distinguished bending forward in an attempt to make out the marks of the exceedingly narrow dredged channel to the old coal hulk. The mud shallows were successfully skirted; the dark mass of the hulk was almost abeam; the little craft heeled slightly as the wheel went hard over. Under the shadow of the Stanley Park peninsula she glided quietly at half speed, until at the point she heeled again, more sharply, under the impulse of the tidal whirlpools beneath her keel. She straightened out and shot away down the ebb that had but just begun to run out through the First Narrows.

The dark shore to port brooded in its deep shadow; over the way Lion's Head, supremely indifferent, communed with its million stars. Like a phantom the little craft glided, darkened and silent. The low purr of her throttled engines was almost inaudible. Only the eddying waters alongside whispered and gurgled and tossed angrily a thousand arms in protest at the intrusion of this alien through the involved and intricate dance of the tide on its way to the open sea.

By the after rail the girl remained where she had coiled the rope, apparently looking back. In a moment X. Anaxagoras joined her. They exchanged no word, but he too looked back intently. The Second Light dropped astern. The point of the peninsula appeared. For an instant Siwash Rock stood out clear and detached; then, as they passed, it blended with the shore. Far away the lights of Point Atkinson on the right and of Point Gray on the left marked the widespread arms of that little sea called English Bay. The outrushing tidal current met the calm of the open water, slackened, turned uneasily, and was stilled. X. Anaxagoras left his post and spoke aloud, cheerily:

"All right, Bill, let her go!"

At his word the running lights flashed on; the purr of the engine became a steady beat; the wake boiled white a moment under the counter; then, as the propeller bit and the craft gathered way, strung out astern in a long faint line. The girl slipped by Marshall and disappeared down the companionway.

"Now," remarked the Healer of Souls, courteously, "I will, if you please, show you your quarters. They are neither distant nor commodious—nor, indeed, are they even exclusive. Our only stateroom—to dignify it by that name—is occupied, so that you and Bill and I are constrained to occupy the after cabin together. I will indicate your bunk and you can turn in."

"And yourself?" inquired Marshall.

"Oh, Bill and I will do the navigation."

"I think I will remain on deck a little while, with your permission."

"Please yourself, to be sure. But in that case let me persuade you to slip on this pilot coat. And may I offer you refreshment?"

"Thanks, no."

"In case you should feel the need of rest," Anaxagoras advised him, "you can lie down on any of the bunks."

Without further parley he rejoined Bill on the bridge where, presently, the faint light of a binnacle disclosed dimly the two figures staring intently out into the darkness.

Marshall put on the pea jacket and sat down in an easy chair that occupied almost the entire space on the tiny after deck. The night air nipped sharply, but its edge was turned by the thick pea jacket into the pockets of which he thrust his hands. No ripple of wind blurred the glassy surface of the sea, which itself breathed slowly as though asleep. The chill depths of Heaven were a-crackle with stars. To starboard the land seemed to lie prone and inert, dark as velvet, shrunken by night into a narrow band of shadow; and the great snowclad peaks, grown insubstantial as soap bubbles

under the starlight, hovered above its sleeping form as though embodied from the substance of its dreams.

Marshall lit a cigarette and fell into musing. On what adventure had he embarked, and in what company? What plots against his close-guarded personality had been laid? What, in this wild experiment, meant these things that had been here gathered together by this man who called himself fantastically a Healer of Souls? Where was this little craft heading so bravely out into the starlit sea? Who and what was Bill? Who and what was the mysterious girl of the silver ring?—Marshall reflected cynically that he thought he could guess her why.—Who and what was he himself in all this—besides a fool? The whole of creation suddenly seemed to beat in on him with an answer, clamouring at the gateways of his soul. From the widespread night came forces demanding.

Suddenly, without reason, mystically, he felt as though he were in the midst of a combat, silent and unseen. The sense of struggle was strong and real within him. He was being assaulted, and he roused himself fiercely and tensely to defense. External things disappeared before a strange inner concentration. Forces outside were clamouring at him a triumphant battle cry; and, fantastically, something within was answering faint and far, as though a prisoner deep immured lifted its smothered voice. Then came a great surge as of a pride that reared a haughty crest. The forces withdrew as swiftly as they had gathered. Again he looked about him on external things. The little craft once more forged steadily on into the starlit night; once more he became aware of the deck and the bridge with the two figures peering into the dimness.

He passed his hand across his forehead and looked about him as though at an iron victory won. The mood, draining away, left him with a fleeting wonder, with a little terror. What was this thing that had befallen him? Had he indeed been invaded? Had indeed the defenses of his inner being been rallied in instinctive resistance of some threatened privacy of self? Did indeed this mysterious man possess some power that——

He shook himself angrily and snapped back into reality. Again the night slumbered; again, wearily, he called himself a fool.

With decision he arose, took off the pea jacket, and descended to his bunk.

CHAPTER II

THE ADVENTURE OF THE UNDESIRABLE GRAY BOAT

Marshall was shaken into consciousness some hours later by the violent tossing of the cruiser. The sun, shining through the portholes, played like violently erratic searchlights back and forth, up and down, in circles and ellipses, crazily jerking. He swung from the bunk to his feet. Instantly he was cast with precipitation straight toward an uncompromisingly hard bulkhead, from collision with which he saved himself only by an acrobatic contortion. There seemed to be no plan or decent maritime rhythm, whether of roll or pitch or scudding. The craft was shaken about. He assured his way to the companion by holding to the edge of the bunks, ascended until his head and shoulders were above the combing of the hatch, steadied himself, and looked about him.

The sun was shining brightly, the air was clear and sparkling, a little wind was blowing from the northwest. It was only a little wind, a breeze in advance of summer; certainly insufficient, one would think, to account for the enormous and peaked whitecaps which were so tossing the boat. These rose and fell straight up and down, or rushed forward or back, or whirled about without semblance of order or sequence. The cruiser, moving ahead at lowered speed, did her best to adapt herself to these conflicting ideas, but was being sadly shaken and confused by the attempt. Forward on the bridge were still the figures of both Bill and the Healer of Souls. The latter held the wheel, which he spun rapidly from time to time in an attempt to ease her over some peculiarly twisting comber. Bill, without other visible means of support than his own two feet, stood nonchalantly and miraculously and smoked a short pipe. Marshall glanced astern. The Gulf sparkled blue and winking under the little breeze, but nowhere showed the whitecaps that would indicate heavy weather.

Far in the distance, half to be guessed among the cloud hazes of the horizon, were the snow ranges of the mainland whence they had come.

He stepped to the deck and tried to see ahead. A low, dark, tree-clad strip of land lay squarely across the bows. Apparently the boat was driving squarely nose on against it. The shore showed black with jagged dripping rocks up which the sea water alternately surged and drained. There were no spray rockets of onward-running waves—merely an up-and-down wash of uneasiness. So near were the rocks that Marshall, on first catching sight of them, shrank back as though in expectation of a blow. Anaxagoras, glancing astern, at this moment waved his hand.

Marshall, clinging to the rail, stepped fully on deck. In spite of himself, an uneasiness and an indignation rose in his breast. He knew a good deal about yachts. What were these fools up to? Didn't they realize that in this sea they were not leaving themselves room to manoeuvre? In another ten seconds they'd be piling her up——

In a melodramatic last-minute sort of scene-shifting fashion, the line of black rocks directly ahead divided itself into a near plane and a back plane; and between them, sharp to the left and almost parallel to the coast line, opened a narrow channel like an S-shaped river. From it rushed a strong tide. This tide it was which, meeting the open waters and the wind outside, had raised the erratic and choppy seas. On the very instant of Marshall's recognition of this fact, the cruiser passed from them into the smoother-running current.

He shook himself a trifle disgustedly as this obvious explanation occurred to him. He must have been half asleep! Actually for a few moments he had entertained the idiotic conceit that an attempt was being made to scare him by shaving close to disaster! Fine state of mind he was getting into already! Last night that silly fantasy of an assault of some kind on his inner self, and this morning an equally silly—though momentary, thank Heaven!—idea of a flirtation with danger for his impressing! He was attaching altogether too much importance to—himself!

The cruiser stuck her nose into the current. Below, the engines beat in deeper rhythm as the throttle was opened. Slowly but steadily she began to force her way up the narrow passage against the strong run of the tide.

Two hundred yards in, the channel bent again sharply to the right, then as suddenly to the left. With a last effort the cruiser tore herself from the suction of the current and fairly darted forward into the flat, rippling waters of what had the appearance of an immense inland lake. X. Anaxagoras turned the wheel over to his companion and came aft.

"Good morning," said he, "I trust you have slept. Now that we are in still water I'll see what can be done about breakfast."

His appearance and manner were not at all those of the formal practitioner in his office of yesterday. A buoyancy and what might be called a restrained heartiness informed the latter. As for the former, an old tweed cap, a gray flannel shirt, a pea jacket, loose trousers, and basketball shoes went as far as they could toward breaking professional dignity into an unexpected, sheer youthfulness.

"We are," he volunteered, "now among the Channel Islands—off the coast of Vancouver Island. They run along unbroken for a hundred miles or so, except by passes much like the one through which we have come. Thousands of 'em; all sizes, big and little."

Bill, on the bridge, revolved the wheel thoughtfully and the cruiser swung her bow to the left and headed down the length of the apparent lake.

"Looks as though there were no way out down there, doesn't it!" observed Anaxagoras, cheerfully. "Always looks that way—until you get there. Hundreds of ways out—in all directions. Just islands, you see; little and big—and channels between them, of course."

He disappeared down the hatch.

Marshall, for lack of other occupation, sank into the easy chair. The water sparkled with little tossing waves, but there was no heave of ground-swell. The cruiser moved forward as steadily as though on a pond. The shores slipped by, near to port, distant to starboard: low, wooded, with rounded hills. In the distance to the west were higher mountains.

The sun was very warm. The engines beat rhythmically. Marshall found himself drowsing; catnapping, waking again with a little start. He came to himself suddenly to find again the Healer of Souls standing in the hatchway.

"Come and get it," invited the latter; then, raising his voice, "Oh, Bill! Come eat?"

"No hurry: eat yourself," rumbled the man at the wheel without turning. Marshall reflected drowsily as he shook himself together that all he yet knew of Bill was a burly back. He descended to the cabin.

There on the small yacht-table which had spread its wings between the bunks were coffee, ham and eggs, and bread. Anaxagoras waved his hands at them and without further ceremony fell to.

Marshall seated himself. He had not felt the need of food, but now he found himself ravenously hungry. The two men stoked up in a silence which he was uninterested to break, and of which his companion seemed quite unaware. The latter finished first and arose, clearing away his own dishes into a small sink. Marshall was suddenly overcome by an overpowering drowsiness. Without a word he rolled himself backward into the bunk on which he had been sitting and instantly once more fell asleep.

His slumbers must have been very profound, though at times he was dimly conscious of certain things. The entrance and departure of Bill in search of sustenance left him unaware, as did movements to and fro that had to do with deck work, with the washing of dishes, and similar matters. When, however, the steady burr of the engines dropped in pitch, he stirred a little. The rattle of an anchor chain penetrated to his consciousness as an alien disturbance apparently far away. But with the dead silence that succeeded the turning off of the engines he came dully awake.

The boat lay almost as still as though set in concrete. The sunlight through the portholes did not waver by the breadth of a hand. Feet moved heavily to and fro above; and there were rattlings of blocks and sounds of some ponderous business a-doing—probably putting the dinghy over-side, Marshall reflected drowsily. For a moment he contemplated going on deck to ascertain the surroundings; again he considered rising for the purpose of putting himself and his belongings in order. Neither of these impulses possessed sufficient strength to reach his motor centres. He felt lazy, superlatively lazy—too lazy, for example, even to move his hands or feet.

Someone started down the companionway. Marshall closed his eyes, simply to avoid the trouble of talk or greeting; and as the newcomer continued to move about the little cabin, he kept them closed. And shortly he was sound asleep once more!

When he awoke for the third time he came to instantly and with his head quite clear and refreshed. The sunlight had disappeared from the cabin and a cool air breathed sweetly down the hatchway. Motionless forms occupied the other two bunks. The remains of a meal still littered the table. From outside came two insistent sounds—the steady tiny lappings of water against the side of the craft, and the exuberant wild crying of sea birds.

Marshall glanced at his wrist watch but found, to his disgust, that it had stopped. He swung his legs over the side of the bunk in two minds as to what to do. His physical fastidiousness called to his attention that he had not had his clothes off in many hours, that his face was unshaved and unwashed; but his natural considerateness reminded him of the fact that his companions had been up all night. The latter thought decided him. Cautiously, he made his way up the companionway and out on deck.

The yacht lay at anchor near the middle of what seemed to be an oval lake, perhaps half a mile across its widest part. There seemed to Marshall to be no break in its circumference, as break there must be—unless some levitation magic might be premised to have transported this massive fabric and all it contained bodily overland from the sea. The shores were low and wooded, though to the west—as though some distance inland—rose a moderately high square mountain, the shadow of which a low declining sun had cast across the whole immediate prospect. Innumerable waterfowl of many sorts carried on a garrulous business. Groups of gulls, floating high, screamed and cackled consumedly over some reprehensible ribaldry of their own. Flap-skitter ducks talked low *tuck-a-chuck* confidences to one another. Trim, modest little drabchicks, consorting monogamously two by two, swam a trifle nervously back and forth, their slim necks upstretched, their eyes perplexedly bright, liking the place but deprecating the loud vulgarity, saying nothin' to nobody. Small companies of self-conscious grebes proceeded effortlessly from nowhere in particular to

nowhere else in particular, for the sole purpose of arching their long necks and proving that one does not have to be big in order to possess the far-famed swan-like grace (over-rated creatures, swans, anyway, they remarked to each other; and so few of them as compared to *Us*). Over in a far corner two loons floated motionless above their own trim reflections. From time to time they laughed at all the rest—derisively, with an almost orgiastic touch of impatience too long restrained; or uttered their wild haunting cry of longing for something unattainable. And occasionally a flap-skitter duck, making up his mind to go a-visiting, gave himself over to the serious business of flight. *Flap-flap-flap, skitter, skitter, skitter*, went he, taxi-ing along like an underpowered airplane, leaving behind him incredible churning of wake. Inch by inch he rose until at last even the tips of his wings ceased to beat the water, and he could apply his mind to the tremendous task of tucking up his legs. Having proved he could do it, he promptly descended again to his more congenial element with all the headlong rush and swish of a launched ship. The outraged echoes of the effort died. He wagged his little tail, ruffled his feathers, shook himself all over, and made unto himself low duck remarks of a congratulatory nature. All of which being accomplished, the lake could turn its attention to some of its other creatures. Altogether a sociable, busy, conversational, and self-centred kind of a place. And the extraordinary part of it was that all this self-complacent and cheerful clamour seemed not at all to disturb the still and gentle evening peace which was all the time softly and steadily condensing like a shadowed mist.

But though Marshall's sensitive perceptions were caught by all this, it did not long hold his attention. It was crowded aside by his intellectual apprehension, which was immediately attracted by the fact that barely a hundred feet away another small power cruiser lay at anchor. She was a neat little craft, thirty-five—perhaps forty—feet in length, built with fine lines, painted a dark, unobtrusive green. Her davits were empty and no life showed aboard her. Curiously enough, he could make out no name. She was a pretty craft, neatly kept, her varnish shiny, her paint fresh and unmarked. Marshall glanced again around the shores of the pond, and this time his more concentrated examination made out a slowly moving object near the farther end. He remembered a pair of field glasses hanging just inside the companionway. These he reached with a motion of the arm, and began to focus them upon the distant object.

The first blurred image showed as a small boat—probably belonging to the other craft. Then, as the definition sharpened, his attention sharpened with it. The occupant proved to be a girl. Of course, she might belong on the other yacht—and, in any case, Marshall reminded himself, she was to him a matter of supreme indifference. Still, if it were the girl of the silver ring, here was an excellent opportunity to study her unaware; to examine at leisure the type Anaxagoras had judged attractive to him.

She had a good stroke, that was one thing! No doubt of that! The upper part of her body swung freely and effortlessly from the waist; the sculls left the water and were feathered for return with a neat businesslike snap. At the distance and under the shadow, however, Marshall could make out little more than this, except that she was bareheaded and barearmed. He caught the flash of the arms and an impression of short tumbling hair—looked as though it might be red, but of that he could not be certain; certainly, it was light. Outdoor, breezy type; dizzily blonde; bobbed hair. Marshall had seen dozens of them. He yawned and returned the glasses to their place. Presently she would return and he would have to go through with it. Nothing bored him more than to be polite to flappers. And within the narrow confines of a small yacht! For an indefinite period! Something akin to a small panic swept through him and was gone. What did he care? What responsibility did he have to be polite to any flapper, athletic and redheaded or otherwise? Let her suffer!

He was aroused from these reflections by sounds of life below. After a few moments he heard his name called by the voice of X. Anaxagoras. He descended the companionway.

Behind the yacht's table sat the blandly professional Healer of Souls whom the day before Marshall had encountered in the blue consultation room, but who seemed to have been lost in the roughly clothed, humorous, and casual skipper of the yacht. On the table were pencils and paper and an affair that looked like a fever chart. Anaxagoras was dressed, to his visible parts, once again in the high-collared white starched surgeon's jacket. Bill was nowhere to be seen; but sounds indicated that he had escaped forward through the engine room.

"I trust your rest has been complete and refreshing," he greeted Marshall, formally. "Will you please to be seated? I find it advantageous periodically to check up our condition in order that gains or relapses may be recognized and evaluated. Like any other practitioner I appreciate greatly entire frankness and honesty on the part of the patient; but like any other practitioner I do not find that frankness and honesty absolutely essential. I have other methods of arriving at my conclusions. I shall ask you certain questions, as a physical physician would inquire as to your sleep, your appetite, your

sensations. You do not in his case consider those questions as impertinences, although often they deal with matters of the greatest privacy. The same attitude of mind I would bespeak for my own interrogations."

"It is a matter of indifference to me," stated Marshall, superbly.

"Yesterday," then began the Healer of Souls, "you extended this indifference to include all things that were. Has it continued quite unbroken from that moment until this?"

Marshall considered.

"I wish to be honest with you," he said, at length. "In essence I must answer in the affirmative. As against essential indifference I do not believe I can count small momentary stirrings of curiosity—or even admiration over a well-managed *mise en scène*."

"In other words," said Anaxagoras, "in spite of intervening small pulsations of emotion of one sort or another, you yourself at this moment in no appreciable different than you were in yesterday at this hour."

"You express my thought," replied Marshall.

"You do not know where you are at this moment, nor why you are here; and you do not care. You do not know in what company you now are, nor for how long, nor for what purpose; and you do not care. You do not know the reasons for your instructions of last night, nor for our subsequent movements; and you do not care. Is that a minutely correct statement?"

Again Marshall considered.

"Perhaps not entirely. I fancy I do know the reasons for some of the matters of which you suppose me ignorant. Your first two suppositions are correct. I do not know where I am nor for what specific purpose I am here; nor how long I shall be here or elsewhere. As to the rest I can as an intelligent being make moderately accurate deduction. 'Bill' is obviously the crew or engineer or pilot, and his functions may be predicated. As for the redheaded young woman——" He hesitated.

"My secretary," Anaxagoras supplied, blandly.

"Ah, yes—your secretary. I assume that, *as concerns my own case*——" he paused at the words—"her status must rest either on her secretarial duties—which in such event must be slight—or on her sex. You ask me to be honest," he ended, in half apology.

"Oh, quite! Quite so!" agreed Anaxagoras, amiably.

"As for the instructions of last night and the mysterious midnight departure, they were quite as obviously a stage setting of 'atmosphere'—skilfully arranged, I admit, and interesting intellectually, but in my case without emotional appeal."

"Or effect?"

"None."

"At any time?" persisted Anaxagoras.

Marshall hesitated.

"I wish to oblige you by being entirely candid," he said, at length, "I can quite honestly say that none of your prearranged effects impressed me. I did, however, experience a rather strange psychic sense of invasion which I successfully combatted. This took place, however, after we had left the harbour, and was induced by a hypnotic combination of the night, the sea, the distant mountain, the stars, and the monotonously rhythmic beat of the engines. I do

not know that I can describe it to you, but——"

"You need not try," interrupted Anaxagoras, "I know." He made a note on his papers; then glanced up to catch Marshall's slight smile. "No," he answered the latter's unspoken thought, "this is not a clever exhibition of opportunism on my part. I know because, in your case, at that moment a natural law worked. Laws do not work because anybody makes them work, you know. All any one does is to gather together the conditions for the working of the law he desires to place in operation. There is quite a distinction. When the conditions are collected, in their proper proportions, for any law, you can't prevent its working. I gathered certain conditions, though they were not quite what you think them, I see. You indicate to me quite clearly that I succeeded in gathering the right conditions in approximately the proper proportions. I am gratified."

"I do not see," objected Marshall.

"This 'psychic invasion,' as you call it, indicates that the law worked, even though only momentarily."

"The law? What law?" asked Marshall, impatiently.

"The law of permeability."

"Permeability?"

"Of the human soul."

"To what?"

"To life. That's what's the matter with you, you know. Your soul lacks permeability. We've got to assemble the conditions."

"You will pardon me, I know," said Marshall, "but as far as I am concerned you are talking nonsense."

"That does not in the least matter," rejoined Anaxagoras, cheerfully. "Laws work whether you know about them or believe in them or not—any laws."

Oars splashed outside. Marshall instinctively turned his head to listen.

"That's Bill," said the Healer of Souls. "She won't back for some time; she's had her supper."

Marshall flushed angrily at this interpretation of his movement, but he said nothing, for it was basically true. He had thought it might be the redheaded girl. Just natural curiosity.

"I thank you for your candour," X. Anaxagoras was saying. "It is invaluable. I must, however, point out that most of your deductions are in error. I do this for a distinct purpose; not to refute you or correct you or persuade you to other conclusions, but solely as an influence toward a more open mind. You were instructed to come at midnight, not because at that hour the graveyards yawn, but because at that hour the favouring tide sets through the First Narrows, and because a departure at that time brought us to the pass when the strength of the opposing tide had sufficiently abated. The request that you take care that you were not followed was made merely in contemplation of the fact that you had on your person a considerable sum of money and that the waterfront is at best none too safe. The sum of money is for the current expenses for which you are responsible. It may seem excessive—and it may prove to be so; but there will be no opportunities for replenishment, and it is well to be prepared. It is quite simple."

"And," observed Marshall, drily, "I suppose these same considerations caused you to run out at half speed and without lights."

"That," said Anaxagoras, "is another matter which at present happens not to affect you. To continue: Bill is not the crew nor the pilot nor the engineer. He is the owner of the craft you no doubt noticed anchored near us. He left her here while he went to Vancouver in quest of certain supplies and repair parts. I have given him passage. My secretary has

nothing more whatever to do with your case. Her functions in the matter definitely ceased at the moment when she closed her typewriter in my town office. Her presence here is explained by the simple fact that she always accompanies me on the *Kittiwake*. To relieve you from the trouble of random speculation I will tell you that she is my sister."

He dipped a pen into a bottle of red ink and painstakingly traced a low curve on the chart-like thing before him.

"You will wish," said he, "to dispose of your belongings and to freshen up. I will show you the arrangements for both activities and will then leave you for a few moments. When you are quite ready, kindly call out, and we will have some supper."

While Marshall was shaving he heard the girl come aboard. Her footfalls passed over his head on their way forward, and shortly he heard her moving about in the fore-castle cabin which apparently was her habitation. With the vaguest conscious intention he expedited his toilet. At supper he would at least see what she was really like. It was absurd! Here for nearly twenty-four hours aboard a fifty-foot craft they had been fellow passengers, and as yet he possessed only the following collection of impressions: (item) a neat foot and ankle; (item) a tapering graceful hand bearing one (1) hammered silver ring; (item) short, presumably red, hair. That was all. Probably she was freckled (most redheaded girls are); and her eyebrows would be white (like those of the majority of redheaded girls); and her eyes milk blue (typical redheaded girl stuff). Of course, he did not care; still, might as well get it over and done with. He tucked away the last of his things in the deep wall bags over his bunk and gave the requested call.

X. Anaxagoras instantly thrust his head and shoulders into the companionway. Somewhere and somehow he had shifted from his hospital rig. His professional air he had likewise discarded.

"Ready?" he queried, cheerily. "All right, come on up and we'll eat."

Marshall accordingly climbed to the deck, though he did not clearly understand how that would help toward food. Perhaps to give Miss Anaxagoras—Lord, what a name!—a chance to prepare the supper.

But Anaxagoras was hauling the dinghy alongside.

"We're going over to eat with Bill," he explained. He glanced shrewdly at his patient. "My sister has had supper," he reminded.

Marshall bowed stiffly. What concern was that of his?

Bill's boat proved to be much less commodious than the *Kittiwake*, although its waterline was only a little shorter. It was one of the V-bottom type, which makes for speed but not for headroom. The after deck was tiny, and even its space was constricted by what seemed to be a pile of square boxes covered by a tarpaulin. The cabin was low and narrow, with a turtle-back roof; there was no bridge; the pilot house, too, was low. While the *Kittiwake* gave an impression of comfort and seaworthiness and room to move about, this craft looked all raciness and speed. She was beautifully kept.

In answer to a hail Bill rumbled from below that they were to come aboard. They did so and descended into the cabin.

This, too, was unexpectedly contracted. It was lower and narrower than one might have anticipated, and appeared to occupy a scant third of the boat's length. Its two bunks were closer together than on the *Kittiwake*, and they had been given generous width only by the expedient of extending them to the skin and under the channel of the side decks. Thus one could sit on the outer half only. The inner halves at this moment were filled with more square boxes. A double pile of the same had been placed on the floor between the bunks, and these it was evident were to serve as the supper table.

Anaxagoras seated himself on one bunk and motioned to Marshall to follow his example on the other. Bill's back was visible around a tiny half partition. After a moment he emerged bearing a coffeepot and a frying pan containing a beefsteak, fried onions, and fried potatoes.

"Fly to it!" he growled.

Marshall looked at him with interest. Bill, too, had for nearly a full day remained a mysterious symbol. He was a big and burly man, with a square-cut granite face, an almost aggressive eye, and no expression whatever. He proved to talk entirely with his lips and throat, without play of any facial muscle.

"This is Bill, Mr. Marshall," said the Healer of Souls.

"Pleased to meet you," growled Bill, extending a dangerously constrictable paw.

"Bill——?" repeated Marshall, interrogatively, as he shook hands and at the same time skilfully avoided being crushed.

"Just Bill," Anaxagoras assured him. "Bill doesn't run very heavy to names—in fact, at times finds them fairly inconvenient, don't you, Bill?"

Bill made no reply to this.

"Fly to it," he repeated; and himself set the example.

The meal was finished in complete silence, which Marshall did not feel called upon to trouble himself about. Then Bill cleared away the simple utensils, returned to his seat, lighted a pipe, and leaned his great shoulders against the side of the deck house.

"All right, Sid," said he, "tell him."

"Sid," remarked the Healer of Souls, looking Bill steadily in the eye, "is Bill's personal interpretation of my given name. He has difficulty with names beginning with an initial X."

"Sure," growled Bill, unexpectedly. "Only thing I know that begins with x is xylophone; and I can't call him that. Though I don't know why that should begin with x."

"The fact of the matter is this," pursued Anaxagoras. "Bill wants me to ask you a favour. As I told you, Bill went to Vancouver to get certain supplies"—as though by accident the speaker's eye strayed to the pervasive square boxes—"and certain parts for one of his engines, leaving his boat here; and I have brought him and his purchases back. Now, Bill's partner went up to Nanaimo at the same time, and was to have met him here. The partner, I regret to state, has not met his engagement."

"Soused to the ears, likely," observed Bill.

"That leaves Bill in an embarrassing predicament. He, in turn, has contracted certain engagements at a point which we will name Somewhere in the United States, which he feels he must fulfil at a given time. To do so he must take his departure at once. Now, Bill's engines—"

"They're damn good engines," interposed Bill. "It's the ignition that——"

"Quite so," resumed Anaxagoras, firmly. "They are the very best little engines in the world. But at present, owing to a dastardly plot, probably by the Germans, they aren't up to normal. They require someone to feel their pulse occasionally and perhaps give them bits of cracked ice or tell them a bedtime story from time to time."

"You go to hell!" growled BUI.

"It is obvious that at such junctures—oh, very infrequent, I grant you—it is necessary to have someone aboard to take the wheel while Bill plays nurse. He wants you to go along and do it."

"Why should you think me capable?" asked Marshall.

"My dear chap, it is my business to know what I can about my patients. You forget that your *Spindrift* is a registered yacht. This expedition will be very brief. By two days, or at most three, you will be back aboard the *Kittiwake*. The trip down through the islands is pleasant. I might almost exercise my authority as a physician——"

"It is unnecessary," said Marshall. "Whether I stay here or go on this craft is, I assure you, a matter of the profoundest indifference."

"That is well," said Anaxagoras, briskly. "Bill wants to start in half an hour. That will give you ample time to select such of your belongings as you may desire."

By the time all preparations were complete it was the last of twilight. Anaxagoras, after a short, low-voiced conversation with Bill, stepped outside into his own dinghy and departed. Bill dove into his tiny pilot house, but immediately thrust his head forth again.

"Want to take a look at her power?" he asked.

The intent was gruffly hospitable. Marshall knew this, and he detected a hidden vibration of pride. Every powerboat man is the enthusiastic proponent and apologist for his engines, or else he is a suppressedly vindictive potential machinocide: there is no middle ground. Like motor cars.

"Surely," said he.

"Go right through the cabin, then," rumbled Bill, and withdrew his head.

Marshall, obeying the suggestion, picked his way past the piled boxes to a small door in the forward bulkhead. This was now open and the farther compartment illuminated by electric light. He thrust his head in the aperture, and stopped short with a whistle of genuine amazement.

Instead of either the massive two or three cylinder heavy duty engine, developing perhaps thirty horsepower, or the more compact and flimsy fast machine of the same strength, he stared at twin engines of multiple cylinder. No wonder the after cabin was so small! These formidable machines occupied, disproportionately, a full half of the boat. They were beautifully spick and span, all the enamel work fresh and unmarred, the brass brilliantly polished, no speck of oil visible, the necessary tools clean and neatly arranged in sockets or loops. But it was out of all proportion. These engines would have been amply adequate for a craft three times as big. Bill was lovingly wiping an imaginary tarnish from a brass governor ball and trying to look unconcerned.

"A hundred and twenty each," he answered Marshall's whistle.

"Two hundred and forty horsepower!" marvelled the latter. "What on *earth* do you want it for in a boat of this size?"

"I like to go—sometimes," mumbled Bill, turning the gas cock and opening his priming cups.

"Well, you ought to have your wish! How fast?"

But Bill's moment of expansion was over.

"Fast enough for me," was his non-committal answer.

He inserted a starting bar and turned over one of the fly wheels. The engine fired at the first revolution. Bill looked self-conscious, though he tried to conceal it. The other engine, however, did not so instantly respond. Bill fiddled with the carburetor; he reprimed twice. When finally it started, it hesitated and back-fired, and only at the last possible minute of momentum decided to take up its job. Bill looked at it with honest mortification.

"She just needs warming up," he muttered, but without conviction.

He switched off the lights unceremoniously and clambered up through his little pilot house. Marshall had perforce

to feel his way back through the cabin to the after deck. Bill's bulky form was stooped over the anchor cable.

"Any help?" proffered Marshall.

"Nope," grunted Bill.

He stowed the dripping hook, then returned to the pilot house. A great boiling of water under the counter; a quiver of the light fabric—the craft shot forward like an arrow, rising buoyantly forward as though about to take to the air, throwing from either bow wide, graceful curves of water like wings. But Bill was evidently only "feeling" her quality, for almost immediately he throttled down. The bow sank—almost alarmingly—the wide bow wings of water were folded. She became just an ordinary boat, going along at an ordinary decorous six or seven miles, with an ordinary decent and respectable wake. But not too fancifully she seemed to quiver with the joyous guarded secret of her folded wings.

To Marshall the closing of the throttle seemed to have been a rather urgent necessity. Even the brief moment of its open-throated exultation had shot the craft past the *Kittiwake* halfway across the tiny lake. Now she bore down steadily against what appeared to be a sheer blank wall of the forest trees. Nevertheless, Bill steered confidently. At the last moment the silver gleam of a narrow opening disclosed itself. This led into a hundred-foot channel; and the channel, followed through the arc of half a circle, debouched into a much larger, though still inland, body of water running approximately north and south. Looking back, Marshall could make out scant indication of the opening whence they had emerged.

The craft now picked up speed once more, though not again the free exultant rush of her first release. Marshall lighted his pipe and settled himself against the canvas-covered pile of boxes on the after deck. The long Northern twilight had almost drained away. The land, now near, now distant, now broken by gleams of silver that indicated bays or the separation of islands, looked all alike in its blackness, the swelling contours of its hills; but Bill apparently knew exactly where he was going. Marshall admired his local knowledge. The surface of the water was glassy smooth. Once, however, it was uneasily disturbed, and to port Marshall caught a narrow break in the shore line beyond which glimmered open water—another pass like that by which they had entered that morning, and through which the uneasy tide rushed back and forth. Lights winked here.

Marshall gave himself over to reflection, assembling the elements of a growing suspicion. It might well be that the midnight departure was to catch the ebb tide, as Anaxagoras had said, but why midnight? There are two ebb tides each twenty-four hours. The warning about being followed was accounted for naturally enough by the ten thousand dollars, but why in that case could not Anaxagoras or Bill, or both, have escorted him from the tram line? And why had they left the harbour at half speed and with doused lights? And why had the Healer of Souls and his sister gazed so anxiously astern? And why all this mysterious activity in the little lake harbour of which he in his sleepy condition had been but dimly conscious? Indeed, when you come to that, why the inordinately sleepy condition? He had turned in between one and two o'clock, to be sure, but that was no reason why he should have slept some eighteen hours. Drugged, perhaps, at breakfast? To leave the field clear? Clear for what? The transfer of Bill's supplies? And why the anonymous speed boat, with two hundred and forty horsepower—such a fabric as might be appropriate to a millionaire sportsman in racing waters, but hardly to Bill in British Columbia wilds. And what was in all these square wooden boxes? Marshall glanced over his shoulder at the north star, nearly astern. Sweet mess he'd let himself in on!

"Pretty clever!" he reflected, half humorously.

He was not an enthusiastic upholder of the Eighteenth Amendment, and he had no care how large the "liquor export" figures of British Columbia might show. But he did not propose to be made a bootlegger *malgré lui*.

In spite of himself he was inclined to consider the whole plant, from the very beginning, as a mechanism for enlisting his services in this dubious enterprise. Then a moment's consideration showed him the absurdity of this. Why should it be to any one's advantage? The contrary. Probably the defection of Bill's partner was genuine enough. He had merely happened upon an unexpected crisis and had been ingeniously drafted as the only available material. A thought of the ten thousand dollars crossed his mind; but he dismissed it. There need be no elaborate scheming to get that. Under the terms of the agreement Anaxagoras could get it quite regularly. Having thought matters out this far it seemed advisable to

get more information, if possible. Accordingly, he made his way by the handrail on the turtle deck to the pilot house. Bill was standing over the wheel in pitch darkness. Not even a binnacle light was burning, though, Marshall had noted, all running lights were on. Evidently there was no attempt at secrecy, and from that fact Marshall shrewdly deduced that they still navigated Canadian waters.

"Whereabouts are we, anyway?" he asked, but without much expectation of reply.

However, Bill turned to the after wall of the pilot house, fumbled with a catch, and turned a switch. A small electric light, shaded on all sides but one, disclosed an ingenious disappearing shelf on which now, at a convenient angle, showed a thumb-tacked chart.

"There," quoth Bill, succinctly, placing his stubby forefinger.

Marshall bent over the chart with considerable interest. The forefinger had indicated a spot in the outermost of one of the many long, parallel, island-broken and island-separated waterways that guard the east coast of Vancouver Island. To the south lay the involved maze of the San Juan Islands, and to the south of that the intricacies of Puget Sound.

"That must have been Active Pass back there," he ventured.

"That's her," said Bill.

"Where are we headed?"

"Just down south a ways. Turn her off when you get through," said Bill.

Marshall switched off the light and seated himself on the miniature transom. He considered.

"What am I supposed to do on this trip, anyway?" he asked at length.

"Oh, just lend a hand—take the wheel once in a while—if necessary," said Bill.

"I see," replied Marshall, thoughtfully.

A silence fell. After a little the silhouette of Bill turned its head sidewise for a moment to listen. Then, one hand on the wheel, he bent back to open the door into the engine room.

"Here," he said, with a note of chagrin, "take her a few minutes. That starboard engine ain't right yet."

"How do I hold?" asked Marshall, rising.

"Straight on her course. We're just coming into Plumper Sound and there's no dangers."

Marshall took the wheel. Bill disappeared into the engine room where, Marshall presumed, he indulged in the usual painstaking profanity of those who wrestle with the little contrary gods. At least, there were symptoms. The boat continued to forge ahead, but she did so uneasily. Sometimes, for a few beats, she picked up and surged on heavily; again she limped jerkily; twice her engines were turned off and she glided down the diminishing curve of her momentum with the whisperings of small waters. Finally, after a long interval, the door opened and Bill's figure reappeared.

"No go," he growled, angrily. "Sta'bo'd engine's on the blink."

"Can't you run on one?" asked Marshall.

"Don't like to. Twists her," muttered Bill. He was plainly mortified and chagrined, as a parent over a misbehaviour of its child.

"What'll you do?"

"Run in here and drop a hook."

He took the wheel and headed unhesitatingly toward the black band of land. With accuracy he steered into a tiny cove and dropped anchor. Marshall could not but admire the skill of his almost uncanny local knowledge and memory.

"You may as well roll in," he told his passenger. "No sense your sitting up all night for nothin'."

Marshall considered this to be good advice. He made his way down to the little cabin, stretched himself out alongside the cases of gin or whisky or whatever they were, and dozed off. Time enough to have this out in the morning.

The opportunity did not seem favourable until after they had left the cove and were driving slowly at half or quarter speed across a wide, island-dotted stretch of open water below Plumper Sound. It was a sweet morning, with still the light northwesterly breeze stirring the waters.

Part way over the open water Bill, after squinting carefully across some distant bearings, dove below. A moment later the sound of the engines died; the cruiser forged ahead on her own momentum. Bill reappeared at the after hatch, bearing some strange contraption.

There seemed to Marshall no immediate reason why he should remain at the wheel. He made his way to the after deck. There he found Bill squatted against the rail, a telephone headpiece clasped on his head. This he stripped off as Marshall approached, looking up with a grin.

"Well," said he, with a cheerfulness that seemed foreign to him, "I figure you're just about back home now—in the U.S.A.," he added, as Marshall looked puzzled, "which puts me in foreign parts—which I don't particularly fancy."

"I imagine not," observed Marshall, drily, "and I suppose you have ascertained the fact by that thing in your hand."

"That?" said Bill, examining the headpiece as though he had just become aware of its existence. "That?" He touched thoughtfully the apparatus to which it was attached. "No. I can tell by the bearing of Skipjacket Island yonder. This here thing is a great dingus. She's one of these underwater listening de-vices they used to use to spot submarines with during the war. She's a bear. Want to listen?"

Marshall slipped on the headpiece. At once a curious variety of sounds assaulted his hearing. After a moment's confusion he realized that he was hearing many exaggerations—the impact of the waters against the boat, the silken slipping of tidal streams around each other, the splash and fall of wavelets.

"Hear anything?" queried Bill. His hitherto expressionless face was alight with interest. Marshall noted with surprise that his eyes, now that for the first time they looked squarely into his own, were straightforward and engaging. "Don't pay any attention to that." Bill dismissed Marshall's report impatiently. "Listen down underneath it, sort of."

"I hear a kind of throbbing—a beat—I think," said Marshall, hesitatingly.

"That's her!" cried Bill, triumphantly. "That's the *Island Queen*—the sound of her propeller, I mean. She's probably down toward Roche Harbour somewheres."

"How do you know?" asked Marshall.

"Roche Harbour? I don't, really; that's just a guess. But she's about that far off, and the set of the current is that way."

"No, I mean how do you know it's the *Island Queen*?"

"Shucks!" said Bill, "that's easy! I just recognize her. They all sound different, just as different as people's voices. I know a lot of boats that way."

Marshall slipped off the headpiece. The moment seemed right to declare himself, and to his disgust he felt a

decided tautening of nerves at the prospect. Bill gave the impression of uncompromising, square-jawed, stocky-built face; of a single-mindedness it would be neither pleasant nor healthy to cross. Nevertheless, Marshall had his own code of obligation to himself, a sportsman's honourable compulsion to ignore odds or probabilities.

"I suppose you can recognize revenue cutters, too," he remarked, pointedly.

"Oh, sure," responded Bill, with entire cheerfulness. "I know both of *them*."

"Now, look here," Marshall faced him squarely, "I think we'd better come to some sort of understanding. I understand perfectly well what this is all about. I'd be a blind man or a fool if I didn't. You are engaged in rum-running to the United States—bootlegging. I don't object strongly to infractions of the Eighteenth Amendment, but I do object, most strongly, to being rung in as assistant in a dubious enterprise without my knowledge or consent."

Bill looked a trifle bewildered.

"Sid told me you wouldn't care," he proffered. "He told me you told him you didn't care—about anything," concluded Bill.

Marshall checked himself for examination. He found his inner being quite calm. The strength and apparent heat of his words were only reflections of a determination to make his point quite clear. Even a profound and genuine indifference was not compatible with a determination not to be a jellyfish.

"Well, he's mistaken," the young man replied to Bill, "when he goes so far as to imagine I will join as participant in such an enterprise without being consulted in the matter."

"He told me you was under orders to do what he told you to do," persisted Bill, but dubiously.

"I am under orders to do what he tells me only as long as he asks nothing dishonourable. I consider this dishonourable—for a gentleman," said Marshall, stiffly.

To his surprise his speech failed to arouse Bill. By all congruity, either of looks or of occupation, he should here have seized a belaying pin—or its equivalent—and knocked Marshall into the scuppers—or their equivalent. Instead of which he merely looked troubled and passed a huge hand gropingly over his square chin.

"I'm sorry about this, Mr. Marshall," said he. "I sure have made a mistake. But I don't see what I can do about it now. I got to get this stuff here down South before midnight, and to do that I got to hustle. That delay last night didn't do us no good. There's nowhere I can land you now—not in the U.S.A. Looks as if you were in for it now. And it's sorry I am."

He thoughtfully hauled inboard the underwater part of his apparatus.

"All I may want you to do is to take the wheel once or twice, maybe," he proffered.

"I'll take the wheel gladly, provided you turn around and head straight back to the *Kittiwake*," countered Marshall, with decision. "I won't raise my hand to do one thing aboard this boat if you continue down South. I will not be shanghaied."

"I can't very well do that." Bill shook his head. "I sure am sorry about this mix-up. I was told different."

He appeared to accept the situation as final. With another shake of the head he disappeared below, leaving Marshall on the after deck. The engines resumed their humming; and, soon after, the forward leap of the little cruiser indicated that Bill was once more in the pilot house and on the job.

They crossed more open water full of tide swirls, toward distant blue lands. Islands, single and in groups, detached

themselves from hitherto apparently unbroken shores, crept up abeam, and dropped astern. To the eastward, many miles distant, rose a splendid snowclad peak, solitary. Far to southward, dimly, almost hull down, lay a rampart of glittering snow. Marshall's yachtsman's curiosity drove him to the pilot house. No man who has himself ever navigated a boat can long remain content in ignorance of where he is on the chart. Bill, smoking a short pipe and staring straight ahead of him through the window, did not look around at his entrance. Marshall pulled out the chart table.

"That's Waldron Island off the port bow," volunteered Bill.

Thus directed, Marshall managed to orient himself, after many squintings across the bearings of the different islands. Evidently they were headed for the San Juan group and purposed making an entrance past John Island. But beyond that point the possibilities seemed almost numberless. The maze of passes and passages among the islands offered a dozen or more choices.

"What's the big mountain to eastward?" asked Marshall. He surmised it would not be tactful to make inquiries as to the course.

"That's Mount Baker," answered Bill. "She's a bear. And them down below are the Olympics. Purty, aren't they?"

Marshall agreed that they were pretty, and settled down on the transom with a cigarette. There was no more conversation. Just beyond Spring Passage Bill shut down and for the second time dropped overboard his listening device. Then he headed her nose past Deer Harbour and toward the channel marked on the chart as Pole Pass.

It proved to be not more than a hundred feet wide, heavily guarded by rocks and shoals. A moderate tide was running through it, and the seaweed streamed straight and almost unwavering, like hair blown backward by a strong wind. Bill steered straight at the shore until within a scant fifty yards; then put the helm hard over; skirted the coast so closely that an active man could almost have jumped ashore from the deck; turned sharply out from the rocky spit at the narrowest point; and so disclosed a strip of clear water through which he shot into an open bay-like stretch beyond.

"Pretty nigh break a snake's back," remarked Bill, glancing astern. "Looks nice and clear, too, don't she? But if a fellow steered straight through, he'd be in a sweet nest of boulders!"

The cruiser ploughed down the more open water toward one of the wide lake-like expanses that so frequently punctuate the charts of this region. Beyond it were other openings leading to other waters. When about halfway across, Bill suddenly reached for his throttle with an exclamation. From behind an island halfway down West Sound darted another cruiser. She swung, and with a white line in her teeth bore down in their direction. Her colour was a uniform gray.

"This comes from this damn daylight running," said Bill.

His craft careened as the powerful engines kicked against the hard-over rudder. A boil of water swirled about her stern. Then she straightened out and headed back toward Pole Pass, full speed ahead.

This manoeuvre safely accomplished, Bill relaxed.

"That fellow can't catch me the longest day he lives," he observed to Marshall. "Watch her go! Ain't she pretty?"

"Revenue boat, I suppose?"

Bill nodded indifferently, glancing back at the gray craft. The latter was emitting a series of angry toots from her whistle, much as a traffic officer halts the offender sneaking past.

"He's always wanting me to stop and talk just when I'm in a hurry," complained Bill.

Marshall had taken the glasses from their case and was looking back.

"She's a pretty craft, too," he observed, with a yachtsman's appreciation. "What's her speed?"

"Two knots less than mine," replied Bill, with satisfaction.

"Won't she shoot?" asked Marshall, after a few moments. "Looks like a gun cover that chap's taking off forward."

"One-pounder," supplied Bill. "Sure; they'll pop off one pretty soon as a hint to pull up. But they won't aim to hit nothing at first, and they won't begin to until they find out that I'm faster than they are."

"They don't know that, eh?"

"We ain't never yet had what you'd call a real race," said Bill. "Cap. Stafford and I have talked it over. He's real proud of that boat of his. I didn't brag too strong of mine; what's the use?"

"Oh, you know him, then?" queried Marshall, blankly.

"I've swapped howdys with him at Seattle."

Pop sounded faintly from astern; and, looking back, the men could see a tiny white cloud drifting to leeward of the cutter.

"Signal-stuff—black powder," snorted Bill, contemptuously.

He reached for a shotgun hanging in slings, thrust it from the door to starboard, and pulled the trigger.

"Got to reply to s'lutes," he grinned. The excitement and amusement of the situation seemed to have waked Bill up.

The grin was suddenly extinguished within, leaving only its frozen simulacrum on Bill's face. Without troubling to remove it he turned his head sidewise in alert attention. The smooth even rhythm of the engines had broken ever so slightly, and in like degree the buoyant forward rush had checked as though a weight had been attached astern. Pole Pass was opening just ahead.

Bill glanced appraisingly at the passing water and astern at the pursuing cutter. His broadside of profane remarks seemed to have a wide scatter. Whether the centre of their aim was the craft astern, the offending starboard engine, the immortal gods, himself, X. Anaxagoras, or his absent and drunken partner, no preponderance of evidence showed. Marshall would have expected that most of it might have been directed against himself, but apparently he was not among those present.

The outburst lasted about ten seconds. Then Bill straightened up and gripped the spokes of the wheel.

Marshall's soul may have been sick to indifference of all things, but what happened next at least touched some old reflex of emotion. Instead of slowing down to thread the short intricate passage through the Pass, Bill steered boldly without slackening speed straight out across the boulder flat.

Marshall rose from the transom where he had been sitting and stared in fascination. To right, to left, straight ahead—all around—the kelp streamed from the hidden dangers, the menacing yellow patches of water warned. And the tide twisted and turned as though bewildered. Under Bill's powerful hands the wheel whirled almost constantly and the cruiser in instant response careened far over, first to starboard then to port. There seemed no possible way, yet Bill found one, dodging like a boy through a crowd. Hair's-breadth escapes followed each other so quickly that the eye barely caught the flash of them. Marshall's every muscle was tense for a crash that it seemed must come and that was delayed from second to second only by a succession of miracles of the first class.

And then, suddenly, blue water, and Bill uttering a brief chuckle and looking back. The revenue cutter could be seen broadside on feeling her way through the angles of the Pass.

"Gained a mile or two on her that time," quoth Bill, "I reckoned he wouldn't want none of that. Now we'll just run down through the Wasp Islands and see how he likes the shoals down there."

The starboard engine still ran, but it limped badly. Bill cast a longing eye toward the engine room, but he said nothing. Marshall glanced at the chart by his elbow. Evidently, if the engines had been working properly, and if—as Bill claimed—they had a two-knot advantage over the revenue cutter, a straight run down the clear and open San Juan would shake off pursuit. If he, Marshall, were to take the wheel——

He shut his lips obstinately. This situation was none of his choosing, and not at all to his taste. He resented being thrust into such a position. Let matters take their course! He even braced himself mentally against a demand which he felt sure must come.

Bill, however, made no request. He cocked an anguished ear toward the engine room, but said nothing. The revenue cutter had by now emerged from the channel at the Pass and was straightened away in stern pursuit. Bill estimated the distance with his eye.

"He'll slow down again when he gets among the Wasp Islands," he confided to Marshall, "and I'll gain enough on him there to make a run for it."

"Run where?" asked the young man.

"Run back home," stated Bill, emphatically. "This ain't no place for us with one bum engine. The Line ain't so very far north. I wish I could get two minutes on that dang engine," he added, as though to himself.

Marshall said nothing.

At the highest speed of which the crippled motive power was capable, they dashed into the intricacies of the Wasp Islands. Bill's knowledge of the dangers both above and below tide mark seemed to be as accurate as it was complicated. Under his tense guidance the little cruiser turned and twisted, checked and darted ahead with a complete and positive assurance, finally to tear herself free on the other side of the maze into the wide-open waters of the San Juan Channel. Bill feinted for the south until he saw the cutter well involved in the slow navigation through the rocks and shoals; then he turned north.

"Fooled him that time," he chuckled. "If he'd have dreamed I was going north he'd have cut through by Spring Passage." He filled and lighted his pipe. "It's a straight run and a stern chase now," he observed. "If that starboard engine was only behaving, I wouldn't be heading north," he added, viciously, "I'd be going due south; and if I couldn't lose that bucko before we passed Smith Island, I'd eat a hat." He sighed and looked at Marshall speculatively, but still made no suggestions.

The revenue cutter had by now in her turn come into open water and was doing her best directly astern. Marshall pulled out the chart shelf, determined the position of the boundary line, and made a rough calculation.

"I think we'll make her," Bill supplemented his unspoken conclusion,"—if things don't go any worse."

"What's the penalty?" asked Marshall.

"For what?"

"Getting caught rum-running"—impatiently.

"Oh, that! They confiscate the stuff, of course, and the boat, and maybe fine you and maybe put you in jail—that depends." He squinted astern. "She's sure pulling up on us; but I think we'll make it, at that."

The starboard engine added another miss to its iniquities.

"Damn!" said Bill, "just as we're getting along toward the tides of Spriden Island, too!"

Close along the cliff-like hills of that long and narrow island they limped at an irregular speed that alternately diminished and spurted. Marshall, watching the revenue cutter, saw the sailors who had been standing by the one-

pounder cover it up and go aft. Evidently the result of the chase was considered assured beyond necessity of shooting. He snatched the glasses and by their aid could see clearly the faces of the sailors and of the man at the wheel and of an officer who stood beside the latter. They were all grinning.

At the head of the island Bill spun the wheel over and darted around the point.

"Listen here," he said, rapidly, "I'm going to run up close enough to that flat rock yonder so you can make it with a good jump. The minute you land you drop down out of sight. When you're sure they's no one looking you go right up through them there woods to the backbone of the island. You'll find a shack. It belongs to a friend of mine who's off fishing. There's grub and blankets. Just lay low and I'll get means of having you took off in a few days. Watch your eye now!"

Marshall rose suddenly from the transom.

"Give me that wheel," he ordered, shortly. "Get below and fix your engine."

Bill stared at him.

"If they catch us you may be in for it," he warned, "—without you perjure yourself. It's aiding and abetting!"

"That's all right," snapped Marshall. "Get below."

"And they'll shoot."

"Let 'em shoot."

"The law——"

"To hell with the law!" roared Marshall. "Get below!"

"Steer west till you've opened the island, then north. Water's clear," directed Bill, rapidly, then dove for the engine room.

Almost instantly the starboard engine ceased its evil ways. The cruiser again lifted in the exultation of her full power. Marshall headed her west. By the time the revenue cutter had appeared off the point of the island, a comfortable distance had opened between them. Marshall looked back at her and a barbaric exultation swept through him.

"How's she making it?" Bill's voice came from behind him.

"Fine!" he shouted back. "Step on her, old scout! How're things below?"

"Got to nurse her," yelled Bill. "Gas line clogged. First she floods and then she starves. Got to stay with the carburetor."

At the words she flooded or starved, and Bill dived down again.

There was for the moment nothing to do but steer. Why was he steering? a vestige of the usual Marshall asked him. Because he doggone wanted to! the unreasonable manifestation of the present moment truculently rejoined. Because Bill was a good scout who had been decent about the whole thing. Because he wasn't going to stand by and see those smirking, smug bluebellies astern put over anything. Because——

We will discuss this question later when this hysterical emotion has subsided, coldly interposed the other. It is always reprehensible to get drunk.

This fantastic thought—and emotional interplay was shattered to bits by an ominously complete let-down of the offending engine. An instant later the other engine, too, fell silent. Bill wriggled up through the companionway, seated himself on the transom, and began leisurely to stuff tobacco into the bowl of his pipe. The cruiser, weirdly quiet,

dropped her bow and, with a gentle bobbing motion, surged forward in the remaining momentum.

"We lose," said Bill, briefly.

The revenue cutter was now overhauling them rapidly. In a moment they heard the engine-room bell reducing the speed. She glided alongside. Alert sailors with lines leaped aboard the cruiser and made fast fore and aft; another sailor deftly interposed a rope fender between the two craft. The pilot houses were opposite each other and only a few feet apart. Bill arose and leaned comfortably out of the window of his own. Over his broad back Marshall saw the customs officer doing likewise just opposite. He was a square-built grizzled person with a sea-blue eye.

"Well, Bill, looks like we caught you," he remarked, genially.

"Looks like," admitted Bill.

"Why didn't you pull up when I signalled you?"

"Was you signalling to pull up?" drawled Bill, with an air of surprise. "Well, think of that! I thought you wanted a race. You always did brag consid'able about your speed."

"You heard me shoot, didn't you?"

"I thought that was the starting gun," said Bill, blandly.

The officer laughed briefly and stepped on deck.

"I'm coming aboard," he announced, starting aft.

"Help yourself," invited Bill. "Glad to welcome you."

He thrust himself outside and made his way by the hand rail to his own after deck. Marshall followed unbidden.

"Cap'n Stafford, shake hands with Mr.——" Bill hesitated for the fraction of a second.

"Marshall," supplied the latter.

Bill flickered a glance of surprised reproach in his direction and Marshall realized too late that he had been accorded a chance to pick his own name *pro tem*.

Captain Stafford merely nodded briefly in his direction. He was evidently exceedingly pleased with himself.

"Well, Bill," he said, perching himself sidewise on the pile of boxes underneath the tarpaulin, "I've been looking for this chance a long time. You certainly are a hard man to meet up with."

"That's right, Cap'n," growled Bill. "I'm pretty busy as a general thing. Sorry I couldn't give you a better race. My sta'bo'd engine is on the blink. Gas line clogged. I'll try you again sometime."

"That's kind of you," rejoined Captain Stafford, drily, "all things considered. I'll put a couple of men aboard you now and follow you in. No monkey business! Your other engine's going, I suppose?"

"That seems to be plumb clogged up, too. That's why I had to stop. You don't think, Cap'n, that I'm poor enough sport to quit a race right in the middle unless I had to, do you?"

"No," acknowledged the revenue officer. "I'll say you've got your nerve—after watching you through the Pole Pass. I suppose, then, I'll have to tow you."

"Thanks, but I don't believe you need bother," said Bill, in the accents of apparent gratitude. "It's dead calm and a flood tide. I'll be able to fix her up in a few minutes. You needn't wait, Cap'n: much obliged."

Captain Stafford stiffened a trifle. It was evident that in his mind this fooling had gone far enough.

"Salton!" he snapped.

"Sir?" a form clad in dungarees popped out from the house on the cutter.

"Take a look at this man's engines. Look to the gas line first."

"That's kind of you, Cap'n," murmured Bill, unheeded.

"Baxter, you and Henderson will take charge here." He turned to Bill, "You and your man will come aboard the cutter. It's about time we quit this fooling."

Bill heaved himself squarely upright.

"I agree with you," he rejoined, with an unexpected crispness. "It's time to quit fooling. Now, I want to know what you think you're doing giving orders aboard my boat?"

The revenue officer stared at him incredulously.

"You're under arrest—and you know it," he answered, after a moment.

"On what grounds and by what right?" insisted Bill. He turned to Marshall. "I call you to witness," he said.

"For God's sake, do you want all the red tape?" growled Stafford. "I warn you, it's not going to help your case any."

"I repeat my question," said Bill. He was a new Bill, an alert, quick-spoken Bill; most surprising.

"You are arrested for attempted liquor smuggling," stated the revenue officer, formally.

"You have, I presume, a warrant in my name. I have the right to see it."

"I don't need any warrant, and you know it."

"You must have either a warrant or produce evidence."

"What do you call this?" roared Stafford, losing patience. He slapped the flat of his hand against the boxes under the tarpaulin. "Come, I've had enough of this fooling. You get aboard the cutter and be quick about it."

But Bill did not stir.

"I'd go slow," he cautioned. "You're going to get in a lot of trouble. I warn you. You haven't seen my papers and you haven't produced a drop of evidence. You are witness." He turned again to Marshall.

Stafford hesitated, puzzled.

"What's your game?" he demanded.

"I'm within my rights," insisted Bill.

Stafford gave in with a gust of temper.

"Baxter, Henderson!" he roared. "Break out this cargo."

He turned his back squarely on the other two and stared across toward Prevost Island, ostentatiously indifferent to the next proceedings. The two sailors stepped forward and with the deftness of long experience undid the fastenings of the tarpaulin and stripped it back.

"Open 'em," growled Stafford, after a glance at the unmarked square boxes thus disclosed.

At this moment first one engine, then the other, started up. All the men on the little after deck cocked their ears sidewise to listen. The explosions ran true and steady, increasing in speed, as the throttle was opened, to a subdued roar. After perhaps a half minute they were shut off. Salton appeared.

"Nothing the matter with the engines that I can see, sir," he reported.

"Look over the gas line? It may clog again."

"No, sir, no obstruction whatever. I tested it throughout."

"Well, what do you know about that!" exclaimed Bill, admiringly. "You're a smart young man."

"These boxes are empty, sir," one of the sailors reported.

"Empty!" repeated Stafford. "All of them?"

"Yes, sir."

"It's a blind. Search her."

The sailors saluted and with businesslike method went about their task. Captain Stafford lighted a cigar and ostentatiously took up a post in the stern sheets where he showed them his back with his hands clasped behind it. Bill amazingly became chatty.

"They're grand little searchers," he told Marshall. "You see, they've had so much practice. You've no idea how ingenious these awful bootleggers get to be. It's terrible. False skin full of whisky; and flat tanks in the bilges painted to look like ballast bars, and things overside and under water. All kinds of wicked de-vices. You'd be surprised. But nothing gets by these little bright-eyes. Hullo, look who's here!"

Around the lower end of Spriden Island came another gray boat, very much like the first.

"The other revenue cutter, as I'm a living sinner!" said Bill. "Wonderful system! Wonderful age we live in! Wireless and all that. I'll bet a cooky the cap'n here sent 'em a message when we started our race and that he hustled down to the end of the San Juan channel to wait for us to come along so he could see the finish. Thought sure we'd go down that way—as we probably might have if our engines had been in shape for a *long* race. Well! Well! Well!" Bill chuckled. He seemed to be in high spirits.

The cause developed a moment later. The two searchers appeared on deck.

"There's nothing aboard, sir," one of them reported to Captain Stafford's back.

The officer whirled about.

"What? You're crazy!" he cried. "There must be!"

"No, sir, nothing," repeated the sailor.

"There's some new trick. It's impossible."

"I'll stake my job on it," insisted the sailor, with a touch of pride.

Stafford turned on Bill.

"What's all this nonsense?" he demanded. "What are you carrying these empty boxes for?"

"The cabin's full of them, too," supplied the sailor.

Bill produced from his inner pocket a bundle of papers.

"Packing boxes for Billingham canneries," he announced. "Here's the papers, all clear and proper." He was evidently relishing the situation.

The second cutter had by now come alongside. Her captain, a younger man than Stafford, lounged out to the rail, his hands in his pockets.

"Got him at last, eh, Stafford?" he remarked in congratulatory tones. "Well, Bill, I always thought you were too foxy to be caught in broad daylight. But the best of us fall at last."

"Really, my dear sir," rejoined Bill, in an affected mincing voice, "I do not know what you are talking about."

The other laughed good-naturedly.

"Where's Parsons?" he inquired, "down below?"

"Parsons"—Bill turned with exaggerated politeness to explain to Marshall—"is my partner whose place you were supposed to take—my much-maligned partner." He turned to the revenue officer. "Parsons," said he, sweetly, "is running our other boat."

Captain Stafford pricked up his ears.

"Your other boat!" he interposed. "I didn't know you had one!"

"Oh, yes," said Bill, sentimentally, "—her maiden trip."

"Whereabouts is she?"

Bill flicked a sardonic eye to the southeast.

"Down toward Puget Sound—by now," he answered, dryly. "She was not far behind me when we started our little race. I thought Parsons might have come along to see the finish, but he is such a shy sort of a cuss! I reckon he must have just slipped right on through Pole Pass as soon as you and I left the way clear for him, Cap'n."

"Well," struck in the other revenue man, cheerfully, "we'll get him another time. You're a pretty good prize yourself, Bill."

But at this moment Captain Stafford, who had been turning purple, blew up with a loud report. An exegesis, abstract, digest, or syllabus of his remarks is all that is proper to the printed page. He conveyed to his brother officer knowledge, conjecture, and conviction, together with a brief but forcibly expressed hope as to the eternal future of all concerned, including himself. The knowledge was of the fact that while Bill had indeed been caught at last, it was a—legally—innocent Bill, not subject to detention, no matter what the moral certainties.

The combined conjecture and conviction was that they themselves had been diddled, cozened, choused, hoodwinked, enticed, seduced, and decoyed; and that that which they sought was even now, under charge of the unmentionable Parsons, jogging a humdrum and unmolested way toward its illegal destination. There was considerable more.

Bill listened critically, his head on one side.

"I tell you," he sighed to Marshall, "us coastwise men ain't got a show. It takes a deep-sea education!"

Having finished his remarks in the workmanlike manner that so enlisted Bill's admiration, Captain Stafford came to self-control with a snap. He issued curt orders to his men. Shortly the lines were cast off and the two cutters in convoy disappeared around the lower end of Spriden Island.

Bill watched them go.

"Well, well," he remarked. "That's the worst of these here sporting events: they're liable to make bad feeling."

He dove for the cabin and started his engines. Marshall sidled along outside the deck house to the pilot house, where he found Bill already at the wheel. They were headed for the north end of Spriden Island. For some time nothing was said. Bill seemed to have reverted to his early taciturnity. They passed the north point, but instead of bearing then to eastward, continued on their course.

"Where are we headed?" asked Marshall, at last.

"I'm taking you back to the *Kittiwake*."

"How about your 'important business' with these empty boxes—for the Billingham canneries?" demanded the young man, ironically.

"I reckon I'm too late for that appointment now, anyway," said Bill, vaguely.

Another silence fell, broken only by the beautifully rhythmical purr of the powerful engines.

"Look here," Marshall broke out at last, "are you going to come through, or aren't you?"

Bill hooked an arm over his wheel and half turned.

"I reckon you've got something coming to you," he acknowledged, "but remember the accused ain't noways obliged to incriminate himself."

"Was anything ever the matter with those engines?"

"Those engines?" repeated Bill, with honest indignation. "Why, those engines work as sweet and true as a couple of watches. Why, say, I'll bet they'd damn near run on *sea water*!"

"Then what was all that monkey business last night?"

"I had to let Parsons catch up, didn't I?—if we was to cruise down sociable-like together," Bill grinned.

Marshall brushed this aside impatiently. "Why didn't you just stop and wait for him? Why didn't he join you before you started? Why——"

"You got some great speechmakers in your country," Bill interrupted, with irrelevance and with considerable unexpectedness. "I remember reading one once that tickled me pink. I looked up the words, and they're bears! He said it was 'to add veri-similitude to an otherwise bald and unconvincing narrative.'"

"Of all the dam-fool—I don't understand——" broke out Marshall.

"I'm sorry," said Bill, turning back to the wheel, "but that's just it: you maybe ain't supposed to understand."

CHAPTER III

THE ADVENTURE OF THE TRANSMOGRIFIED HARPY

After the Adventure of the Undesirable Gray Boat, Bill steered his craft directly back to Montague Harbour, which was entered about sunset. This in these Northern latitudes implies a somewhat later hour than the word connotes in our habit; and a sketchy evening meal had long since been prepared by Bill on his "Shipmate" stove, and devoured by the two men in succession, each relieving the other at the wheel. The *Kittiwake* lay at anchor where they had left her twenty-four hours previous, her cable suspended straight down, her every line clearly reflected in the still water. Bill rounded to about fifty yards from her; his reverse ground for a moment; he stepped through the pilot-house window-door to drop his anchor overboard with a splash and a quick rattle of chains. By a single effort of his powerful frame he slung the light dinghy from the deck into the water. Then, without a glance or a word to Marshall, he jumped in and sculled himself toward the *Kittiwake*.

Marshall, who had arisen in anticipation of being ferried across, shrugged his shoulders, laid down his little parcel of belongings, lighted a cigarette, and sat down. It was a sweet evening, with a tender pink and green sky and dark reflections; and the screaming wildfowl had fallen silent, so only land birds sang.

On the *Kittiwake* no life moved. Bill climbed aboard. The ports and windows suddenly glowed with electricity. Bill disappeared below.

He was gone barely five minutes. At the end of that time he reappeared, dropped into his dinghy, and sculled back to his own craft.

"Hop in," he urged Marshall, which was the last coherent word from Bill. His reply to the young man's politely voiced good-night was a grunt. Bill was no longer human.

"Step down, please," the voice of X. Anaxagoras came up to Marshall, hesitating at the companionway.

The young man obeyed, to find himself once more in the presence of the white-clad professional aspect of his host. X. Anaxagoras sat behind his table; his fever-chart affair was in front of him, as were his pads and pencils; he had mounted the irritatingly sophisticated pince-nez in place of his friendly horn glasses.

"Please be seated," he invited, briskly, without greeting. "We have, I trust, to record a gratifying improvement."

"There may be improvement," Marshall acceded, courteously. "If so, I find myself unable to remark it."

"Nevertheless, I am informed that in a certain recent contingency the pathological condition of soul which we are combating has been at least momentarily relieved."

"It may be so," agreed Marshall. "I naturally would be rejoiced to find you correct. The impulsive action to which you refer does not, however, impress me as more than a reaction to old habit of thought under the stimulus of unusual and dramatic circumstance. I do not, on after reflection, find that I possess the faintest interest in whether Bill is or is not captured by the revenue officers. My momentary partisanship was no more a symptom of psychic health or improvement than a muscular contraction induced by galvanism is a symptom of physical health. What you interpret as interest is thus in no way fundamental, but is what one might call an external simulation."

"I thank you for your very interesting analysis," rejoined X. Anaxagoras, who had listened attentively. He made a number of careful marks on his chart, the nature of which were not evident to Marshall. "I would call your attention to one thing, however," he continued, after this task was finished. "An external simulation is an exceedingly valuable therapeutic agent. The mere physical arranging of the muscles of the face into laughing lines makes the tiniest sort of a dent on the *nouma*—or soul, or central ego, or what you please—and this in turn conveys that impression to the mind. In time, this circle of cause and effect will end by producing a laughing condition of mind. Do not despise the value of

external simulation."

"I shall not do so," assented Marshall, "though I confess that for the moment your precise meaning escapes me. This may be due to natural ineptitude, or perhaps to the stupidity of fatigue which has resulted from broken rest."

"The latter, I am assured," said Anaxagoras, "as my proposition is at once clear and self-evident. Let us, however, repair the condition by a good night's sleep."

Marshall's last thought before dropping asleep was the slightly exasperated realization that he had not yet seen what that girl was like; his first impression in the morning was the metallic clank of a starting bar turning over the heavy flywheel of the engine. He jumped up hastily and began to dress, but before he had completed his toilet the rasp of the anchor chain was succeeded by the soft thump as the hook was stowed; and a glance out the porthole showed that the *Kittiwake* was under way. A moment later X. Anaxagoras came cheerfully through the engine-room door.

"Ungodly hour to be up and off," he greeted Marshall, "but there's a place north, called Dodd's Narrows, where the whole Pacific Ocean tries to crowd through a hole a hundred feet across. Got to go through ourselves on slack water, or mighty near it."

"I have no idea what time it is," said Marshall.

"Four-thirty. Now, while you finish dressing I'll rustle a little grub. My sister usually takes over that job, but I didn't want to turn you out so early. So she took the wheel and I've turned cook."

"She's a good navigator, then?" ventured Marshall, glancing out of the window at the shore of the narrow and tortuous channel.

"She can handle her pretty well," Anaxagoras informed him, rattling the stove covers.

Nothing more was said until the table had been laid.

"I'll relieve her at the wheel, if you like," then suggested Marshall. "It looks like plain sailing up the channel now."

"Thanks, no. Sit in and eat. I may call on you later." He drew up his own stool without further ceremony. "Devil of a time getting her to pop this morning," he remarked. Marshall gathered that this meant his engine and not his sister. "The clutch is bad. I must do a repair job the first chance I get. Until I poured some coal oil on her I found I was turning against the whole screw."

He chatted on cheerfully, while Marshall ate in silence. When he had finished he dumped his dishes into the dishpan and arose.

"Come into the pilot house when you are through," he said, and disappeared.

Marshall finished his breakfast slowly. He told himself that there was no reason he should not take his time; and he kept one eye cocked at the engine-room door. Finally, with a flash of vexation at himself, he gulped down the last of his coffee and made his way to the pilot house. He had barely emerged into that cubbyhole when he heard the stateroom door open and shut, and the sound of the third member of the party making her way aft.

"Had breakfast already?" shouted Anaxagoras.

"Not yet," she answered. "Been doing up my quarters."

It was the first time Marshall had heard the sound of her voice. For the flash of an instant he could not but like what he heard. It was a contralto voice, but with an upward lilt in its intonations. Then, mentally, he characterized it as "gruff," and conceived that it went inseparably with heavy, black, bushy eyebrows. What he did with the skimpy white eyebrows of his former conception, it is impossible to say. Now they were bushy and black, and the face that went with them was square-cut and severe—regular masculine type. Bobbed hair on that sort of thing was the limit! Lots of these middle-

aged harpies had pretty ankles and nice hands. Many a man had been woefully fooled by the modern fashions until he had overtaken the object of his admiration and looked back into the face of a grandmother. Comic papers do much of it. Harpy: that was it. Why had he thought of her as a young girl, anyway? Older sister, undoubtedly; and X. Anaxagoras was no spring chicken. So spake his cherished indifference; and something small and weak and cowed within him popped out its head and dared to say, "Lie; and you know it!"

He flushed angrily at this impertinence. Where did this something small come from, and what was it? He had not been aware of its existence before. It gave him an uneasy sort of feeling as of an alien intrusion, an invasion. The word brought him up short. Invasion? That was how he had described his experience of the first night. Was this thing akin—or the same?

He made a brusque movement as though shaking something intangible from his soul. There was one thing about it, he wasn't going to be fooled with any more. It was as plain as the nose on your face that she was deliberately avoiding him. This might be banal tactics to arouse interest; it might be that even a middle-aged harpy of a masculine cast—especially as to eyebrows—had some remnant of vanity and preferred to leave with him an illusion as long as possible—— What rot he was thinking! But he'd break through the exasperating web of incident, at any rate. An excuse—any excuse—cigarettes—would do for a visit to the after cabin. He made a half movement.

"Would you mind taking her a minute?" requested the Healer of Souls just at this moment. "Go right up the channel to the end of this island, and then take the passage to the left. I'll be back by the time you get through there. I want to look at the clutch."

He delivered the wheel into Marshall's reluctant hands and disappeared. The young man steered glumly, one ear turned toward the engine room, one eye cast at the ship's clock over his head. The latter ticked steadily on. The former heard faintly the metallic sounds of tinkering, and more faintly the stowage of crockery. After twenty minutes the "gruff" voice floated up to him from the engine room.

"How are you getting on, Sid?" it asked.

The reply was lost.

"I'm going forward to read a while," the voice went on. "Call me if you need me."

The stateroom door opened and closed. Marshall made in private a remark that, had it been overheard, would promptly have gone down on the Healer of Souls' symptomatic fever chart.

"Damn that clutch!" quoth Marshall, fervently.

He stared straight ahead and steered. The channel between the long, low islands was that through which they had come from Vancouver. Shortly he left to starboard the pass by which they had entered; and shortly after, following directions, he put the wheel over and rounded the head of the island. The morning had thinly overcast, and the distant mountains had shrouded their shoulders. An intermittent wind of considerable strength sent catspaws scurrying across the waters. These little gusts could have slight influence in raising anything resembling a sea, but they seemed to possess a surprising violence. With yachtsman's instinct Marshall cast his eyes about him for the barometer. The black hand stood at 29.6. The gold stationary hand was at 30.1. Marshall opened his eyes at this discrepancy. If the Healer of Souls set the instrument regularly, as a seafaring man should, this indicated a tremendous and portentous drop. On the other hand, the gold indicator might not have been touched for days—it did not matter.

The Healer of Souls reappeared, wiping his hands on a piece of waste. He glanced about him to determine his position.

"All right; I'll take her," he said, briefly.

Marshall surrendered the wheel, and, as he saw no particular reason for remaining in the pilot house, he made his way to the after deck. The prospect was wild and interesting: a succession of low wooded islands to starboard in an unbroken chain, and lofty inland mountains to port, whose snowy summits were alternately concealed and revealed by a

hurrying murk. The channel between varied in width but was nowhere more than a few miles wide. But now, even in this narrow confine, the sweep was sufficient to raise quite a respectable bob of a slop. There was a biting quality to the wind that soon drove the young man below.

He might have found amusement and education new to him in some of the books snugly tucked behind their rack shelves. A glance at the titles, however, stimulated in him only a faint wonder and a little flicker of half-contemptuous amusement. "The Creative Power in the Individual," "From the Unconscious to the Conscious," "Our Unseen Guest," "Suggestion and Autosuggestion" were the first that caught his eye. He went no further, but flung himself full length on the bunk and let his mind go blank.

Here he fell into a half doze from which he was aroused by the shrill and piercing note of the *Kittiwake's* air whistle. Toot; toot; toot-toot-toot, it spoke. Sounded like a signal. Marshall thrust his head above the hatch and looked about. No other vessel was abroad. The wooded shore line seemed to be unbroken except for a little rocky cove or indentation wherein a typical gasoline fishing boat lay. While his eye rested on this, however, a tiny figure appeared on its after deck and waved a white cloth. Probably Anaxagoras was signalling to a friend, he thought; but the incident was to recall itself to him later.

He surmised that they must by now be approaching Dodd's Narrows. At least, they were running full speed down what appeared to be an ever-widening cul-de-sac. A little curiously he tried to place where an opening must exist, but was unable to make it out. The hills seemed to be absolutely unbroken in contour. The pass proved finally to run at right angles through a fold in them, a rock-bound gut not much wider than a good-sized stream. The wind sucked through here with chilly violence, and again Marshall sought the seclusion of the cabin.

After that, nothing happened for some time, except that shortly the *Kittiwake* left her even keel and began to sway gently as though on a ground-swell. Then, suddenly, something hit forward with a shattering crash. Marshall sat up. The crash was succeeded after two seconds by a hasty pattering dash of waters overhead. Marshall relaxed, for by that douse of spray he knew that the impact had been delivered by a heavy sea and not by a rock. Nevertheless, he made his way, not without difficulty, through the engine room to the pilot house.

The *Kittiwake* had left the sheltered waters and was headed out across a wide open stretch beyond which showed distant faintly blue mountains. The wind was whistling from the northwest, and a heavy sea was running. Barely astern were the last of the small islands from whose shelter they had emerged. Whitecaps curled as far as the eye could reach. The water was of a milky light-green colour, lifeless and dull. It lifted in steep, high, sharp waves, that ran, not in the long, purposeful regular ranks of ocean combers, but with only a general direction of sweep. Smaller cross purposes developed and ran counter. Tossing smaller waves, holes in the water, peaks that rose and collapsed without onward movement, broke the forward regularity of the main system. The sea was not merely aroused: it was troubled and uncertain. It was not merely angry with the glorious anger of a storm: it was irritated and puzzled and sullen and flinging aimlessly about its heavy hands. From its lifted crests the gale snatched full handfuls of spray and flung them down wind.

This is the most difficult of all seas in which to handle a small craft. Each instant brings its fresh problem. One cannot, as with the dignity of an ordinary storm, take one's course quartering and more or less keep it, except for an occasional easing her into a big fellow. Here one is attacked from any quarter. X. Anaxagoras, a short pipe between his teeth, stood, feet well apart, his eye unwavering, gripping the wheel spokes firmly, watching each move of his antagonist. When he became aware of Marshall's presence, he talked in quick, jerky sentences.

"Nor'wester—blowing against the tide—raises hell, doesn't she?—fourteen-foot tide in this country. She'll get better when it turns. Darn good sea boat—feel how she rises to them—Lord!"

A wall of water, seemingly straight up and down, cut off all view of the horizon. Anaxagoras spun the wheel to port. The *Kittiwake* swung her head. There was a moment's hesitation, then slowly her bow lifted. It could not lift fast enough, however, and the nose of her disappeared in the upper third of the wall. There was a rush of water; for an instant the pilot-house windows were obscured; then the gallant little craft tossed herself into the free air above. A veritable cascade rushed aft and over either side as the solid sea returned to its element. An instant she hovered, then plunged downward.

"That was a peach," observed Anaxagoras. "She's a wonder in a sea—never touched her—engine never skipped."

"When did you set your barometer last?" Marshall inquired, suddenly.

"Last night. Quite a drop, eh?—always means a nor'-wester."

"How far is it across here?"

"Oh, about five hours. You're wondering why we're out—it's that clutch: she's frozen in. We've got to go on now until we're ready to fix her. We'll make it; it won't be as bad as this long."

As the yacht rose on the crest of an unusually lofty roller, Anaxagoras uttered an exclamation. Following the direction of his gaze, Marshall made out to leeward, and about a mile distant, a small gray fishing boat of the gasoline type. Her tall, slender salmon-fishing poles were, as usual when not in use, lashed upright against her stump of a mast. From one of them flapped a blue shirt, tied on flagwise. This much they saw, and then the *Kittiwake* dove into another trough.

"She doesn't look to me as if she were in command," observed the Healer of Souls.

The next rise gave them a longer view. It at once became evident that the fishing boat was not under power. She lay directly in the trough, wallowing painfully, and her tall fishing booms were describing wide and erratic arcs.

"That shirt is undoubtedly a signal of distress," said Anaxagoras.

He eyed the tumbling waters closely. The hard, quick spray was hammering away at the pilot-house window in rapid, insistent jets, almost without cessation. Through the streaming glass the great seas impended and crashed and raced astern distorted in image. Four times the *Kittiwake* rose and plunged. Then Anaxagoras spun the wheel rapidly to starboard. The bow swung. A smaller wave lifted her broad off and hulled her bow. For three waves she lay in the trough, rolling so violently that it seemed as though the very roots of the engine bed must be torn loose. Then, slowly, she paid away. The next comber caught her under the quarter. With all her power she tried to swing back. Anaxagoras opposed his strength at the wheel. It seemed to be touch and go whether or not she would broach to, as a badly handled boat swings sidewise in the surf. But the drive of the engines and the hard-held rudder swung her straight. Now she was flying down wind, alternately sucking back slowly into the trough and lifting forward on the rise, to be flung forward from the crest as a missile from a mighty hand.

Anaxagoras wiped his forehead.

"Pretty dusty!" he commented.

They bore down on the fishing boat very rapidly. A man became visible. The *Kittiwake's* air whistle shrieked encouragingly.

"We've got to get a line aboard," Anaxagoras told Marshall, rapidly. "You'll find an inch and a half cable on the after deck and a lighter line to throw. I'll go as close as I dare in this sea. If we crash together, we're both done for. See if you can get the line to him. Look out and don't go overboard, whatever you do."

Marshall made his way through the engine room and cabin. It was only by dint of clinging to anything he could get his hands on that he could keep his feet at all. Only when he emerged at last on the after deck did he realize the full force of the gale. Inside the protection of the pilot house, its reality had been vivid enough; but its intimacy had been more or less shut off, insulated, placed definitely in another though immediately contiguous world by the interposition of the thick glass. Here the flying spray and the pressure and snatch of the wind and the mingled howl and crash of air and water hit Marshall full force. For an instant he could only hang on and gasp.

But in a moment he began to get his bearings. He found the cable and laid it out, and attached a good throwing bight of the lighter line; he selected the firmest place in which to brace his feet and his knees in order to leave his hands free. The tiny deck rose and twisted and sank from beneath him so erratically and unexpectedly that at times it seemed it must

jump out from under him entirely. Having at last and with infinite precaution braced himself in readiness, he looked about him.

Anaxagoras had run the *Kittiwake* down past the fishing boat and some hundreds of yards to the right of her. Now he was evidently preparing to circle for the purpose of coming up close to her with his own head to the wind and sea. To do so, naturally, he must once more for a few moments take the trough. Coming into the wind is not so difficult as wearing to run before it, but it requires a nice eye and a quick hand. At the appropriate moment the *Kittiwake* swooped. Three terrific plunges, as many violent rolls that buried her scuppers, and once more, the sea water running over her sides in cascades, she was pounding head on into the big waves. In contrast to her wild free ride down the streaming gale, her speed seemed now almost doggedly slow. Nevertheless, she was pulling up steadily on the distressed craft, toward which her nose was now directly pointed.

Marshall braced himself. His turn was coming. He could see the fisherman also getting into as secure a position as possible to receive the cast.

The two craft approached. But now the danger became only too evident. Borne like chips on the mighty shoulder of the seas, like chips they could be tossed together—or apart—by the most insignificant of the many cross seas that broke the regularity of the surges' rhythm. A touch would be enough to send them both to the bottom; a very small separation would render impossible the casting aboard of the line. Between these extremes was a very slender gap. The problem, in its correlations, was as delicate and exact as confronts the flying trapeze performer in making one of his flying catches, only here the elements were uncertain and untamed. It could most successfully have been accomplished by slowing the engine down to that point which would only just have sufficed to push the yacht forward. Anaxagoras, however, kept on at full speed. So nicely did he time the manoeuvre that one instant the two boats poised on the crests of contiguous waves; the next they plunged into the same trough together. Marshall gasped. Only then did he come to an appreciation of the terrible velocity of these heavy bodies. It seemed that nothing could prevent their being hurled together. The drive of the *Kittiwake's* engines, however, thrust her just enough ahead. Her broadside passed within twenty feet of the fishing boat's stern.

Marshall recovered himself and cast. The light line fell across the cockpit of the fishing boat, but before its owner could seize it the combined effects of the sea and the speed at which the *Kittiwake* was travelling snatched it overboard. The fisherman raised an angry bellow which the shocked and prudish wind tore into shreds of "hell" and "slow up." Marshall drew in his line and made his painful way to the pilot house. Anaxagoras looked at him questioningly.

"I got her aboard," said Marshall, "but we were going too fast. You'll have to slow up."

Anaxagoras nodded.

"I was afraid of it. You see," he explained, "I don't dare slow up. The clutch is frozen in. If I closed down on the throttle, and in consequence the engine started to die, I'd be unable to relieve her by throwing out the clutch. And if the engine died out here, we'd be in for it ourselves."

"Couldn't you start her again?" queried Marshall, impatiently.

"Not with the clutch frozen in," Anaxagoras pointed out.

"Damn the clutch!" said Marshall, for the second time that day.

"You corroborate my already expressed sentiments," observed Anaxagoras, sweetly.

"Well, what now?" asked Marshall.

"Try again."

"You evidently believe in the repetition of miracles," rejoined the young man, shortly.

The second wearing away before the wind was also successful, though an unexpected breaking comber threatened

to engulf the *Kittiwake* broadside on, and ran angrily hissing beneath her counter cheated by a scant ten feet. For the second time they ran up under the lee of the fishing vessel. This occasion offered a plain choice. Either they must crash together, or pass at a good hundred feet. Anaxagoras naturally chose the latter. Again the fisherman offered the elements a few trifles of homebrew language to add to the ravings of the gale. Again Marshall sought the pilot house.

"It simply cannot be done," he stated, positively, "unless you can slow up."

"I can't slow up," said Anaxagoras.

A pause followed.

"Why not put in for assistance?" suggested Marshall. "He has plenty of sea room to drift, and, while he's uncomfortable, his boat is making good weather of it."

"Good idea, except for one thing."

"Yes?"

"Graham Bank."

"What's that?"

"It's a bank four miles long with a maximum depth of one fathom."

"Where is it?"

"About two miles—dead to leeward."

"Good Lord!" said Marshall.

No more was said for some moments, while the *Kittiwake* manoeuvred for another circle back.

"If he only had a dory," jerked out Anaxagoras, "—that'd be the simplest way—even if he swamped getting aboard us, he'd have his line across.—Well, he hasn't!—We won't have many more chances to try, or we'll go on the Bank ourselves——"

"Look here," said Marshall, suddenly. "Maybe I could get a line aboard him with our dinghy."

Anaxagoras flashed a side glance at him.

"Have you had any experience handling a small boat in this kind of a sea?" he asked.

"Mighty little, but I'm not unhandy. It will be worth trying."

"Well, it's quite a trick. It's not as easy as it looks."

"It doesn't look easy," disclaimed Marshall, with a short laugh. "But can you think of any other way?"

"Do you think you could handle the *Kittiwake*?" countered Anaxagoras. "Then *I* could try the dinghy."

"I don't know," confessed Marshall. "I'm afraid I've been a good deal of a fair-weather yachtsman, and on a larger craft. But there's no occasion to try. I'd simply risk the whole thing that way, and in the dinghy I would only risk myself. Besides, I could wear a life preserver, and if I get swamped, you can pick me up."

"Just like that!" said Anaxagoras, drily. "Still, it might be done. You'd have to get aboard him first. I wouldn't attempt to carry across a line if I were you. Then he could take our dinghy and bring a light line aboard me as I passed—if he could catch me, and didn't get swamped in the process. In that case it would be you who would be aboard the

fishing boat drifting on Graham Bank, for the dinghy won't carry two in a sea like this. And you'll have to get that dinghy in the water alone, and board it while we're going full speed ahead: don't forget that!"

"What else is there to do?" demanded Marshall, impatiently.

"Stand by and try to pick him up the other side of the Bank. He has life preservers too."

"What chance is there of that?"

"About one in twenty."

Marshall pondered and his face set.

"Well, I'm going to have a try. If things go wrong, you can circle as near me as you can. I'll leave a line trailing from our stern, and if I swamp I'll catch that if I can. If I get aboard his boat, and things still go wrong, I won't wait until she drifts down on the Banks; I'll go overboard when you are nearest and try to be picked up. I suppose you can leave the wheel long enough to haul me in?"

"I'll have to," said Anaxagoras, grimly.

"All right, that's settled," said Marshall.

"Look here," interposed the other. "Why do you do this? It's a bad risk; don't get away with the idea it isn't. This chap's in a mess, but we'll do our best to pick him up; and we have a fair chance of succeeding. He is only a fisherman suffering the hazards of his calling."

Marshall took off his pea jacket, and left the pilot house without reply.

As he passed through the engine room he heard a blast from the air whistle, probably an encouraging signal.

Once on deck he surveyed the first part of the task before him—the launching of the dinghy. She rested in chocks on deck, lashed down. Instead of the usual davits, she was to be slung overside by a boom which angled from the mast. The line from the boom hooked into a line fastened at bow and stern of the small boat. Thus she was suspended as one carries a shopping bag by its string, was slung overside by the sidewise movement of the boom, and was dropped into the water by lowering away on the tackle fastened at the end of the boom. This was all very simple in still water when not under way. But the difficulty in these circumstances was that nothing guaranteed that the dinghy would strike the water nose on, or that she would take the forward motion of the *Kittiwake* nose on. Her suspension was in the middle, not at the bow. And if she did not strike the water in the right position, or if she did not tow forward in the right position, she would infallibly fill and be torn away.

If someone could only be forward to hold the dinghy's painter and guide her in the way she should go while he lowered her!—Well, there wasn't!

He picked up the coil of light line and ventured on the turtle deck; and at once found that he would have the greatest difficulty in staying on at all. The jerk and swing of the seas exerted at that height above the water a centrifugal force that tried to throw him off into space like a green apple off a switch. In addition, the streaming sea water from the constant bucketing of the spray made the surface so slippery that his rubber-soled shoes could get no grip. He dropped the line in the dinghy and descended cautiously to the after deck, where he took them off. As an afterthought, he put on a life preserver; the picking-up process might begin sooner than he had anticipated. As he crawled back atop the deck, he saw that through the after window in the pilot house Anaxagoras was watching him and that he nodded approval.

Now for the elements of the problem. Marshall concluded that, though he could have no one forward to hold the painter, the painter had to go forward none the less. That was the first thing. So he went hand over hand to its fastening at the dinghy's bow and got hold of it. Fortunately, it was a long one. Taking it in his teeth he crawled forward; he needed both hands to stay aboard. Twice he had to cling with all there was in him, hanging apparently over an abyss, half strangled by the rush of water, until the *Kittiwake* had recovered from a plunge into an unusually large sea. Finally, he

managed to pass the painter around a stanchion of the forward deck rail. With the end of it he made his way aft again. So far, so good: by holding the painter in his left hand while he lowered away on the boom tackle with his right, he would have control of the direction the dinghy's bow would take when she touched the sea. As an afterthought it occurred to him that this would also prevent the boom from swinging the wrong way, to port, if the *Kittiwake* were to roll in that direction just as he lifted the weight of the dinghy from the deck.

But that must not occur. Marshall foresaw a fine possibility for a disastrous crash if it should happen just as he got the dinghy partly lowered. No: she must be raised and swung overside and lowered to the water smartly during a roll to starboard. It was evident he could not do that with one hand. He really needed about five: two to hang on by, one for the painter, and two to hoist and lower away. Otherwise, apparently, either him overboard, or the dinghy sidewise and swamped, or the little craft crushed like an eggshell in a wild swing against the more substantial structure. The job was gathering like a thundercloud of impossibility.

No use thinking of that. One thing at a time! He would have to make the painter fast with as nice an estimate of its proper length as he was capable of making. If he made a bad guess—— Never mind that: he made the guess. The hands to hang on by he would have to dispense with. In lieu thereof he got his knee against the mast and jammed one of his bare feet against a ventilator. Tentatively, he tried his strength on the tackle to see how easily it would handle. The dinghy stirred in her chocks without much effort.

All being ready, Marshall wiped his eyes clear of salt water and looked about him. The *Kittiwake* had forged ahead of the fishing boat some hundreds of yards. The occupant of the latter stood, one arm around his little mast, watching intently. Marshall reflected that he must be in no haste. The thing must be done right. He had plenty of time, for the rate of drift, even in this heavy wind and sea, must be slow. He looked anxiously to windward, trying to judge a propitious moment, to select a "smooth" between the worst of the seas, for the only attempt he knew would be permitted him. Ordinarily one could expect such momentary though comparative lulls even in such a gale; but in this head-on conflict between tide and wind all rules and precedents seemed to have been cast aside. To assist him as far as possible by minimizing the tendency to roll, Anaxagoras had put the *Kittiwake* head on. This, however, caused her to pitch even more wildly than ever; and her undiminishable speed thrust her bow into green water at every plunge. Marshall, surveying the situation for the last time, sank leaden into doubt. If all the other miracles should be accomplished, it was impossible that the painter, held rigidly, should be of the proper length at all stages of the procedure. If short enough to hold her parallel while going overside, it would not be long enough when she hit the water.

Perhaps she would not swamp immediately. Perhaps, if he were quick enough, he could slack it off in time. He seized the boom tackle halliard and stood ready.

A voice called out to him above the rush of the wind and waters:

"Let go your painter!" it shouted. "I'll hand it."

He turned his head.

The sister of X. Anaxagoras stood on the forward deck next the pilot house. She was bareheaded, and dressed in what had been an immaculate white skirt and sweater, but which now, soaked and soaked again by the floods of sea water that almost continually drenched it, had resolved to their original elements and clung. The figure they revealed was an exceedingly good one. She was balanced in such a manner as to leave both hands free for the job. One leg was thrown over the low rail and twisted back so that the toes hooked around the stanchion; the other was braced against the foot of the pilot house in opposition. Above this firm base the upper part of her body swayed easily back and forth from a supple waist in answer to the wild plunging of the yacht. She was looking straight at him, and her eyes were blazing.

Marshall's reaction was an instant surge of resentment. He saw in one lightning and comprehensive glance that the exhibit was not at all according to advertisement, not at all what he had been given every reason to expect. He felt fooled, cheated. Her hair was not red: it was something between brown and gold, and it curled naturally, as was abundantly attested by the failure of gallons of sea water to subdue it. She was not in the least freckled: on the contrary, her complexion was of a biscuit brown. Her eyebrows were not white: they were quite startlingly black in contrast to her hair, but they were decidedly not bushy and had no intention of becoming so. Nobody would have to look at her teeth

to determine the fact that she was not X. Anaxagoras's older sister, not by several years. In short, if she were indeed a harpy, then both painters and poets had heretofore been dead wrong.

All this passed through the young man's mind with the upsurge of his resentment. The latter was aggravated by the something impertinent within him that had been weak and cowed but had nevertheless dared call him a liar. Now it was capering around shouting, "I told you so!" and he had no time to attend to it. In fact, he had no time to attend to any of his inner processes after his usual methodical manner. Three of the four original Elements saw to that. Air and Water held mad carnival in and out of his self-preoccupations, and Earth, embodied in Graham's Bank, waited not far away. Fire alone was absent. Or was he? For a brief instant something strangely like him swept Marshall's unguarded being.

He had no time for ordered defense against the invasion. Invasion! That thought again!

But his self-respect hastily seized one sandbag of fact and threw it into the gap. Her hair *was* bobbed. Even though she were not redheaded and freckled, and had not white (nor bushy black) eyebrows and a masculine face and many years, she did have bobbed hair. Therefore, she must be silly, flapperish, brainless, conventional, would always say the obvious thing and never the unexpected. Within this temporary defense Marshall hoisted his flag until he should have time to rally his forces and redefine the word harpy.

All this took place fairly in the raising of his eyes in answer to her hail. With the same glance he saw X. Anaxagoras through the pilot-house window frantically trying to attract her attention. She gave him no heed, and he did not dare leave the wheel. Finally, he snatched at the whistlecord. She did not even turn her head.

"Ready when you are," she called to Marshall.

He seized the boom tackle and stood by for a propitious moment. But just as he thought it had come, and as he stretched his body upward in preparation for a heave, an unexpected and unseen cross sea smote them from the port side. The twist of the *Kittiwake* caught him unprepared. He was swung bodily off his feet and toward the starboard rail. The boom halliards, on which he had not quite taken his grip for the hoist, were torn from his hands. He plunged forward grasping wildly. Another rope fell across him. He clutched it, and was deftly heaved forward against the stanchion. He found himself at the girl's feet, the end of the dinghy's painter still in his hands. He struggled to his feet. (The top of her head came just to his chin.)

"Lord, but you are quick!" he cried.

But now they could not but pay attention to the persistent pounding of X. Anaxagoras on the pilot-house window behind them. He was making frantic pointing motions. They followed his indication, which was toward the fishing boat. She no longer wallowed, but faced the seas, lifting her dripping forefoot clear of the water at each rise, and plunging forward headfirst into the troughs. As she topped a comber, a series of vapourish jets could be seen shooting regularly from her side.

"She's got her engine going," said the girl.

"Thank Heaven, we don't have to launch the dinghy!" said he.

"Better make fast and go change your clothes," was her advice.

She untwined her leg from the rail and laid hands on the pilot house in preparation for going below.

"Do you know that you have saved my life?" said Marshall.

She paused to look over her shoulder.

"What of it?" said she, and disappeared.

Marshall made all fast, and returned to the after cabin, where he stripped off his garments, rubbed down, and re clothed himself. He did not need the rubdown to restore his circulation. That was doing quite well. Now that she was

back on her course the *Kittiwake*, in contrast to her late disordered plunging, seemed almost steady. Marshall had full leisure to look at the situation. He resented being fooled. He resented this repeated mysterious "invasion," which he could not define, which he could not even seize as a tangible thought, but which distinctly he could recognize in its essential repetition. He resented above all the fact that his incurable tendency toward stilted melodramatics in speech, augmented by his ridiculous association with this eccentric who called himself the Healer of Souls, had betrayed him into idiocy.

"Do you know that you have saved my life!" spoken with all the dark-eyed impressiveness he knew—and loathed—in his mirror.

But most of all he resented the fact that his temporary defense had not held. He catalogued six obvious and conventional replies to such a speech as he had made, to such a situation. She had made none of them.

"What of it?" she had said.

Now, what in blazes had she meant by that? There seemed to be a number of possible interpretations—quite a number. Had her black eyes laughed? He could not say.

CHAPTER IV

THE ADVENTURE OF THE THREE UNWARRANTED PRECONCEPTIONS

Although the wind in no way abated, but rather increased, the seas shortly began to fall somewhat, and to become regular. This, X. Anaxagoras explained, was because the turn of the tide permitted wind and current to work together instead of in opposition. Nevertheless, it still continued rough enough, and to windward the whitecaps raced madly in a smother of foam. The *Kittiwake* rose like a bird over the crests, and only an occasional smash and quick rain of spray followed the unavoidable meeting with a "curler."

Altogether, it was not bad rough-water cruising. The distant blue land defined itself slowly into low fir-clad hills and mountains along an indented coast, with high and glittering summits immediately behind.

Three hours brought them to detail of the coast—a rocky shore; three [Transcriber's note: trees?] growing close to high-water mark; small land-hugging islands close in like ducks; once a wide mouth like a great river reaching mysteriously in toward the heart of the land. The breaking seas dashed high and white along the shore.

Anaxagoras put his wheel over and headed in, apparently for the worst of the smother. Marshall, made accustomed by now to the unexpected, felt no uneasiness; but he was unable to distinguish either a break in the rocky shore or an indication in the hills of passage or cove. The huge boulders of which the beach was built offered a menacing and unbroken front; the outlying rocks swirled the waters savagely; the long kelp streamers swung and swayed and flung about. Straight into the white water the *Kittiwake* made a confident way, rounded a boulder that apparently sat squarely on the beach, and from white water and tumbling seas emerged into a still, creek-like stretch not much wider than she herself was long.

Up this she surged boldly, between two high cliffs. Marshall could have touched either side with a pikepole. Looking back he saw the ocean, white and tumbling. Here the water was undisturbed. Not even a swell ran in, though, why this should be so he could not have told.

The narrow creek ran for three hundred yards straight inland, then turned sharp to the left. The *Kittiwake* came out into a tiny round pond.

Anaxagoras throttled down (I can run the risk of killing her now, he said). He popped out on deck and dropped over

the anchor; popped back and shut off the engine. A great peace, that had courteously withdrawn during their entrance, on folded soft wings led back her lesser gentle sounds. The *Kittiwake*, rocking slightly from the last impetus of her arrival, lay slack-cable on a glassy surface which not a breath of air disturbed. The last of the tiny wavelets she had brought with her on her prow were hastening toward the shore, there to come to rest. Birds sang clearly and tranquilly from the quiet of a poised attentive forest. The soft rare splash of a rising fish widened into leisurely rings. Yet an upward glance showed the whipping of branches on the far hilltops. About the stillness, as something that surrounded and made precious without disturbing, was the rhythm of a faint, far-away roaring that was the gale in the trees and on the waters, and the beating of seas upon the coast.

"Well," came the cheerful, everyday, non-professional voice of the Healer of Souls. "Here we are; and snug enough. She'd mighty near lie here on the weight of her chain without any anchor at all. Strikes me a little grub would be in order." He thrust his head down the companionway with the same suggestion, and received a reply.

"Light up," he advised, seating himself on the bitts. "Long time no have smoked. That sun feels good, doesn't it? Have a drink? You got pretty cold and wet out there."

"No, thanks," refused Marshall. He produced a cigarette and sat down with his back to the pilot house. The sunshine soaked into him as though it were some sort of beneficent fluid and he an absorbent thing, capable of expanding with it like a sponge.

"This," remarked Anaxagoras, "is Kelley Cove. Very few people know about it. The entrance is blind, as you noticed, and looks bad even if you happen to see it. But there's eight fathoms of water in that entrance at low tide. Used to be the hang-out of a tough old customer they called Pirate Kelley. He used it as a hide-out. He was in the smuggling business mostly."

"Liquor?" inquired Marshall, perfunctorily.

"No; before prohibition. Chinks."

Marshall repeated the word, puzzled.

"Chinks—Chinamen," explained Anaxagoras. "They're excluded from your country, I believe, but not from this. Pirate Kelley used to land them across the Line at so much per head. He had to give it up, though."

"Caught?"

"No, he couldn't get any more customers. The Revenue Cutter overhauled him in the gulf one night. The officers had to report that Kelley was the only man aboard. But one of them told me that the peculiar Chinese smoke was still in the cabin. It was twenty miles offshore."

Marshall slowly took this in.

"The Chinks were a little shy of shipping with him after that—but they couldn't prove anything on him. You might say that the evidence was destroyed!"

They finished their smoke and put the dinghy overside. X. Anaxagoras explained that there would be no more wide stretches of open water from now on, and it would be easier to tow her rather than take the trouble and labour of hoisting her aboard every day. He made other normal and cheerful comments, not at all in the formal and stilted manner of his professional moments. Marshall examined him covertly. There was too much humour to please him in the bright and glancing eye of the Healer of Souls. Healer of Souls! Where did he obtain the warrant for such an assumption? Whence did he derive any especial knowledge and wisdom to arrogate such a title to himself? A healer of souls should possess a wide experience, a deep insight, occult perception, understanding of but aloofness from the daily concerns of ordinary mortals. Probably he should have long white whiskers. This young chap looked more like a rather keen sportsman enjoying life with a roving eye and a flair for any prank that might prove alluring.

Marshall's thoughts stood quite still at this point, and a slow flush of warmth arose within him. He was a young man, at the age when being taken seriously was more to be desired than ultimate salvation. To avoid appearing ridiculous was one of the chief ends of man. What if this whole affair were only a prank, the whim of an idle eccentric with a misguided sense of humour? What figure must his own situation take in the eyes of these others? The flush mounted to his forehead.

"Indifference," the professional voice of the Healer of Souls broke in at precisely this point, "is only passive rebellion. It fights by refusal. In essence it is rebellion. It encases itself in a shell, whereas the fighting type puts on armour. It is rebellion against going along with the scheme of things in one way or another. When this is fully comprehended, one can readily see that one type is capable of understanding the other."

"This may be true," observed Marshall, "but why do you tell it to me?"

"I was one who fought," said Anaxagoras. "But to go on: full understanding implies always complete sympathy. I do not mean maudlin sit-and-wail-with-you sympathy. I mean the sympathy that wants to do something. That is one requisite in a healer of souls.

"There are many others. I will name only one. That is imagination. Imagination, you know, is an actual and a constructive faculty; just as definite a faculty as hearing or sight or smell or a knowledge of carpentry. By its means one goes forth and brings back from the invisible universe all the spoils of possibility for leisurely examination by reason. If it is a good lively imagination, it will be able to fetch in all probabilities, and thus a certainty or belief may be constructed. It will also be able to perceive not only what things are not working together, in the general harmony of all things, but why."

"This also may be true," repeated Marshall, "but why do you tell it to me?"

"To answer your doubt in some small particular."

"What doubt?"

"That on which you were reflecting: as to why I should esteem myself capable of healing souls."

"But—but——" stammered the young man, taken aback.

"I know you expressed nothing, but the thought was in your mind. Believe me, even my sense of adventure would not lead me to the impertinence of offering an illusion to genuine distress. I believe that in many cases I can help; at least, I understand."

Marshall attempted no denial.

"Are you a mind reader?" he asked, bluntly.

X. Anaxagoras laughed.

"In the sense of reading your mind in sentences made of words, no. In the sense of being able through the two qualities I have named, and to which I lay a modest claim, yes. There was nothing mysterious or occult about it. It was rather an example of the use of that type of imagination to which I referred. I caught your slightly puzzled glance at me. It was a simple matter to await some indication of the annoyance to which your thought must inevitably lead you."

Having said this, the Healer of Souls made fast the painter of the dinghy, which he had been holding, and remarked in a matter-of-fact tone that grub must be ready.

Marshall followed him slowly, somewhat puzzled. The Healer of Souls, who had in the immensely practical detail of cruising contracted slowly to the dimensions of a young man of Marshall's own type and capacity, had in a stride

regained the heights of a somewhat mysterious ascendancy. This was both elusive and illusory, and not to be seized by definition—like the repeated sense of psychic invasion that had accompanied unexpectedly the most trivial occasions. And like that sense of invasion it carried an uncombatable reality.

But in the cabin his sense of vexation, of being bafflingly played with, returned full surge. There were two places laid at table. The girl was nowhere to be seen.

Marshall stopped short.

"I trust I am not discommoding your sister by my presence," he could not avoid saying stiffly, and instantly regretted it.

X. Anaxagoras looked up with an appearance of surprise.

"Oh, no, not at all," he replied, after a moment, but offered nothing further.

Marshall took his place at table rather sulkily. It was perfectly evident that the woman was avoiding him. Whether this was because of calculated coquetry or from genuine indifference did not, of course, matter to him in the least. Except that, naturally, indifference was his own private specialty. He hated to be thought a fool, that was all. At the moment he felt a good deal like one. He thought savagely that if this so-called Healer of Souls got out that confounded fever chart and hospital jacket and professional aspect and asininely solemn manner, he'd throw somebody overboard. He was in no mood to be trifled with! When did the creature eat, anyway?

But apparently X. Anaxagoras had no intention of holding the customary consultation. He arose and began to collect the dishes.

"Permeability to life is the thing," he remarked, but as though to himself, "and emotion is what breaks up the impermeable shell. Even the wrong kind of emotion is a start. I'll bet there are rock cod out near the entrance."

Marshall experienced a wave of the wrong kind of emotion—murderous—and went on deck.

There seemed to be nothing to do on deck, either. It was by now mid-afternoon. The girl had gone off in the dinghy. He could see it across the little pond, secured on the beach. Marshall would have liked to continue indifferently indignant—or indignantly indifferent—but the warm sun on top of a belated lunch and the chill and excitement of the morning made him unexpectedly drowsy. He fashioned a cushion of his sweater and stretched himself out on the forward deck, intending to think things over. Naturally, he fell asleep.

That his slumber was profound was attested by the fact that he knew nothing of what went on aboard the *Kittiwake* until a low, fresh voice asked him a question.

"I'm going cod fishing: don't you want to go?"

And since he was only half awake he replied with animation:

"I'd like to very much."

Then he realized that he had not intended in any manner either to forgive or encourage the creature after her deliberate avoidances and the altogether gratuitous remark she had made that morning. He considered the latter uncalled for and a most unattractive indication of character. But it was too late to back out.

He arose and went aft. She was standing waiting for him in the dinghy alongside. She had on now a brown tam-o'-shanter and a brown wide-necked sweater, and she was looking up at him with a frank expectation that seemed to be quite free from either guile or amusement.

"Hop in!" she invited, cheerfully.

He hopped in.

"I love to row." She declined his offer, so he sat in the stern sheets, a little self-conscious and awkward. Her eye met his calmly and impersonally, however; and she betook herself without remark to the oars. Certainly, she rowed well. Her body swayed easily at the waist, the blades dipped only just below the surface, were recovered at the end of the stroke with a final little snap of the wrists, and were returned in a half feather a few inches above the water, leaving in pairs small smooth-edged swirls. No splash, no whitewater, no rotary windmill spatter-duck grabbing. Marshall, who had rowed on a college crew, knew a good job when he saw it, and grudgingly acknowledged it: with a saving afterthought that he did not particularly admire athletic women. Except, of course, in matters of technique and physical outline. No one as fastidiously groomed as himself could fail to note—with appropriate indifference—the harmony and symmetry of the physical fitness that comes from complete and habitual physical command. That was his detached way of expressing it to himself. It really meant that he saw that healthy blood underlay the brown of her complexion, that her long, lithe body moved, rounded and supple, in the close-fitting brown clothes, that her hands and wrists were strong and flexible in spite of a quite feminine delicacy—yes, there was the queer silver ring with the Swastika—and that her legs were not bulgy, but ran in long, graceful lines from the already-noted neat ankles.

During the short row out of the little pond and into the narrow gut between the cliffs, she remained cheerfully silent. So Marshall obstinately proffered no conversation. The open sea beyond the points still showed white and tumbling. The breakers, however, ceased quite suddenly just outside the entrance, within which the oily dark water stirred restlessly. Here between the cliffs was no wind, but a humming as of a swarm of bees overhead, and the vagrant questing of stray little breezes, now in one direction, now in another.

The girl gave a last vigorous stroke and dropped the oars. From behind her she produced a strange contraption which she handed to Marshall.

"Here you are," she said. "I'll hold the boat in position."

The thing she gave him was a huge winding of what was almost a young clothes-line on a long piece of wood. To the end of this had been attached a five-foot piece of green cuttyhunk, which in turn was fastened to a piece of lead. The lead was, perhaps, five inches long and shaped roughly like a fish. On its nose revolved a nickled two-bladed propeller-screw arrangement, and set solidly in its tail at right angles to each other were two enormous hooks. She laughed at his evident amazement.

"Didn't you ever jig before?" she asked. "Well, follow directions. Lower it until you feel bottom, and then draw it up four or five feet."

"Where's the bait?" asked Marshall.

"There is no bait."

"Do you mean to say that any self-respecting fish will bite at *that* thing?"

"Cod will. I've often wondered if they were self-respecting. Possibly that's it. There are other indications that they are not. They look quite like some people who are not self-respecting, to my certain knowledge."

Marshall dropped the lead thing overboard and lowered away on the line until he felt the bottom. Then he drew in the required five feet.

"Now, stand up," advised the girl, "and raise and lower it a full arm's length, rather rapidly. That's jigging."

He obeyed orders. It was a foolish performance. Shortly, his right arm got tired, so he shifted to his left. He had no faith whatever.

"Hold it and I'll move a little," she instructed, after a few moments. With a half-dozen strokes of the oars the dinghy was shot over toward the other bank.

"Try again," she commanded, briefly.

Marshall obeyed, with an increasing sense of futility. He wondered how long he must keep this up before she would be satisfied and would permit him to cease.

"Good calisthenics, anyway," she answered his unspoken thought.

"Well, now I've caught the bottom!" said Marshall, resignedly.

"Pull steadily, without jerking. Perhaps it will come loose."

Marshall pulled steadily. The hook did not come loose, but he took in perhaps ten feet of line before it dawned on him that this must be a moveable bottom.

"I think I must have snagged a piece of waterlogged wood, or kelp or something," he proffered. "It seems to be coming up."

The girl chuckled.

Marshall continued to take in the baby clothes-line—yards and fathoms of it. He had not realized the water was so deep. The weight on the end gave way to his steady, slow pulling, arm over arm. And then he looked over the side of the boat straight into a countenance whose expression was wide and open and whose eyes stared into his own with an aloof and stolid scorn. The complexion of the countenance was rubicund, and there seemed to be attached to it an obese and inert body of a brilliant carnation hue. Paralyzed with astonishment he stared at this creature, and the creature stared back. Its expression was resentful but entirely acquiescent.

The girl chuckled again, made a desperate effort at control, finally dropped the oars, and gave way to laughter.

"Oh, oh!" she cried. "You don't know how funny you both look!"

Marshall started, choked; then he, too, overcome by the ridiculous surprise and the contagion of the girl's mirth, gave way to laughter.

"Sporting creature, isn't he!" he managed to gasp at last. "And what in the name of Heaven do I do next with the thing?"

She handed him a short gaff.

"No need to stick him with it. Just hook it under his gill covers and haul him in."

Marshall did so. The creature slid unprotesting over the rail and lay quite resigned in the bottom of the boat, where it continued steadily to regard them with a detached and sullen malevolence. Seen in its entirety it proved to be rather beautiful, of a clear uniform coral colour, with red fins and large plate scales. It lay quite inert, except that twice it flapped its tail as though in bored and perfunctory applause.

"Wind up the line," said the girl. "We're in luck. It's a red cod. They are usually in much deeper water. I thought we might get a rock cod or a ling, but this is real luck."

"Is that thing good to eat?" asked Marshall, dubiously.

"Delicious: the best of all."

She picked up the oars.

"We'll take him back and let Sid clean him."

"Can't I do it?"

"There's a trick about it. Isn't he a lamb?"

The cod lay between them, resentful but resigned, eyeing them sardonically. She laughed afresh, so joyously that Marshall laughed too. Something seemed to him to have been swept away between them, some forgotten constraint. She laughed as though she had some definite thought whose ridiculous effect she could not overcome. Marshall laughed at first through sheer contagion. But shortly that passed. She too controlled herself and began to row toward the *Kittiwake*. But every few moments, whenever her eye fell on their prize, she burst forth again into a delighted chuckle. Her eye danced toward Marshall.

"Look at him!" she cried at last, as though in answer to the young man's stare. "From fifty feet down in the cool green water to the planks of a boat; from starfish and sea kelp to humans! Can you imagine a greater or more sudden change?"

She hesitated, then chortled and added:

"And he's so colossally *indifferent!*"

The red cod on the table proved to be all that had been told of him. But he failed to distract Marshall from his resentful withdrawal. Twice in the same place was enough. He was very certain he did not like this girl. He was quite certain he did not like his situation aboard this craft. There was now no question in his mind that the girl did not take his case at all seriously; and while youth may tolerate almost anything else, it can never tolerate that. As for X. Anaxagoras, the alleged Healer of Souls, while he seemed to be a nice enough young fellow and very competent on a boat, his pretensions were ridiculous. What had he actually done, besides indulge in a lot of spectacular aping of professional methods? And it looked as if Marshall was in for it for some time to come.

Anaxagoras and his sister seemed to make no note of this glumness. They chatted across the table at each other. Marshall did not listen in. He heard enough to realize that the subject was one Sigmund Freud, whose theories these two seemed to find interesting, but whose carrying out and application of the said theories appeared to them ridiculous.

"He's like all specialists," pronounced Anaxagoras. "He lights on one bit out of a whole universe of truth and insists on referring everything in the universe to that one bit, instead of trying to fit it in where it belongs and see what proportion it bears to the rest."

"Specialists have to be that way," pointed out the girl. "Otherwise they couldn't get up enough minute interest in small bits to research 'em. That's their job. The fitting it where it belongs and reducing it back to its proper proportion is not the job of specialists, but of generalists."

"Like us," suggested Anaxagoras.

"Like us," she agreed.

They both laughed.

"If you will excuse me," said Marshall, stiffly, "I'll go on deck for a smoke."

He sought out his old place against the pilot house.

The sun had slipped below the bordering high hills of the tiny pond-harbour, so that a cool of evening was filling the basin as if poured in gently by a steady hand. On the eastern summits it still shone, but with a softened light as though something of its daytime brilliance had been withdrawn. On the fir tops it rested molten, a dull green-gold. Night shadows lurked far back among the trees along the shore. One could see them, deep within the forest between the tree trunks, waiting motionless. Innumerable hermit thrushes sang, their leisurely cathedral chiming building up note by note the hush of evening. The water was glassy. In it reflected in accurate detail the wooded hills. Through their phantom trees one could look deep into far vistas, the more alluring because of their actual inaccessibility. They possessed all the

mystery of that which they reflected, and a fascination added, perhaps, from the enchantment of the sea.

Only one locked tightly within himself, as was Marshall, could have been impervious to the soothing magic. Nor could even he remain locked for long. His eyes faithfully brought the impression to him, over and over again. Item by item, and hardly, little details gained their recognition; and as they slipped in by that opening they made, some little portion of his self-preoccupation slipped out. He ceased to think, either of himself or of anything else. He did not consciously notice or "appreciate." He simply absorbed; and something profoundly peaceful flowed through him softly with a faint, far-felt, long rhythm as of a tide.

By and by the sky gathered the last daylight from the earth to itself in pale transparent lucence a million miles deep. A single star appeared.

At this propitious moment the girl came forward and sat down beside him. He glanced at her a moment aside, but, somehow, as an active object of resentment she did not for that moment exist. The oncoming Night had drawn to herself all the importance there was in the world. In the presence of this, her soft and solemn ritual of appropriation, two merely human figures had been struck small and must keep their place.

The girl said nothing, but sat knee-clasped, staring out into the gathering twilight. One by one land details of tree and rock left the daytime posts they had held so steadily for so many hours and vanished silently about whatever business they might have in an insubstantial land of dreams. Only those on the skyline remained. The land shrank lower, giving place to the heavens, until it became only a dusky velvet band between the silver of the waters and the dark, clear blue of the sky. And then, leisurely, one by one, Night bejewelled herself with shining worlds; and in her mirror they reflected back one by one.

At what moment the Day definitely withdrew and the Night became supreme it would have been difficult to say. Yet such a moment did come: as though this new queen of the world had stepped back from a finished occupancy, leaving her realm once more to the pleasure of its creatures. The slow, solemn ritual was finished; now once more life could do its affairs. Whether this were indeed a fact, and a pause had intervened in animated activities; or whether, more simply, the spell of the transformation had blinded and deafened to ordinary impressions, it seemed to Marshall that a world that had stood motionless was again beginning to stir. An owl hooted; something far away crashed in the brush; a fish jumped; a little breeze came hurrying, as though belated, to lift the pennant.

The girl, too, stirred.

"Do you mind my saying that was a most awfully plucky thing?" She turned to Marshall. "You were taking long chances trying to get that dinghy overboard alone in that sea.

"It was nothing," replied Marshall, his stiffness returning.

"But it was. I know something about such things."

"Somebody had to do something."

"I know. But it *was* plucky; and I wanted you to know I know it."

"Thank you," said Marshall, drily.

She peered at him with curiosity.

"Why are you so dreadfully formidable?" she challenged, suddenly. "Is it your usual manner, or are you shy, or just don't you like us? We're going to be on the same boat together for some time, so let's find out how to get along with each other: it's the only way. If you don't like me, say so: I've no false pride. But then you don't know me, do you?"

"I had not realized that I was formidable," said Marshall.

"Well, you are. Right now. I'm not petitioning for your good graces, fair sir; but I aim to please, and all complaints

will be carefully considered by the management."

Marshall withdrew completely within his shell and pulled its trapdoor to behind him.

"I am sorry if I may have seemed in any way discourteous," he said, in his best manner, "but it has been unintentional, I assure you. Do you mind if I smoke?"

She nodded permission abstractedly.

"It is not his natural manner," she reasoned, aloud, but as though to herself, "for he was quite human when he was interested in cod. He is not shy, or he would not be rude. So it must be that he doesn't like me." She turned to Marshall. "Would you mind telling me why?"

"My dear young lady," said the young man with laboured patience, "there is no reason in the world why I should either like or dislike you. Our acquaintance has been very brief and limited. Your assumptions are quite baseless, I assure you."

"He is snubbing me," she remarked, dispassionately, to her invisible interlocutor, "and he is 'assuring' me again. He thinks I am brazen." She returned to Marshall. "I am not brazen: I'm just interested. It seems unnatural. Everybody likes me. I'm a likeable person. And I like everybody. Why should you come aboard to make any new records in that respect? What is it you don't like about me? The way I dress? I could change that."

Marshall disdained reply.

"My looks?"

Still silence.

She sighed. "I can't change them. It must be something I've done, then. But I've done so little! I threw you a rope, and helped you catch a red cod, and cooked the same; and that's every mortal thing!"

Apparently she mused over the problem. Her manner was quite impersonal and detached. At length, she gave it up with a sigh.

"Well, if you won't tell me!" she concluded, regretfully.

Marshall's manly dignity had come to a decision. He was being made ridiculous, and he did not propose to stand it. He was shrewd enough to see that her appalling downrightness was no part of a game of attraction, nor intended to arouse interest. And he had no intention of being made the ship's goat for the entertainment of any light-minded young person. He would imitate her astonishing frankness. Doing things and then pretending to be unaware of it, and getting away with it because everyone is too polite or proud or considerate to admit that he knows that she knows, is a favourite feminine weapon. He would take that weapon from her simply by saying boldly what she supposed he would not mention. Rash youth!

"Look here," he said, curtly. "You claim I dislike you, and that's all rubbish, of course. But will you inform me why I should be especially keen to continue to offer myself for your amusement?"

"I don't want to be amused: I just want to be human," she murmured. "But never mind that: go on. He's going to tell me!" she informed her invisible interlocutor. "What have I done?"

"You are quite well aware. In the first place, you avoid my mere presence in so marked a manner that it could not otherwise be taken than as a hint. In the second place, when under the hurry of considerable excitement I made, I must admit, rather an asinine speech about your saving my life, you inform me that whether it was saved or not was in your opinion a small matter. In the third place, you compare me to a red cod. I am not complaining, you understand, in any way, shape, or manner; though my cataloguing of these apparently trivial things might be so interpreted. I am stating the reasons, small but significant, why I cannot reasonably be expected further to offer myself for your amusement."

She listened to him with the deepest attention until he had quite finished.

"You have caught my brother's professional manner," she accused, "but without his clarity. I make neither head nor tail of what you say." She struck her hands sharply together as though a new idea had struck her, started to say something, then thought better of it. "Would you mind elucidating?" she asked with what he should have recognized as suspicious meekness. "I am not explaining, you understand," she said, with an excellent imitation of his manner, "but I should at least like to comprehend the 'small but significant reasons.' The first cause of—er—*not* complaint—is a plea of avoidance. It had not occurred to me, but the fact is that circumstances may look that way. To tell the truth, when we started I was rather tired, fed up on people, even fascinating young men. I wanted to soak up a little solitude, so I did. Then, too, you were rather busy, going on expeditions, and sleeping at odd times, and the like. But as I look back on it, it was not too courteous. Plea: absolutely not guilty in intention. Now," she concluded, "that was rather handsome of me, I think. But I don't understand your other counts at all."

Marshall's confidence was momentarily shaken, for her manner was such that he could not but believe her. However, the red-cod episode braced him. That at least was a direct enough thrust.

"The remark you made when I thanked you for throwing me the painter was certainly—to my view—uncalled for," he reminded her, stiffly.

"My remark?" she repeated.

Well, if she must have it!

"I called your attention to the fact that you had by so doing saved my life. You replied, 'What of it?'"

She puzzled over this a moment.

"I see. You thought I meant it didn't matter whether your life was saved or not. You will forgive me, won't you, if I find in that interpretation a slight egocentricity? My remark was intended as a mere disclaimer of merit, so to speak: as one would politely say, 'Not at all!' to an expression of obligation. You see I have been nicely brought up; but, alas, my education in expressing myself accurately when under the 'spell of considerable excitement' has been sketchy. That was the way you defined the condition at the time, was it not?" she asked, sweetly.

Marshall was uncomfortable. The thing was not going as anticipated. He was silent.

"Now about the cod," she reminded him. "That sounds interesting. How did I compare you to a cod?"

"It is unimportant," said Marshall.

"Oh, probably—but interesting. How did I do it? The only thing I said about him was that he was good to eat—oh, yes, and that he was colossally indifferent. Which was it?"

"My dear young lady," cried Marshall, exasperated, "you cannot mean to tell me that, with your professional knowledge of me, that remark was made without intention!"

"My *what*?" she exclaimed; then turned to her invisible other self in mock despair. "My knowledge of him! And I never even heard of him before! I must be very ignorant and he very famous! And I'm his dear young lady again!"

Then, abruptly, she dropped her mocking manner.

"Tell me," said she,—"you don't mind, I'm sure—are you by any chance a patient of my brother's?"

This was too much!

"Considering the fact that you yourself typed the absurd and regrettable agreement that made me so," he replied, with dry asperity, "I think that question uncalled for!"

"I—tell me, what makes you think that?"

"Simply that I saw you."

"Where?"

"In your brother's office: where else?"

"You *saw* me there?" she repeated. "Are you sure of that? Did you see me plainly?"

"Of course I did—you were within three feet of me—how absurd!" He was becoming really angry.

"You are *sure* you saw me plainly?"

"As sure as I'm sitting here. What's the object of keeping up this farce?"

She made no reply to this. He enjoyed his triumph. Now that at last he had the upper hand which was his right, the rigour of his displeasure abated to a trace of magnanimity. He reached out to touch lightly the silver ring.

"If you intended an alibi, you should have remembered this," said he.

She sat up straight and clapped her hands together.

"I see! I see!" she cried. She turned to him all animation. "Answer me! You must! You shall! Did you see my face there in the office? Answer!"

Caught aback, Marshall recollected briefly. He remembered now that his eyes had been cast down and that he had stubbornly kept them so.

"It was unnecessary," he said. "That ring is unmistakable."

"So the ring is your only means of identification," she pressed him.

"Not at all; though it is certainly enough. Your feet and ankles are quite as characteristic."

"Thank Heaven hers are passable!" ejaculated she, fervently. "Now, listen, my dear young man. This absolutely unique ring is made by the score, but exclusively for the college sorority to which both my brother's secretary and myself belong. In fact, I got her the place *because* she belongs to my sorority. Her feet and ankles may be like mine, but you should not identify girls by their feet and ankles. Otherwise we are totally unlike."

She began to chuckle, then to laugh. At last Marshall had a little shamefacedly to join her.

"I am sorry," he said, after a moment, "but I seem to have made of myself rather more of an ass than usual."

"Now that was handsome of *you*!" she cried, "so we're quits. But I think you owe me an explanation about the cod. Is indifference your own copyrighted specialty?"

Marshall flushed in the darkness. Ordinarily, he would never have even considered discussing this aspect of himself with her, but his strict sense of reparation forced him.

"You had no idea, then, that I was a patient?" he first queried.

"None whatever! Sid is always taking somebody unexpected for a cruise; and he never explains anything or introduces anybody. I thought we'd find out about each other in due time. That's the usual procedure."

"I am under your brother's care for just that copyrighted specialty. Since the war something has gone dead in me, and I don't like it—but I cannot care. That sounds silly to you, I dare say, but it is only too true."

"It does not sound silly; and I am sorry," she said, gently. "I did not mean to intrude on you. We will not talk about it unless you wish to do so. I am glad you came to my brother; he is wonderful."

"Thank you," said Marshall. "I am sorry I have been an ass."

She began to chuckle again.

"So have I been," she gurgled. "You're not the only one. When I learned that you were a patient I made sure he was trying to cure a deranged mind!"

They laughed together once more. She thrust forth a friendly paw.

"So now we'll start over again," said she, "and we can catch another cod without danger of international complications."

"You have been very patient, and I am afraid I have seemed very rude," said Marshall, contritely, as he shook hands on this.

"I've long made it a rule never in any circumstances actually to quarrel with any one fifty miles from a railroad," said she. "Within that limit I'll fight with you any time you say." She arose lightly. "The chill is coming down from the high country," she observed.

He arose to accompany her aft, but stopped.

"I say," he hesitated, "it seems ridiculous to call you that. It doesn't sound real, somehow."

"What?"

"Miss Anaxagoras."

Once more her rich laughter rang out.

"Good heavens! I never thought of that!"

"Well, what?" he persisted.

She considered.

"I can give you the choice of two," she decided at last, "—Beatrice or Betsy. They are both supposed to fit me."

Marshall recovered instantly from a slight impact over the unconventionality of this free offering of the given name.

"He thinks I'm brazen," she addressed herself, "—but he doesn't like Miss Anaxagoras."

"No!" he disclaimed, with some fervour. "But won't your brother think it a little hasty?"

"My brother thinks nothing hasty, because in everything he understands," she said, with a return to the sober fervour of her previous reference to the Healer of Souls. "He understands; he is wonderful." A slight pause ensued after this statement. "Well," she challenged, lightly, "and which is it to be?"

"Betsy," he chose, boldly.

"I like that better myself. And do I call you Cod for short? I have as yet no faintest inkling of anything more appropriate."

"My name is Roger," he told her.

"Very well, I shall call you Jerry, then," said she, promptly. "So that's settled."

Again she thrust forth her paw in confirmation.

CHAPTER V

THE ADVENTURE OF THE SESQUIPEDALIAN FISH

North of Vancouver, and for some thousands of miles, the Mountains and the Sea made a mistake in their relations. Perhaps the Mountains attempted an unwarranted height above sea level. At any rate, instead of defining a reasonably straight littoral decorously outside of a plain spread at the feet of the ranges, as is customary, the Sea has refused to recede, and so runs inland a thousand feet or so higher than it should, thus redressing the balance and allowing the Mountains only their usual and expected altitude. As a consequence, what should have been the littoral plain is a sea floor; the foothills are submerged banks; the dozens of outlying lesser ranges that so literally outflank Western sierras are greater islands, their spurs are little islands; the innumerable valleys between them are waterways; and into the heart of the majestic snow-clad glacier-adorned main ranges the greater cañons run for a hundred miles and upward floored with as many fathoms of salt water. One simply substitutes a boat for a horse, and seeks the same passes—or channels—by which to cross the ranges. The whole coast is indented and cut and penetrated on a fringe a hundred miles wide, and the chart of it resembles nothing so much as the "lace paper" our grandmothers used to put on their pantry shelves.

Now, through all this region the tide rises and falls twice a day on a range of from twelve to twenty feet. No cove so small, no inlet so remote but, by the laws of physics, claims its due share of attention from this bi-daily phenomenon. In consequence, an enormous quantity of water must change place. In some localities, the supply for a whole widespread and complicated labyrinth must come through a single narrow opening. Naturally a twenty-foot raise of level means a rush as through the spigot of a bathtub; which must continue long after high tide by the shore, simply because the bathtub takes time to fill. Likewise, a twenty-foot lowering of level means a terrific suction as the bathtub is emptied. And though water is by nature calm and peaceful, it is easily thrown into violent excitement by untoward circumstance; so that at these narrow places are great whirlpools that suck down whole trees; and upswelling boils acres in extent and ten or twelve feet above the level; and suddenly forming ominous green caverns into which white waters fall with a roar; and graceful gliding mist wraiths like spirits; and swarms of gulls and terns swooping to the hake and herring tossed up by the turmoil, or riding with exultant shrieks on logs tossing and turning and twisting down the stream. These places are called in Chinook *skookum chuck*, which means "strong waters." Those who would navigate them must hurry through at one of the four brief periods of slack water.

One of the most *skookum* of these many passes runs between Stuart and Gillard and the Dent Islands on one side and Sonora Island on the other. It is more than four miles long, and about halfway down its length it adds the gratuitous complication of a right-angled turn. Its voice is hoarse and loud and can be heard many miles. It is an exultant rapids, and tosses white arms. At its glory it is a fine thing to watch—from the shore! The Indians named it the Yucletaws. The blue-bound Coast-pilot^[1] washes its hands of all responsibility therefor. In fact, it advises people to leave it severely alone, though it grudgingly admits that some tugboats use it. The Coast-pilot hates to acknowledge the existence of anything smaller than a two-hundred-foot vessel, and bases its advice on a dignified deep-sea point of view.

[1] Coast-pilot: a document descriptive of a coast, for the use of navigators.—Standard Dictionary. [Ed]

Nevertheless, the Yucletaws are much frequented. Millions of herring and hake use it, perhaps unavoidably, on their way to spawning grounds; and the salmon in thousands follow the herring and hake. Huge cod lie in wait on reefs and along the shore. Clouds of gulls and terns and dozens of eagles hover and circle and stoop and scream during the run of

the tide, for the herring and hake have no slack-water tables to consult and are often whirled up helpless to the surface. Seals follow the salmon. The run of the tide is the busy time for all these creatures. Near and during the slack they retire from active business: the gulls to sit in conversational rows on the rock islets; the eagles to perch in heraldic device on high dead limbs, and the salmon and cod and seals to withdraw into mysterious green depths of contemplation. As for the harassed herring and hake, no longer forced by the swift water, they undoubtedly proceed with thankfulness.

But in the brief respite of the slack, from bays and coves where they have patiently bided, now venture other creatures. Tugboats with long tails of logs crawl painfully like men in nightmares putting forth desperate efforts to accomplish a snail's pace in danger; small gas boats dart hastily and rather furtively before the briefly sleeping monster shall awaken again; perhaps long troops of whales, single file, who have been cannily waiting for slack like any other sea-going craft, roll through majestically, throwing their jets aloft, showing their black flukes, noisily and ponderously scornful in the deliberate might of their power whether the monster be disturbed or not. And now, in this few minutes of repose, is the moment for the little placid breezes and the tiny light-topped wavelets to venture forth for their short play.

The Dent Islands and Gillard are uninhabited; but although from midchannel Stuart Island seems to present an unbroken shore, a closer examination discloses a series of slight indentations—they could hardly be called bays. They are shallow, but they are sufficient. The utmost of the tidal race sends into them only minor swirls and back eddies and most of the time they lie in calm water. Each of a half dozen or so of these shallow depressions has been appropriated by a family; the narrow steep shore cleared for a few hundred feet back; fruit trees planted; white chickens installed; flowers and clover cultivated; a kitchen garden laid out; thus clutching what looks like a precarious handhold between the crowding wilderness and the raging waters. Here, the year round, dwell people: neighbours, but cut off from one another except on favourable occasion. For trails there are none, and the waterways are not always open.

They live there not for the sake of the strip of fertile soil, which is narrow and remote from market; nor for the sake of the view, though the high steep mountains on either side the channel catch and hold between themselves a peculiarly tender blue atmosphere, and glittering Estero Peak stands at the turn; but, like the gulls and the eagles and the seals and the salmon and the cod, primarily because the herring get into trouble. They do not want the herring, except for bait; but they do want the salmon. And since a third of the way down Stuart Island a short point thrusts itself out, it is possible, behind its shelter, to fish from rowboats whatever the tide.

Around this point, near slack water, the *Kittiwake* made her way two days after the Adventure of the Three Unwarranted Preconceptions. The dying whirls thrust her, and the water surged up white, first on one bow then on the other, as she swung. Straight down the channel she held until opposite one of the shallow indentations, then turned square in. A float, held from shore by boomsticks chained together, occupied the tiny bay. Toward this the Healer of Souls turned his prow. A moment later Marshall, poised on the rub-strake near the bow with the end of the line in his hand, managed to leap to the float. The uneasy and erratic currents made landing none too easy. He made fast and ran aft to where Betsy was waiting to cast him the stern line. Only after a few busy moments did he have a chance to look about him.

The float was about ten feet by twenty. On one end of it stood a rack over which were festooned gracefully the folds of a red-brown net. Near the other was an opening that exposed an underwater live-fish box made of slats. A small gasoline work boat was moored inside the booms. On the slender pole that led to shore a man in rubber boots was slowly but surefootedly approaching. Behind him at regular intervals marched four cats, all exactly alike, each with his tail held rigidly perpendicular. The man was heavy-set, middle-aged, dark-haired, wore a black moustache, and looked both genial and competent. To Marshall's greeting he nodded an acknowledgment, but crossed immediately to the *Kittiwake*.

"How are you, Miss Betsy?" said he. "Where's Sid?"

"Turning off his engine: here he comes."

The two men greeted each other with a heartiness that bespoke long and valued acquaintance, then promptly sat down side by side on the *Kittiwake's* rail, their feet hanging overside. Both produced pipes. The four cats seated themselves equidistant in a row on the float, curled their tails around their legs, and stared. Marshall stared back with distaste. He hated cats.

"Come here, Marshall," called X. Anaxagoras. "This is Mr. Marshall, Tom, who is cruising with us. He's got to hook on to a spring."

"How are you?" greeted Tom, thrusting forth a horny hand. "There's a few springs about. I'm glad you fellows came in. I am due to-morrow, and I'm shy of fish. I've got to fish like a seal to-day to make up my load. You're going to help, too, Miss Betsy?"

"Surely, if you have a boat for me. How is Mrs. Carlin?"

"She's flourishing. You must go up and see her. I'll rig you out with boats."

"Tom," explained Anaxagoras, "is the bloated plutocrat around here. All the others have to depend on fish buyers coming in, and they are notoriously uncertain."

"You *know* it!" corroborated Tom, fervently.

"But Tom fishes on contract. He supplies a big lumber camp over near Nodales Channel. How much a week do you deliver, Tom?"

"Eight hundred to a thousand pounds," replied Tom. "On Thursdays. I've been doing it for fifteen years now, and I've never fallen down on them yet. Sometimes it's been a close call, though. You see," he told Marshall, "it's fresh fish, and they've got to *be* fresh. Some of these fellows will saw off anything that'll hold together; but I take them only fish caught on Wednesday and Thursday."

"I see," said Marshall, politely. He had no interest in the details of this man's business and sought an excuse to leave the two together.

"And you're a little shy for to-morrow, eh?" suggested Anaxagoras.

"You *know* it!" agreed Tom.

"What's the matter with the cod? Cod," he explained again to Marshall, "I call Tom's insurance. Salmon are killed when they are caught, but cod will live in a live-box for weeks. So Tom usually keeps a lot of them on hand to make out his load in cases of scarcity of salmon."

"Well, my insurance policy has run out; that's all," said Tom. "I haven't got but four little lings to my name."

"What's the matter with the savings bank?" Once more Anaxagoras turned to Marshall. "Right out there"—he waved his hand toward the centre of the channel—"there's a reef with cod that can be fished at slack. Tom saves that for emergencies, and all his neighbours leave it to him on that account."

"I haven't been able to get bait lately," said Tom. "The herring haven't been driving until late at night. So I've got no cod."

"That being the case, we'll have to get mighty busy and help you out."

"You *know* it," said Tom. "Got to put in full time to-day!"

He heaved himself to the float.

"I'll leave you to get your grub," said he. "Come up and see us. There's no fruit yet, but I've got some lettuce."

He walked back to shore along the floating boomstick, followed by the four cats.

"Now, there's a man," said Anaxagoras, "whom I thoroughly respect. He started in sixteen years ago flat broke. His sole assets were a skiff and a washtub. He would row out to a reef, catch two cod, put them in the washtub full of water, and row back home again. He'd transfer the two cod into a live-box, and row back again. In this way, by keeping at it, he

made up his load. Then he'd start about two or three in the morning and row all the way to the Camp to deliver. Slow and painful; but after a while he made enough to buy his gas boat. Then he was all right, for the whole amidships part of these fishing boats is a live-box. He has worked up from that. He is rarely caught shy of fish, like to-day."

"One or two good hauls ought to make it, I suppose," surmised Marshall, glancing at the net.

"Hauls? Oh, I see. These fish aren't taken in nets. The water is too fast and swirly. They must be caught with hook and line. And from rowboats. Fishing with hook and line in many places is done from a gas boat; but here there's no room for that."

From Tom's statement Marshall thought that the fishing expedition must immediately start; indeed, he wondered a little that the fisherman was not already out doing the full time he had said was necessary to get his load. But nothing happened. Betsy was forward in her cabin; the Healer of Souls had retired to a pipe and a book; Tom was not yet returned. The sun lay lazy and somnolent across the float; a few flies buzzed; outside the back eddy the tide slipped by in smooth and gathering strength; beneath the green whorls of the eddy beautiful long streamers of kelp waved gracefully; and below them hung motionless and dim a half-dozen rock cod. Marshall's tensivity of readiness relaxed, but a slight impatience remained over such a footless waste of what had been represented as precious time.

The afternoon wore on, and the sun dipped toward the high ridges across the channel. Outside the eddy the tide was racing by, hoarse and exultant. Clouds of white gulls and terns crowded every bit of driftwood that swirled past. Apparently, they were just out for the ride, for, once their tossing and precarious craft had shot through into the slower water, they arose all together and flew screaming excitedly to the bend at Gillard Island, thence to race back. At the float the *Kittiwake* tugged and shrugged uneasily in the lesser surges of the back eddy, and the small boats inside the booms swung back and forth. Still no signs of human activity. Marshall glanced at his watch. Already five o'clock!

He heard the rattle of the galley stove in preparation of supper. At length X. Anaxagoras appeared, yawning slightly.

"Better get the tackle ready, I suppose," he observed.

"I thought your friend was so keen to put in every possible moment," Marshall could not help remarking.

"He is."

"Then why isn't he out fishing?"

"Because he wouldn't catch anything. There's nothing doing until evening. You must remember it doesn't get dark until about eleven o'clock."

"When do we start, then?"

"Right after supper."

X. Anaxagoras opened a long narrow deck locker and began to sort fishing tackle.

By half-past six, though the sun was still high from its official setting time, it had disappeared from the channel, which had fallen into the cool of evening. Tom reappeared. He was now full of business.

"I'll take the dugout and let you folks have my skiff," said he. "The wife has her boat. You fix it between yourselves how you're to go. There's a few herrings in the live-box that are too small for cod."

"Since it's fish we're after, I'd better take the skiff alone," decided X. Anaxagoras. "Betsy, you take Mr. Marshall with you and show him how it is done."

"I suppose you've got to fish with those rods!" observed Tom, with an air of resignation.

X. Anaxagoras laughed.

"No, old timer; since this is a meat expedition, we'll forego the sport for this once."

Tom brightened.

"That's the stuff!" he cried. "Let's go! The wife'll be along as soon as she has finished with the dishes."

They embarked.

"I'll let you row until we get to the place," the girl told Marshall, "but then you must do the fishing."

Marshall attempted to demur. She laughed.

"It's not self-sacrifice on my part, I assure you," said she. "I consider the rowing less work."

"It certainly doesn't look to be what one would call sporting," agreed Marshall, eyeing the tackle.

This consisted of a winding of stout cuttyhunk line stained green, a huge lead sinker that weighed fully two pounds, a piano-wire leader, and a bright brass spoon or wabblor six inches in length. Accompanying this rig was a short gaff and a small billy like a policeman's club, but heavily weighted with lead.

"Looks as if we were going after whales," he observed, disparagingly.

To both his remarks she replied merely by an enigmatical smile.

Tom led the way out from the enclosure of the boomstick followed by X. Anaxagoras and Marshall in the order named. Marshall found his full strength and attention engaged by the drag and whirl of the current, though this was merely the back eddy, and not the direct tide. Especially did he have to buckle down to it in getting around miniature points, of which there were two. Finally, the boats shot into a little area of still water in the bight behind the longer point. The tide hurtled by, deflected outward by the projection; the strong eddy swept back and outward to rejoin it. As definitely within these two strong forces as if they had been solid shores, lay a smooth pond. It was not more than two hundred yards across, but in it the rowing was undisturbed.

On it floated a number of boats. Their single occupants were moving in apparent aimlessness back and forth and round and about. They barely crawled. So slow was their progress, and so gentle the dipping of the oars, that they seemed barely to drift along. Over a little pulley fixed in the stern of each ran the green cuttyhunk, which depended nearly straight down. A bight had been tied in a slipknot around each fisherman's leg.

"Surely they're not trolling!" doubted Marshall.

"Yes. Why not?" asked Betsy.

"Too slow: the spoon won't work."

"Not too slow for this. And it isn't a spoon, it's a wabblor."

The occupants were as various as their craft. There were half-a-dozen white men. Three had skiffs, one a lapstrake double-ender, and the other two well-shaped dugout canoes, like Tom's, fitted with oars. Two bareheaded white women pulled what looked like pleasure boats. Two Indians, one old and one young, handled dugouts. A fat squaw, dressed in four different primary colours, had come to sea with a baby, two small children, some chickens, and a dog.

On the appearance of the flotilla a chorus of greetings went up. Evidently X. Anaxagoras and his sister were well known and liked. On Marshall they cast the curiously aloof scrutiny the backwoodsman bestows on strangers.

"Change seats," commanded Betsy. Her colour had mounted and her eyes were sparkling. "Anything doing?" she cried to the assembly in general.

"Nothing yet," she was told.

"Then," she instructed Marshall, "we'll begin at thirty feet. That is a safe bet for a starter. Do you know how to thread the herring? Here, let me show you. Now let out the line. You'll find it marked with knots. The first is twenty feet out, and then they come every five feet. Let out to thirty."

"Isn't that very short?" objected Marshall.

"Perhaps. We'll have to experiment. But sometimes I've used as little as ten. These salmon are very peculiar that way. You won't get a nibble at one depth, and five feet down—or up—you'll strike them. Wouldn't you think they'd swim down or up that far for an attractive meal? Not they!"

"There can't be much sport with this rig," commented Marshall. "You can just haul them right in."

"Oh, yes; you just haul them right in," agreed Betsy, drily.

Marshall let out the thirty feet and settled back. The evening was very still. Inside the eddy the water was like glass. Back and forth, crossing and recrossing, the boats drifted slowly. Occasionally, two of the whites exchanged a brief remark in a low tone. The Indians said nothing. There seemed to be not even an atmosphere of expectation to disturb the peaceful somnolence. Imperceptibly the twilight was infusing the air. This became especially noticeable when one of the fishermen lighted his pipe: the flare of the match shone bright and yellow in the dusk. More boats arrived, shooting down the current or craftily edging along the eddies.

"Where do they all come from?" speculated Marshall.

"The people? A few live here. Most are camped along in various small coves. They are here for the fish."

"Doesn't look as if they would get any to-night," he observed, now that the spell of silence was broken.

At this moment a boy in a rattletrap dory of venerable history, who had been hovering close out to the run of the eddy, raised an incomprehensible cry.

"Hern!" he cried. "They're in!"

"Herring," Betsy translated, swiftly. "Yes, there they come; loads of them!"

But the glassy surface remained unbroken, as far as Marshall could see. He said so. But Betsy pointed out to him thousands of tiny bubbles rising from the depths, which she said came from the fish.

"Something's nibbling," announced Marshall, suddenly, "—very small."

"It's the herring hitting against your line," she told him.

At the same instant the quiet was broken by a clatter of oars. Everyone looked expectantly toward a man who had dropped his oars and snatched vigorously at the cuttyhunk hitched to his leg. He arose in his boat and began to haul his line in, hand over hand. For an instant the concourse watched him intently. Then, as though at a signal, a wild chorus went up from every white person present. Some yapped like toy terriers, some barked with deep *woofs*, some howled as a dog bays the moon. It sounded like a particularly vociferous bench show. The Indians were on a broad grin.

"He's caught a dogfish," chuckled Betsy. "Terrible disgrace!"

"How do they know that?" doubted Marshall.

"By the way it acts."

The unfortunate fisherman drew his prize half over the rail of his boat. The creature surveyed him with its derisive shark grin, lividly white in the twilight. The man hit it with his club, disgustedly disengaged it, and dropped it

overboard.

Something telegraphed Marshall gently along the line.

"I think one is biting at my hook," he said. "It doesn't seem to be much of a fish, anyway."

"Strike! Strike!" cried the girl, excitedly.

Marshall struck. Instantly his arm was jerked underwater and he was almost yanked out of the boat. He braced himself and hung on, and the boat began to move backward as though towed by an engine.

"Now you haul him right in," he heard the girl saying, with a chuckle; and in spite of the confusion of the moment, his mind had leisure to register a serious objection to girls who were too confounded competent.

He braced himself and took control, bringing the fish nearer and nearer to the top. It darted here and there with incredible speed, and three or four times all he could do was to hang on like grim death without gaining an inch. He had a confused impression of the other boats gathering more closely about, and resentment flashed in and out of his spirit: they might have the decency to leave him room. Then something swirled four or five feet from the boat, and he was drenched, blinded by a shower of water. Hastily he cleared his eyes. The line was now straight down, and, a few feet below the surface, he gained in the clear water his first glimpse of the fish. It looked to be half the length of the boat. The sheer surprise paralyzed him for an instant. What could he do with such a piece of dynamics when he did get it into the boat? He became aware of Betsy holding toward him the handle of the gaff. A chorus arose from the occupants of the other boats.

"*Up high!*" they chanted.

And then, as he reached the gaff downward, the huge thing made an unexpected roll and dash. The line hung loose in his hand!

"Too bad!" The girl's voice reached his dazed perception. "He was a good one. Try again. You brutalized him—held him too tight."

"What else could I do?" growled Marshall. He was not precisely rude in his tone; but he had certainly forgotten to be polite in the usual Marshall manner.

"You have to play these fish, even with a hand line," she told him. "Let it run out when they take it too strongly, and tire them before you try to bring them to the boat."

"Why didn't you tell me that?" in the same tone and voice.

She chuckled.

"You were so sure you could haul them right in."

Marshall threaded on a fresh herring and dropped the wobbler overboard. He said nothing, but his movements were abrupt. The girl chuckled again.

"At least he's natural," she said, as if to herself.

But now, almost simultaneously, three other men snatched at the lines tied to their legs and arose to their feet. Their thin green lines were cutting through the water; their boats were surging erratically here and there. They knew their business, however; and first one, then another, lifted his fish over the rail to the accompaniment of a chorus of "*Up high!*" Once in the boat the salmon seemed to take a new lease of life and thrashed about with powerful strokes of their tails until hit over the head with the club. Against the hollow structure of the boats the blows sounded loud and staccato, like the quick excited beating of a drum.

The spell that had held the little gathering of people in a silence of expectation now broke. They chattered and shouted at each other. Jokes flew, rough sarcasm, joshing. One or more salmon were always being landed, and the other boats were crowding in as near the spot as they dared in order to connect with the school. Sometimes they crowded so near as to cross the lines, and the man fighting the fish would bring in a snarl along with the salmon. But there was little or no ill-humour. Each realized that the most must be made of the opportunity while the drive was on.

It was by now almost dark. The shores were black. Only the waters were still filled with light. They lay bright as quicksilver, brighter than the sky. Across them the boats moved like dark phantoms. Sound had become more significant than sight. The excited calls and shouts of the men, the swish of waters, the wild splash of the fish breaking, and the rattling slam-bang of the salmon beating their tattoo against the boats' bottoms until the club fell, were continuous. And every once in a while there came a swift, sudden, instantly hushed sound exactly like that made by a charge of spent shot hitting the water, only louder. It was some time before Marshall realized that this was made by the mad break of hundreds of herrings striving thus to escape the rush of their pursuers below.

He did not observe all these phenomena with either scientific or æsthetic detachment, but with a growing though leashed impatience. Everybody in the universe seemed to be catching fish except himself. The exultant cries of *Up high!* followed one another at second intervals; the rattling announcements of the landing of fish came from all about him. But his line hung inert, untouched, taboo. Of course he did not wish bad luck to any of these hard-working men whose livelihood depended on their catch, but, nevertheless, he felt a primitive resentment whenever a new rattling broke forth, and an unreasonable exultation when somebody sang out, "Lost him!"

"Isn't it remarkable how they see the spoon at all!" Betsy was saying. "It must be pitch dark down there!"

"They certainly don't seem to see mine," Marshall grumbled, a good deal in the accents of a spoiled child.

"He's still natural," remarked she to the air; and Marshall for the fourth time repeated to himself his vow not to speak again. "Have you looked lately to see if your wobbler is all right?"

He hauled in his line. The herring had slid and twisted around the hook until it was hunched up in an apparent effort to swallow its own tail.

"No wonder!" she murmured, surveying this exhibit with interest. "It wasn't put on very well, was it? And of course, with all these underwater currents, you ought to look occasionally."

Marshall grimly said nothing. But he did a lot of thinking. How should he know these things? Why couldn't she have told him? Why did she wait until the whole evening was spoiled, until it was too late to do anything?

"It really doesn't matter though, does it?" she was saying, "because, of course, this isn't at all sporting fishing."

Marshall dropped the two-pound sinker overboard weighted with uncomplimentary reflections, and many regrets that the state of civilization to which he had been born precluded his putting the salmon club to a proper use. He was thoroughly ill-tempered, not only because he had no fish and because this creature made fun of him on every opportunity, but because she made him feel unwarrantedly like a small boy, and did not care enough about his opinion of her to refrain! Which complicated thoughts were cut short by a prompt and vigorous strike.

He landed this fish, though at times the issue was doubtful. The power of the creature was extraordinary. At one time, when it bored straight down, and Marshall—under instruction—"snubbed" it, the stern of the dinghy was pulled down almost to the point of taking water. And when the young man had to give line to the rushes, he realized vividly that he ought to be equipped with either the proverbial toil-calloused palms or a pair of gloves. But at last the salmon, tired down, was led gently alongside and the gaff slipped under. Marshall heaved, and was surprised at the strength required merely to slide it over the rail.

"Ugh, *tyee!*" exclaimed one of the Indians, who happened to be near enough to see.

"A perfect beauty! Oh, a monster!" cried the girl.

It occupied the whole forward part of the boat.

"Well, wind up; we may as well go in," said she. "The phosphorescence has come, and once that is in it is useless."

And in fact the other boats, again silent, were already stealing away, blending in the black shadows of the shore.

Marshall again took the oars. His irritation had quite evaporated. In the intensity of the struggle he had worked it out of his system, leaving room for the entrance of a savage exultation over the great fish, at which he glanced with satisfaction from time to time. He entered the enclosure of the boom at Tom's to find the others already arrived. A lantern hung from the net frames cast a flickering light over the float. The latter seemed to be literally covered with fish, over which Tom was bending.

"How many?" called Betsy, before they had reached the float.

"Pretty good, Miss Betsy, pretty good," shouted Tom, with an obvious satisfaction and relief in his voice. "There's twenty-five between the three of us, and all springs. How did you make out?"

"We got one," she replied, cheerfully

A short blank silence fell.

"One!" echoed X. Anaxagoras at last, flatly.

Betsy chuckled to herself.

"Nothing like getting the jump on them," she murmured, confidently, to Marshall; and at once the young man felt himself included in a comfortable conspiracy. "Don't go alongside for a second."

"What's the matter?" queried Tom, after a moment.

"Nothing's the matter," said Betsy, superbly. "Now draw up" (to Marshall). "Get your minnows out of the way. We go in for quality, not quantity."

The boat sidled up to the float. Tom plucked the lantern from its nail. Its light swept across the noble fish laid out in rows. They were big fine salmon, running from twenty to twenty-five pounds each in weight; but with an inner leap of barbaric triumph Marshall realized that his own prize was larger than any of them.

"Jumping Moses!" Tom was exclaiming. "Come here, Sid, and take a look at this!"

Astonishment, admiration, speculation, scales produced. Fifty-five pounds. About the biggest spring ever taken here. Marshall discovered himself most unexpectedly the hero of a small triumph; and still more unexpectedly he found Betsy "playing it up," to extract the last drop of credit. At length, Tom, whetting his butcher knife, addressed himself to the labour of cleaning the catch. X. Anaxagoras leaned against one of the posts watching. Betsy and Marshall went aboard. She turned to him.

"We certainly put it all over them, didn't we?" she congratulated. "Put her there, partner!"

And he shook her hand. Just before he later dropped asleep that moment of enthusiasm welled up in him again. Not a bad little scout at all, was his drowsy thought of her. But it must be pointed out that his reasoning faculties were then almost in abeyance.

CHAPTER VI

THE ADVENTURE OF THE CATAclysmic CAT

Tom was up and off in his gas boat to deliver his fish at three o'clock in the morning, in order to catch slack water. Marshall heard him go, then turned over comfortably and fell asleep again. The *Kittiwake's* party were lazy that morning. It was nine o'clock before they were up and about. After breakfast X. Anaxagoras and his sister disappeared across the boom to shore. Marshall was left to his own resources.

He was experiencing a recurrence of his old depressed, exhausted indifference, which had, in the hurry of events, somewhat lifted during the past week. If it were still always present, it had at least thinned like a fog, at times becoming so light as to be in itself an object of almost derisive indifference. But this morning he was down. There was nothing on earth he wanted to do; nothing he wanted to think; nothing to anticipate. And since this state was in decided reaction to what he had last night experienced, he was a little inclined to be irritated at the situation. After all, he *was* supposed to be suffering under a definite ailment that was said to be susceptible to treatment; and he *was* supposed to be getting that treatment. That was his sole reason for being precisely at this moment seated on the edge of this float staring moodily down at a lot of silly goggle-eyed rock cod. Up to now nothing had been done, except perhaps a puerile attempt to distract him by strange surroundings. He had tried that device for himself by foreign travel in many lands, and had proved it illusory.

"Mr. Marshall," the unexpected voice of X. Anaxagoras at this moment reached him, "would you oblige me by stepping into the cabin for one moment?"

He arose with some surprise. He had not heard the man return. His mood as he slowly boarded the *Kittiwake* and descended to the cabin was grim.

X. Anaxagoras was in his white uniform, behind the table, and he had resumed his professional manner.

"Please be seated," he requested, courteously. "It is my opinion that it is time to take stock of ourselves."

"That is my opinion also," agreed Marshall, squarely.

"One moment, please," interposed the Healer of Souls, raising his hand. "This necessity arises not on my account as your physician, for our association enables me to keep you under an almost continual observation, but on your own. You require a bread pill."

"I beg your pardon?" queried Marshall.

"A bread pill," repeated X. Anaxagoras. "Were you less intelligent, or were our association occasional rather than continual, I would disguise the fact that it is bread. But I do you the honour to consider that device unnecessary."

"I am afraid my intelligence is not deserving of your encomiums," said Marshall, drily, falling into his manner, "for it fails to grasp the significance of your remarks."

"Whenever a patient begins to think that his case is being neglected, that enough is not being done for him, the wise physician relieves the situation and satisfies the patient by the administration of a harmless bread pill."

Marshall flushed in spite of himself, partly with irritation at this accurate interpretation of his mood, and partly with vexation at being thus placed in rather a ridiculous position. But he did not deny.

"I suppose this interview is the bread pill," he said.

"The purport of this consultation," amended the Healer of Souls. "There is a difference. The purpose of the bread pill is to restore confidence and to lead the patient back to a firm ground from which he has unwittingly slipped."

"I am interested to learn by what means this is to be accomplished," returned Marshall.

"By the simple statement of a few facts which I will enumerate."

"I should say here," interposed Marshall, "that I do not bind myself to look upon any mere statements in the light of facts. I say this now, before they are made, in order to avoid misconception. You will have to offer me some proof besides mere asseveration of whatever you say."

"On the contrary," said the Healer of Souls, "I need offer no proof. If you will reflect for one moment, it cannot but be evident to you that any person's belief or disbelief cannot alter the integrity of facts. Nor can any person's belief or disbelief affect the action of law. Your belief in what I am about to say is not essential; only your careful attention."

"In that event I am ready to listen," agreed Marshall.

"I find," stated Anaxagoras, flatly, "a small but decided improvement in your case."

"Which I fail to perceive," said Marshall, positively.

"Your eye is not as trained in such matters as is mine, nor is self-examination to be relied on. I note the improvement."

Marshall hesitated, then resolved on his course.

"Look here," he said, with some heat, "if you are referring to and counting on the fact that I've displayed some human interest under unusual and exciting circumstances, let me point out to you that such interest is unimportant. I cannot go through the rest of my life seeking strange and unusual circumstances. If I am to find myself, it must be in everyday existence. If your 'treatment'"—his voice took on a faint note of sarcasm—"consists in placing me successively in thrilling circumstances in order to demonstrate that I'm not quite *dead*, it strikes me that you are on the wrong track."

But this attack seemed to leave X. Anaxagoras unmoved. He even nodded in satisfaction.

"In that you are entirely correct," he agreed. "At least I have not underestimated your intelligence. Such circumstances as you mention would have slight value merely as treatment. But their very intensity enables a discriminating eye more easily to study reactions—the same reactions in kind, but of a higher degree, as those that constitute life from moment to moment—as one stains certain objects for better microscopic examination."

"I should always have acted in the same circumstances exactly as I have acted for the past week," said Marshall, shortly.

"Granted. I do not examine merely your actions."

"What then?"

"Evidences of motivation. It is by subtleties which I cannot now explain that I form the judgment I a short time ago expressed as to the effects of treatment up to this time."

"Treatment——" began Marshall, impatiently, and stopped.

"It would be better to say it," urged the Healer of Souls. "Nothing is gained by inhibition; and nothing in our professional relationship can offend. You cannot avoid the thought that by a rather childish hocus-pocus you are being offered commonplace distraction to arouse your interest, as one distracts a child with a bright-coloured toy. I do not ask you to avoid that thought. But—and this is the object of the present consultation—I do ask you not to entertain it as the sole guest of your mind's chambers. I would request you to keep with it one other consideration, and that is the terms of our agreement. Those terms I would ask you to analyse in more detail than you have hitherto. You were, you will remember, to place yourself unreservedly in my hands for three months. Of that time one week has expired. Please especially note the word 'unreservedly.'" He was referring to the written memoranda. "You are to perform *without question* anything I may ask you to do—compatible, of course, with your own ideas of honour. You are to discuss my methods if you please, but you are not to question their advisability. You are to do to the best of your ability what I ask you to do, whether you feel any interest in so doing or not. That is correct, is it not?"

"Perfectly," agreed Marshall.

The Healer of Souls thrust aside the paper and leaned forward.

"And I ask you to believe nothing but this," he said, gently. "I have my methods and my purposes. If they are obscure to you, have patience. If you imagine they are obvious and futile, still have patience. Question as little as possible, speculate as little as you may. Do not try for belief, but do not restlessly seek out unbelief. Forces set in motion do their work serenely indifferent to our little opinions of them." He paused. "I am your friend," he concluded.

Marshall arose, somehow feeling the interview at an end. He approached the companionway slowly, his mind grasping desperately for something tangible in the midst of intangibilities by which to account for a strange life of spirit. It must be illusory, but it was there. He turned back. X. Anaxagoras was looking at him steadily.

"I'll try," he said.

"Please do not try," rejoined the Healer of Souls. "The very effort of trying would defeat its end. The puny effort of your surface volition would awaken to opposite action deep habitual subconscious tendencies that are but now beginning to nod in slumber. Against them your well-meant voluntary effort would avail little. Above all, I most earnestly command you not to try."

"What then?" wondered Marshall. In a fashion he stood aghast, as though he had been led to hushed glimpses where an unwary footfall would arouse.

"Wait," said the Healer of Souls. "Be still. Do not disturb the corridors of your mind with echoes of vain speculation. Steal forth outside yourself as often as possible through the Six Doors, taking with you no baggage of thought. There will come a time when you can go forth boldly to their opening and command what you will."

"I do not believe I quite understand you," said Marshall, but no longer in riposte.

"We dwell in a house with Six Doors. Only through them can we go forth. When they are shut, we huddle down close—poisoned, cramped within ourselves, fumbling and fraying over and over the little morsel we have snatched from a beautiful whole. It tastes good, how sweet it smells; it looks soft and tender, let us stroke it, it sounds like music. These are the Doors. Through them we can look, or through them, if we leave behind our baggage, we may actually go forth, leaving the body and the pains of the mind behind."

"The senses," said Marshall, doubtfully.

"What else?" demanded Anaxagoras, sharply. "Did you think they were only to prevent your falling down in the street?"

"Those are five. And the sixth Door?"

"Imagination," replied Anaxagoras. "It is the widest of all; but the key is sometimes far to seek. The others are enough. Use them. Go look, and listen, and touch, and taste, and smell. But leave your baggage behind. Do not speculate, and do not think; do not take with you even the slender staff of conscious interest. Be indifferent as to that"—he slightly stressed the word. "Open the Doors. For there is this to say of doors when they are opened: One may go out from them—and also things may come in."

He nodded, and Marshall found himself mounting the companion stairs. For a brief moment it had seemed to him that a stranger had sat behind the little cabin table, a man no longer to be fenced with half-sardonically, but one in whose company he could have disclosed his secret places and been unashamed. The feeling passed. He stepped to the deck apparently the same man who had left it fifteen minutes earlier. But once again vaguely he had felt the old sense of invasion, of something that irresistibly had flooded guarded places. The circumstances of these vague and subjective experiences had varied widely, but their essence had been always the same, and their reality was with each repetition becoming more substantial. And somehow some responsibility had been lifted from him. He looked down the length of the Yucletaws, and a warmth in which he could bask, like quiet sunlight above the tumbling rapids, seemed to lie on his

troubled spirit.

He seated himself once more on the edge of the float. Behind him he heard X. Anaxagoras emerge from the cabin, cross the float, and step on to the long boompole. Glancing around, Marshall saw that he was dressed in knickerbockers and knee boots, as though for a tramp. So now he was quite alone out there over the water, and he found himself luxuriating in the fact. His mind was idly swaying to and fro, like the long kelp streamers in the current; but the Five Doors had swung open a little, and, true enough, certain smaller things, shy and uncertain of their welcome, were creeping in and calling softly to their kindred within his spirit.

But it was always the rapids that drew him back to themselves. They were hypnotic in their appeal. His eye followed their tumbling waters down the great swirl of their racing, escaped with them into the powerful backward-sweeping eddy with its crinkling smooths and the deceptive glassiness of its wide-flung surreptitious currents. Only when some log or branch or other bit of flotsam was flung from the main tide into the eddy did its motion become apparent. Marshall's eye followed one such log, at first blankly, then with a gradual dawning of interest. Again and again it made the long round trip, escaping the rapids at the point; cruising solemnly back along the straight current of the shore for a few hundred yards; then revolving and tipping and curtsying as though actuated by some detached and unseen force, until at last, with a sudden acceleration to the antic point, having completed its wide half circle, it rushed to rejoin the main current again. And then, even as it leaped exultantly forward in seeming haste to make up time lost, it began once more to feel the drag of its heels. Slower and more slowly it ran; hesitated; turned completely around; appeared to struggle for its freedom as a man struggles against quicksand; checked; stopped, poised; then, relinquishing its dream of the wild open, yielded to the slow, remorseless suction and once more drifted back into the dull and sullen eddy. More and more Marshall's idle interest centred on the adventures of this piece of driftwood. Each fresh launching into the tide race seemed certain to bear it away; at the instant of final escape its wish was denied. But each trip brought into play a new complex of forces. Hopeless as the recurrent disappointment at first appeared, a growing certainty told him that, sooner or later, just the right combination would occur at the right moment. How many of these slow and dreary journeys would be necessary to win success? A dozen? A hundred? How long would they take? In the tiny patch of still water within the eddy itself several old logs floated motionless and inert. Their ends were splintered away by many grinding contacts, their sides worn by long immersion. Had they given up in despair, or did they rest thus in recuperation of a lost courage? and would they, in due time, doggedly resume the attempt to join their brothers at play out there with the wild waters and the screaming gulls? Marshall began to feel a personal interest in the one that had first caught his attention. He breathed a relief when it had revolved its way safely past the dead water; he flung a hope after it when it made its dash; he seemed, somehow, to share a genuinely existent disappointment when the cast once more proved in vain. And, strangely enough, it did not seem to him silly. The Doors were open.

But now his active intelligence was suddenly summoned with a start as though by an alarm struck. The log in its latest round floated in a little nearer than ever before. Marshall saw that some dark living thing clung to it.

For a moment he thought it only one of the sea birds that are so fond of patronizing these unstable craft. Then, as he watched, he saw the creature hitch itself forward a few inches. The action was not birdlike. He arose and sought the glasses from the pilot house.

Through them every splinter of the scarred old log became clearly visible. To it clung a cat. It was flattened close to the timber, its legs outspread, its claws dug strongly into the wood. Its fur was flattened by the sea water, its ears were laid back against its head, and its eyes were wide and staring. Apparently it was too terrified to move, but every moment or so it cautiously raised its head a few inches, and Marshall could see its mouth open in a call for help from an empty world.

Now, Marshall hated cats. He possessed no phobia of the instinctive sort, but he had no sympathy with their temperaments, their characteristics, or their aims in life. As far as he was concerned all the cats in creation could be eliminated without loss. They were, in his view, egotistic, arrogantly independent animals, self-sufficient, ingratiating in matters of food and creature comfort only, attached to places rather than persons, without personal loyalty, cruel in play, and addicted to the destruction of birds, with which people Marshall had considerable affinity. If he had met this individual cat at large in the brush about its, to him, unlawful occasions, he would cheerfully have shot it. Nevertheless, he laid down the glasses and rather impatiently threw the oars in the dinghy. He supposed he'd have to rescue the thing! It was undoubtedly one of Tom's pets that had not possessed common sense enough to keep out of trouble. That it was also

a creature in distress and therefore had an inescapable claim on him, he did not for a moment acknowledge.

The matter was simple. A score of strong pulls at the oars brought him alongside. So terrified was the animal, however, that some moments elapsed before it emerged sufficiently from its fixed idea of clinging tight to the only bit of stability it knew. Marshall could not help it. In the glassy whirls of the back eddy he was obliged to remain at the oars in order to keep the dinghy and the log from being whirled apart. At last the surface of the animal's panic was broken. It leaped lightly aboard. Marshall turned to row back.

The current was directly against him. He bent to the oars, and as the dinghy was light and he practised, he made good progress through the water. The bubbles danced alongside, and the rings made by his oars were well apart. Then he happened to glance to his right toward the single outstanding point. Its trees were not moving as they should against the background of Estero Peak. He looked more sharply. Not only was he not going ahead, but he was being dragged slowly backward.

At this discovery he put his back into it and pulled until the breath almost left his body. Thus he held his own, and even shifted the relative positions of a dead fir and the notch on Estero Peak a few inches in the right direction. But in so doing he did not at first notice that the current momentarily changed direction. The forces that were snatching for him, balked in the direct attempt, insidiously pulled him sidewise even while allowing him the illusion of gain. His first realization of this came when, immediately astern, the waters began slowly to run in a small circle which quickly widened and accelerated. In the centre what was at first a mere dimple rapidly deepened into a suction hole. Marshall found himself looking over the stern of his boat directly into a spinning depression perhaps two feet deep by five or six across, bordered by a band of revolving waters. The dinghy began to revolve with them, winding itself nearer to the suction hole with each circle. Marshall dug his oars in deadly earnest, for it occurred to him that if the stern of the dinghy should once touch the zone of down-drawing action it would indubitably be enough depressed to take in water from the opposite wall, and so be swamped. He pulled until the veins stood out on his forehead, and so just managed to hold his little craft on the brink. His wind was gone, and his muscles had lost their snap. Then, just as he had begun to wonder how long he could keep it up, the hole was slowly filled as though from beneath, the circular motion slowed, ceased, the surface of the water once more ran smooth.

Marshall gasped for breath and glanced about him. The little whirlpool had moved forward as well as around. He found that during his struggle he had been carried farther out. He was not as yet in the full and direct current, but he was within its influence, and decidedly out of the back eddy. Indeed, he could look back to see the log he had been watching so long sullenly giving up the struggle and relinquishing itself to its twentieth slow journey back past the *Kittiwake*. Marshall felt a flash of exasperation that their situations had not been reversed, so that each could have had his desire.

But he had scant leisure for such reflections. The shore was beginning to slip by. Though he floated for the moment in smooth water, more of the small whirlpools were forming and filling between himself and the eddy. Each instant he was becoming more strongly committed to the tide. At any moment another of the things might develop right beneath him. There seemed to be no rhyme or reason to their occurrence. And outside him, much too near for comfort, were greater whirlpools with which he would have no chance of coping, and breakers of white water, and a savage tumbling to and fro.

Marshall was cool-headed enough to realize the futility of exhausting himself in an effort to stem the current. He realized that his best chance would be to yield to it, at least partially; to go with it, but at the same time to angle across it in the hope of making a landing farther down the coast. He addressed himself to the task. If he could avoid the sudden and unexpected suction holes, this did not seem to him to be too difficult. How he was to avoid them he could not guess. For that he must depend on luck. He recovered from the little panicky sinking of spirit natural to his first plunge into the situation and began to calculate forces.

And then a sudden roar just to the right of him startled him almost out of his senses. The surface of the sea bulged upward in a huge conical mass, as though thrust from beneath by some great body, and from that central point cascaded steeply over itself in all directions with a crash. The dinghy, caught fortunately near the outer periphery, but almost broadside on, was nearly overset, and was flung with great violence directly sidewise. The boil subsided almost as quickly as it had arisen, but the force of it had thrust Marshall with irresistible might a hundred feet farther from the shore, and that much nearer the wild turmoil of the tide.

He was now travelling with great velocity, and surrounded imminently on all sides by a constant succession of the most appalling phenomena. The dinghy was almost completely out of his command. It was thrust here and there by violent forces in comparison to which his strength was as nothing. The control of its direction had been taken completely out of his hands. Sometimes it headed one way, sometimes another; sometimes it whirled around and around dizzily. With a growing feeling of futility Marshall continued to pull at the oars. His efforts now were of avoidance rather than direction; they were matters of the moment's expedience rather than of ultimate aim. All he could hope was that his little strength thrown on one side of opposing forces might suffice to turn the scale of a titanic struggle. Thus at one instant he found himself staring straight down into a steep hole fifteen feet deep, whose sides of whirling water were a smooth translucent green and into which it seemed that no power on earth could prevent his being bodily drawn. Three times the dinghy circumnavigated the edge of this terrifying funnel, sailing accurately in what appeared to be a narrow band of current ringing the edges. Two feet to the right would bring her out of the band into the spiral of the vortex. By desperate efforts Marshall held her in the band. At length he was flung contemptuously from the outer circle.

But he had no chance to draw the breath of respite. A succession of violent, choppy white-capped waves awaited him which slopped the dinghy up and down, and threatened to fill her by sheer weight of numbers. Indeed, some water did come aboard. And every few moments, just when the tumult seemed for a brief space to abate and a smooth area of some extent to have established itself, there would up-heave from below another outward-rushing boil. They were like half-suppressed fountains of incredible size, thrusting rounded hills of water ten, twelve feet above the level, the more terrifying because of the menacing roar that accompanied them.

How he escaped from moment to moment Marshall could not have told. A flash of memory brought to his recollection that he had once sarcastically accused the Healer of Souls of a belief in the repetition of miracles. Such a belief was now being forced on himself.

Then, all at once, he found himself in comparatively smooth water. He realized that he had been forced into mid-channel. On either side of him the whirlpools and boils raged unabated, but he was himself in a band of fairly calm, swift-running current. With a return of courage he indulged the thought that if he could manage to stay in this direct tide, he might be safe after all. It was now too late to think of reaching the shore: perhaps he could run all the way through and gain the still channel beyond the foot of the rapids! He took a fresh grip on the oars.

The shores were now strange to him and were passing with great rapidity. Marshall found that keeping in the current was not going to be difficult. He had leisure to draw breath and be thankful.

But not for long. Suddenly he realized that the smooth run of the current was narrowing. The wild waters were drawing closer to him on either side. He glanced over his shoulder. What he saw wiped the confidence from his mind.

He was shooting at tremendous speed, not down a band of safe water, but down a V, or into a funnel. At the foot of the V the whirlpools and broken waves came together from either side, and their joining was a wild and unbroken tumult. He gave himself up for lost.

A succession of shrill blasts from an air whistle reached his ears. From the Sonora Islands shore, and considerably upstream, a small gas boat was pushing boldly out into the current. She sheered violently when she hit the fast water, and a great wave surged up and over her bow on the starboard side as her head was denied her. The port guard rails dipped under the careen. With what seemed an almost human effort she righted herself. A boil flung her sideways and twisted her almost half around, but she caught her course again. With uncanny skill she threaded her way down the narrow twisted lanes of a precarious safety. The force of the tide thrust her continuously sideways, but in some fashion she continued to point toward midstream and to make progress. For some moments Marshall, with a sinking of the heart, made sure she must enter the smoother central current—if she succeeded in entering it at all—at a point below himself; but the skipper's calculations proved his sagacity. Almost before Marshall realized the fact, she was in the central current, and was sweeping down toward him. In ten seconds she brushed alongside. There was an instant's grinding of reverse gears.

"Jump!" shouted a voice.

Marshall sprawled aboard, instinctively bringing the dinghy's painter with him. He started to rise, but was flung

down again.

"Lie down, and hang on like hell!" shouted the voice.

To the first part of the command he could not have denied an obedience which he had no wish to deny as to the second. Over the low gunwale he saw the water all white and leaping. The work boat plunged, rolled, dove, hit with a crash, shipped mighty seas and flung them off again. The man at the little wheel whirled the spokes now this way, now that. It seemed a miracle he could hold his place. Thrice the little craft careened so far under the enormous weight of some unseen force that it seemed she must turn over; and thrice she came slowly back to an even keel as though against strong pressure. Then there came three solid bumps; and suddenly, except for an uneasy weaving, the boat was progressing in a normal and orderly fashion.

Marshall raised himself and looked about him. Astern were the rapids. Three curling but stationary waves marked their termination. These had administered the three solid bumps. Round about were uneasy currents, running in swirls and eddies, but with a blessedly level surface. The man at the wheel reached down into the house and kicked out the clutch.

"We'll let her drift a while and take a smoke," said he, and turned around.

It was Tom.

"Well," remarked Tom, conversationally, as he drew a package of tobacco and some papers from his pocket. "Where are you and your cat voyaging to, anyway?"

Marshall tried in vain to collect his wits. But too much cannot be expected of even the most exemplary hero reprieved from what has seemed a certain death. There were many appropriate things he might have said.

"It isn't my cat, it's yours," was what he did say.

Tom walked across the tiny deck, took the dinghy's painter from Marshall's unresisting hand, and hauled it alongside. The dinghy was quarter full of water, and the cat was very wet. She promptly jumped aboard.

"Did you think I'd starve a cat that way?" he asked. "It's skin and bones. It isn't mine, so it must be yours."

"But I don't like cats," objected Marshall, stupidly.

"Well, it likes you," observed Tom, with finality.

The animal had crossed the deck and was walking back and forth in a two-foot track. Each time it passed Marshall it rubbed against him and arched its back. It was a very peculiar cat, for it had jade-green eyes, a Pompeiian-red nose of a grosgrain texture, thick fur like a beaver's, and a half-length and rather bushy tail. In marking it was of the tiger variety. As Tom had pointed out, it was skin and bones.

"I don't like cats," repeated Marshall, like a parrot.

"Was *that* it?" said Tom. "But if you came out to drown her, the water's just as wet in a pail, and not so dangerous."

"I didn't come out to drown her: I picked her off a floating log."

"That makes it perfectly clear," remarked Tom. Marshall sprang to his feet.

"But, look here! How asinine! What am I thinking of to be talking about a cat! You pulled me out just in the nick of time. I don't know how——"

"Don't," interrupted Tom. "I've run these rapids before, though never when they were going quite so strong. But I admired the excuse to try."

"Where were you—how did you happen to——"

"Oh, I was waiting over in one of the coves I know for slack to get home, and you came drifting by, so I thought I'd just run out and see if I could borrow a match."

"Sorry," said Marshall, who was soaking wet; then bit his lip in vexation at his stupidity. He must be still dazed.

"Oh, I found I had some," returned Tom, gravely. "But I'm glad of your company."

He dove below and returned in a moment with a tin of milk and a chipped saucer. The cat ran eagerly part way toward him; then returned and recommenced its persistent rubbing against Marshall's leg. It did this with rather a feverish acceleration of pace, and at each repetition it looked up into his face questioningly and remarked, "Prrrt," in a voice that ascended to falsetto on the last letter.

"It's thanking you for picking it up," exclaimed Tom.

"What do I do about it?" inquired Marshall, helplessly.

Receiving no reply, he finally reached out his hand and touched the animal's head gingerly. This seemed to be sufficient. It gave over its efforts and fairly raced to the saucer, from which it lapped the milk in as hasty and as large gulps as a cat can compass. Tom stood over it, and as fast as the saucer was emptied he refilled it. Thus he used and threw overboard two cans.

"Isn't milk rather hard for you to get?" asked Marshall. "Aren't you wasting an awful lot of it?"

"I don't call it wasting it," replied Tom, shortly. Then, after a pause, "Do you?"

"No, I suppose not," confessed Marshall, who had not thought of it that way.

The two men stood and eyed the cat, while the gas boat drifted aimlessly, and the rapids lowered its voice little by little. The milk finished, the starved creature was obviously overcome by an extreme drowsiness. Nevertheless, it began painstakingly to wash itself, cat fashion. It was ludicrous, or painful, to watch it. Slower and slower went the licking motion of its head; its eyes half closed; it swayed as it sat. Then, just on the point of falling over in a dead sleep, it would come to itself with a start and recommence rapidly; only once more to slow down to the point of somnolence. It was evident it was drunk with sleep; nevertheless, it could not or would not lie down to repose until it had put itself in order. At last, with a sigh, it stretched itself out and its eyes closed.

But a last thought crossed its mind before it dropped away. Staggering, it forced itself to its feet and made its way across the deck to Marshall.

"Prrrt!" it remarked, and rubbed against his leg.

Then it lay down to sleep.

"Well, I'll be damned if I ever saw the like of that before!" said Tom. "It ain't like a cat. It's more like what a dog would do!"

Marshall lifted the limp little figure. It did not stir. He carried it to the cabin and softly deposited it on the cushioned bunk.

"With your permission!" he said, looking Tom squarely in the eye.

They returned to Stuart Island on the slack which shortly ensued. The *Kittiwake* was still untenanted, which for a moment astounded Marshall greatly, for it seemed to him that a long interval of time must have elapsed since he had left

the float. A glance at his wrist watch, however, told him that the interval had been only a little more than an hour. Tom moored his boat inside the booms, collected various small packages from the cabin, and disappeared, waving aside Marshall's attempt to reexpress his appreciation. The cat slumbered on where it had been laid, dead to the world. Marshall resumed his contemplation of the scenery and the goggle-eyed rock cod.

"As to how to get outside the Doors," the Healer of Souls suddenly began behind him, "as to how to get them open—that is the great problem of all life. It is like ventilating a very close room. Everything one does that involves admiration or sympathetic understanding or loving or savouring or inhaling life is a ventilating process. It doesn't matter how clumsily or fumblingly it expresses itself. It is an inlet, an outlet. It opens for permeation, which takes place only through the inlet you yourself prepare. Permeability—to life! I have said that before. The deeds of each person's existence float, as it were, in a certain atmosphere created only by himself. We recognize things that are almost as intangible, such as the effect of the sun's rays on plants, the necessity of a suitable climate. The warmth of the human heart associated with the directing power of intelligence makes this fostering climate. We are plants that cannot possibly develop without this equivalent of sun and light."

"I do not believe I quite understand the application," said Marshall, without turning around.

"On this occasion I did not address your understanding," replied X. Anaxagoras, "but something deeper in you, which will receive my words."

This was too vague. Marshall made no comment.

The cat, awakened by the sound of voices, emerged from the cabin of the work boat, jumped to the float, and ran to rub against Marshall's elbow. X. Anaxagoras stooped to stroke it.

"Tom told me of this," he remarked, in his everyday manner. "You had a narrow escape. These waters are very strong. It was rather fine of you to take the risk."

"It was nothing of the sort," said Marshall, "for the simple reason that I did not know there was a risk. If I had had the remotest realization of it, I should certainly never have ventured."

The cat continued to rub his elbow. It had freed from the corrosion of sea water a loud purr that was still somewhat coarse and rusty in sound.

"Do you know," said Marshall, suddenly, "I have always disliked cats; but this one does not seem to act like a cat. He is more like a dog"—he unconsciously quoted Tom—"in the way he acts, I mean; sort of friendly without ulterior motive, as you might say."

"Very rare in cats," agreed X. Anaxagoras, gravely.

"He certainly was embarked on a lonesome voyage," continued Marshall. His hand had strayed to the animal's back. "Ought to be named Noah."

"It's a good name," agreed the Healer of Souls.

The cat stretched, and with deliberate slow steps paced out on the boompoles with the evident intention of going ashore. But immediately and mysteriously appeared Tom's four, fully armed and with lance in rest, who announced in vigorous and no uncertain tones that the passage was in dispute. Noah did not retreat, but he ceased to advance, and flattened himself on the log. The opposing powers maintained a position some twenty feet apart and deployed the preliminary forces of cat warfare: to wit, each swelled his tail to a horrific brush, stuck all his fur on end, laid his ears tight back against his head, narrowed his eyes, and summoned to duty the remarkably rangeful and resonant feline vocabulary of growls, hisses, and wildly barbaric wails whose source seems always so inadequate to its volume. This Mongolian system of warfare by terrorization continued for some moments. Then the natives began to creep forward inch by inch. Noah threw in his last reserves of billingsgate, but without effect. His wispy, starved little body looked almost grotesquely inadequate in comparison to the sleek and stalwart strength of the enemy.

Marshall uttered an impatient exclamation, arose hastily, gathered Noah into his arms, and returned.

"Not fair," he muttered, defensively. "He hadn't a show in the world!" He sat down again, the cat in his lap. "I can't imagine where he came from—or what he's going to do," he added, after a few moments.

"Whether a thing is dead or alive," went on the Healer of Souls, irrelevantly, after a short pause, "is determined by whether or not it has growth. Its degree of health or liveness is measured by the rate of its expansion, or growth. That rate, in turn, is determined by its exposure to and acquiring of the elements which are favourable to growth, and which feed it. Its power of acquiring those elements is determined by its permeability; and that is wholly conditioned by its inlets and outlets. All that seems to me self-evident."

Marshall continued to stroke the cat, which again uttered its rusty purr.

"Outlets are numerous, and occasionally very strange," mused X. Anaxagoras, as though to himself. "Almost anything will do; as a starting point at least. It doesn't matter what handle one takes hold of—any that suits. The law will work just the same."

He paused again.

"Even a cat may be quite a good outlet," said X. Anaxagoras. He suddenly spoke briskly, as though terminating his self-communings and as if he answered at last Marshall's remark made some time before. "I think," said he, "that he must have been lost off some boat, because he's so friendly and seems to be so accustomed to boats. And as for what's to become of him, he certainly can't stay here—Tom's warriors would immolate him. We need a ship's cat, but you dislike them. However, would you object if we took him along?"

"Oh, they don't *bother* me," Marshall assured him with a somewhat obvious effort at indifference. He arose.

X. Anaxagoras smiled to himself.

"Prrrt!" remarked Noah, settling himself more comfortably in Marshall's arms.

CHAPTER VII

THE ADVENTURE OF THE TRANSCENDENTAL HAND LOGGER

For six weeks after the Adventure of the Cataclysmic Cat the Healer of Souls apparently abandoned all activity as such. No more consultations were held, no discussions; nothing that could even remotely be considered as treatment was proffered. He became merely the navigator of the *Kittiwake*.

During that six weeks she worked her way slowly northward, but after an extremely zigzag and roundabout fashion. They sailed up inlets a hundred miles long, no wider than the Hudson, with mountains seven to nine thousand feet high rising sheer from the water's edge, clad with dark forests, capped with perpetual snows, glittering with the robin's-egg blue of glaciers. From their cliffs waterfalls that had been rivers leaped a thousand feet directly into the sea, and in the mists and moils at their feet sleek and shining seals raised their heads to gaze curiously at the intruders. Up to the very shores the water was hundreds of fathoms deep. No anchor line could have reached the bottom. Once X. Anaxagoras ran the nose of the *Kittiwake* right up beneath one of these waterfalls. By the aid of a hose connected to a funnel and held at the end of the pikepole he was able to fill his water tanks!

On another occasion they moored deep in the heart of great mountains, which had drawn so close to the long, narrow pond that they shut it in an utter stillness that no faintest air disturbed. Almost straight up their cliffs arose from black water, two, three, four thousand feet at a thrust; and over the edge of these precipices the gray and white summits

lifted yet another five thousand, so that the sky became very remote and small.

This secret place the mountains shared with neither sea nor sky. It was theirs by close-guarded supremacy. Even space that was not of the heights had been denied admittance, for though the oval pond was, in fact, more than four miles long, it seemed but a hand mirror to the hills.

Indeed, nothing seemed to have been allowed in this place that had not its permission from the mountains. On the tiny ledges or in the crevices of its tremendous cliffs, certain selected and miraculous cedars and firs grew, apparently nourished by no soil, grasping no support, but nevertheless holding themselves in confidence. At the top of the precipice a forest of their brethren had crowded to the edge. From this great distance they looked like crowded little people venturing as close as they dared and peering over with the caught breath of wonder; while behind them the great summits, indulgent and benign, looked on with permitting tolerance. Under damp cool ledges were ferns and dripping mosses. All else was the extreme simplicity of granite and dark green and snow and the polished blackness of the water.

Of life and voices there were few, and those simple. Two eagles circled slowly in the blue heavens. One song sparrow sang in a tiny patch of brush, as though by cheerfulness he had won his right to remain. His was the only voice, except those of the falling waters. For over the cliffs plunged with the slow deliberation of great height many waterfalls. They varied in volume from the broad bands of rivers to threads laid narrow and silvery crookedly against the dark precipices. Betsy and Marshall, from the single vantage point of the forward deck, counted thirty-four of them. Over the lip they hurried, tumultuously eager for the plunge, then seemed to check to the slower rhythm of the fall, darting downward long, quickly withdrawn spears like inverted tongues of some cold flame. From them floated white veils, and at their feet phantoms of mist turned slowly like temple dancers. Their voices filled the place, and when one listened below the lofty stillness, one heard always the sound of falling waters.

The *Kittiwake* had anchored over near the song sparrow, as though for worldly company in a solemn place. X. Anaxagoras explained that at this one spot only in all the inlet would soundings be obtained at all. There was at that point a tiny outthrusting underwater ledge. He had hooked the anchor over the edge of this, and had carried a stern line ashore to prevent its sliding off. This accomplished, there seemed nothing appropriate to do but look. Any other mere human activity seemed somehow rather bustling and inappropriate.

"I cannot imagine living here," said Betsy, "unless one could be actually of this fellowship. I feel as though we had come in here on privilege, provided we behave ourselves; and we really ought to take off our shoes, or do something like that. When we have looked softly and with reverence, we must go away again; and we must not begin noisy things until we are well beyond the portals."

Marshall said nothing in reply to this, not because he disagreed, but because of the usual masculine inhibition against the expression of such things. Nevertheless, he felt them fully, and he paused to consider the idea that it was satisfactory to have them expressed by somebody from whom such an expression seemed natural. Their voicing set something free in him which otherwise had been confined. And he passed on to the further thought that such a statement by another man would have made him embarrassedly uneasy. Women—at least, like this one—did have their occasional uses.

But Marshall was by now far from a rigid adherence to his old attitude. The last consultation, or treatment, or whatever you might call it, had done one thing very definitely: it had relieved him of all worry and responsibility about himself. He had been totally dead and indifferent toward life, but he had not been able to avoid a certain dread of the future. In other words, if he was to continue in this state of mind or soul, life stretched before him as a dark and dreary affair. He had thought he should do something about it. Now it seemed no longer to matter one way or the other.

At least that would take care of itself when the time came. The immediate present was all that concerned him, and that he occupied with an almost childlike series of experiments with the Six Doors. He ate, and slept, and looked, and gave no thought; and tried to avoid stepping on Noah, who was always under his foot. Paradoxically, by adding to his indifferences another—as to his future estate in indifference—the Healer of Souls seemed to have effected something. It was almost homoeopathic.

From this place the *Kittiwake* ran a half day to a cove that was humanly intimate. Low islands guarded it closely and forested lesser mountains surrounded it on three sides. At its lower end, but too far away to bother, showed a little white house embedded in greenery. That evening a thin silver mist arose from the surface of the waters over the top of which they could look from the upperworks of the yacht. The air was tepid. The insubstantial magic of a moon on mountain tops gave promise of later enchantments when she should have arisen higher. Altogether, there seemed to be every prospect of one of those calm, peaceful, undisturbed cozy evenings of rare conversation and long silences which latterly Marshall had come so thoroughly to enjoy.

He had just settled himself on the after deck to await the other two, who were still below about their affairs, when he became aware of the slow dip of oars. In a few moments he made out a small boat approaching from the direction of the house at the foot of the cove. At the sight of its occupant he groaned. Another evening spoiled!

The man was rowing after the fisherman habit—standing up and facing forward—so that Marshall had a good look at him. He appeared to be of about forty years of age, a typical logger of the rougher type, powerfully framed, with a rough-hewn, harsh face and big, gnarled, strong but slow and clumsy hands. His features were marred by a scar that ran athwart his cheek and nose. He had on the small battered felt hat, heavy ribbed undershirt, and stained overalls of the logger. Marshall told himself that he appreciated the qualities and friendliness of such men to the full, but unfortunately he found a similarity and limitation to their conversation. Hear one, hear all; and he had heard several.

This man clambered slowly aboard and made fast his painter. Then Marshall noticed two things: that he had a very steady and kindly blue eye, and that he carried a small bouquet of garden blooms.

"Good evening," said this stranger, carefully depositing the flowers on a locker and seating himself against the rail. "I brought Miss Betsy some posies."

"She is below," replied Marshall. "I'll call her."

"Don't bother: she'll come up to see old Tim when she's ready. I heard you come in, but I was up in the woods getting in a stick."

"You are logging here, eh?" stated Marshall.

"Hand logging," corrected the man.

"Looks like a nice place you have over there," Marshall said, vaguely. "Been here long?"

"Twelve years. Yes, it's a nice place—or will be. I've got a good orchard, and some terraces with flowers, and over on that south slope is a place for vines. It isn't cleared yet, but all in good time. You can't hurry nature. When I came here I planned out eight years in advance, and I keep my planning eight years ahead. So I know what will come about, and that keeps me contented."

Marshall's premonition of boredom broke somewhat. This was not the speech of the usual logger. Nor, indeed, was the voice or enunciation. The former was deep and vibrant; the latter, deliberate, with what by a little stretch of the imagination might be designated as power.

"I suppose you have a wife—children?" queried the young man.

"No, I never married, somehow."

"A partner, then?"

"No; I live alone."

"How far are your nearest neighbours?"

"About twelve miles."

"I should think you'd get lonesome."

"Lonesome?" repeated the deep and leisurely voice. "Why? Ain't the world all around me for me to look at and figure on? A man has no license to be lonesome unless he's asleep."

"Asleep!" Marshall echoed. "That would seem to me to be the one time he would not be lonesome."

"Not awake, then. Lots of people are asleep. I've got a honeysuckle that grows right over my front door. It's full of bloom and sweet smell, and there's bees in it and bright-coloured flies and butterflies and humming birds. But there's lots of people in here with fancy yachts who walk right under it and never know it's there at all. They're asleep; they've never waked up. They've missed a lot of good company right there. Why shouldn't they be lonesome? And that's only one thing. There's lots of others. The world's full of them; and they're all around us. As near as I can figure out, and as far as I am concerned, this looks like the best world they've made yet."

He produced a short pipe and filled it. Marshall's leads to the conversation had lost their perfunctory character. This was a kind of talk, a point of view, new to his experience and outside all his expectation.

"Is there much money in hand logging?" he asked, with a genuine interest.

"Money enough. I get what I want when I want it."

"How many logs can you get out in a day?"

"Depends on my luck and how they lay. Sometimes two or three; sometimes it takes me a week to get some old devil into the water." He leaned forward. "But it's interesting. I figure it out: Here's a tree up the mountain; it weighs tons. What's my strength compared to that? I might as well try to lift one of those islands out there. But I figure it out. I've got to work with Nature, don't you see. And if I fix things so Nature will work with me, she'll slide my log into the chuck for me. It's sort of fun to see if I can figure it out."

"But you can't make much that way, in the long run," objected Marshall. "There's mighty little future in it."

"Future for what? I work when I want to; I get my grub. I am my own boss. I make a few hundred dollars when I want them."

"But you don't get ahead; you don't make any money. You'll never get rich this way."

"Money? What do I want to get rich for?"

"Well," said Marshall, vaguely, "if you had more money, you could go somewhere."

"Ain't I somewhere now?" demanded Tim, quaintly.

But Marshall was not satisfied. Had he paused to think of it, he would have been equally surprised at his interest and at what he would ordinarily have designated his impertinent pursuit of this man's motives and ideals. As it was, it seemed to him natural that he should ask these intimate things, as if this man possessed something elusive that he would like to understand.

"Do you read much?" he asked, bluntly.

"A considerable. There's a library in Vancouver; they send you books."

"Stories?"

"I don't hold much with them. They're too much alike. Different man, different girl, different place—that's all."

"What then?"

"Well, this last year I read about a hundred books on theosophy. I ain't an educated man, no ways; but there seems to me a lot that's sensible in it. But these ready-made religions don't somehow hit me, though. They're always talking about dying, dying, dying, and how to do it. We want something to teach us how to live. Looks like dying comes natural enough. That part isn't important."

"Then you're not afraid to die?" asked Marshall, curiously.

"Why?" demanded the stranger. "In some of the books I've read they say I died from a stone and became a reptile; and I died from a reptile and became an insect; and I died from an insect and became a bird or an animal perhaps; and I died from an animal and became a man. I ain't never yet lost anything by dying, have I?"

"Were you in the war?" asked Marshall, abruptly.

The man shook his head.

"No," he replied. "I tried, but I was too old. They wouldn't take me."

"Too old?" echoed Marshall. "I thought in Canada——"

"I've sixty-seven years," said the man.

Marshall stared, not in disbelief, but in astonishment.

"I did what I could," went on the other. "I aimed to do my best to look after the places of my neighbours who went. But I had only my boat there, and I couldn't get to all of them more than once a week. It would surprise you how people broke in and stole things and smashed things. Why, an ax wasn't safe! You'd think folks would let a man's things be when he went off to war, wouldn't you? I never ketched any of them at it." He shook his head regretfully. "Oh, well," he concluded, "they're poor things, just undeveloped—undeveloped!"

He arose slowly, stretching his huge frame.

"Well, give Miss Betsy the posies," he said, reaching for the painter.

"But let me call them," urged Marshall, wondering why they had not appeared. "They will want to see you."

"Oh, yes," agreed Tim, serenely, "but all in good time. They are probably aweary; and I am aweary, and there always comes another day."

He stepped into his boat.

"I should like to see your place," said Marshall, impulsively.

"You will be welcome," said Tim, in his deep slow voice. In the simplicity of the speech was a native dignity that offered but did not urge. He stood for a moment looking off toward the mountains, his eyes remote; then dipped his oars. At once, in some strange fashion, Marshall seemed to comprehend that the old man stepped as across a threshold into a high, sweet, responsive world that was his own possession. Instantaneously, he had left the *Kittiwake* and her people behind him. Under the spaced impulse of the oars the little craft began slowly to fade into the luminous mists. The dark, leaning figure became tenuous. And in total oblivion to the fact that a listener was present the old man began softly to sing in a sweet high tenor. It was a wandering, formless fragment of a song, rising and falling almost aimlessly, something akin to the little vagrant breezes that lifted and let fall drowsily their wings. The boat and the swaying figure became dim; disappeared. Only the sleeping mountains, and the shining mists, and the serene moonlight remained. It was as though the visitor had dissolved into another world from which he had come.

Strangely and inexplicably stirred, Marshall remained for some moments staring at the point of his evanishment. Why he should have been so moved he could not have told. Queer "characters," backwoods "philosophers" were not outside of his experience. But this was something genuine, something real; here was not conscious and laborious pose. In

the rough, uncouth old figure singing its way into that luminous withdrawal was something elementally touching, something close to tears. Marshall shook himself free from a deep and unwonted emotion.

He picked up the little bouquet and descended into the dark cabin very quietly, so as not to disturb the supposed slumbers of his host. The glow of a cigarette end arrested him. Suddenly the electric lights flared up. He discovered X. Anaxagoras and his sister.

"Why didn't you come up?" he burst out. "And why didn't you tell me about him?"

"In good time," quoted the Healer of Souls. "I wanted you to know him for yourself."

"But——"

"The moment for Tim had come," said Anaxagoras, enigmatically.

The following morning after breakfast all four of the *Kittiwake's* crew went ashore in the dinghy to return Tim's call, for Noah now considered himself a member and entitled to accompany Marshall into even the most uncatlike situations. Marshall hardly knew whether to dread or to anticipate the visit. Last night's impression was vividly on his spirit, but in the cold light of morning that impression was likely to suffer change. Nothing could be worse than a backwoods sentimentalist.

The old man met them at the little landing and immediately led them on a tour around the place. At first, it seemed to Marshall unkempt. Then he realized, rather, that it was not tidy, in the sense of long-farmed tidiness. All the essential work was done up to the minute; the unessential had been left. It was the effort of a man working single-handed at many occupations. Things had been let grow wild wherever it did not matter whether things grew wild or not, no matter if that seemed to encroach on some wonted arrangement. Thus fruit trees had been planted, not in rows, but singly between tall stumps; and little favourable patches of irregular shape and varying size had been cultivated and planted in a close surrounding of salal and salmonberry vine. The first impression was haphazard, but the second was a growing realization that an immense amount of labour had been performed.

Tim led them among his fruit trees, discoursing with considerable knowledge on the subject of apples and their varieties. Occasionally, however, he stopped to pluck a wild flower, which he offered absently to Betsy; or to gaze for an abstracted moment without comment at something that attracted his appreciation. Thus they came to a narrow footbridge over a gully. Across this was hung free a curtain made of burlap.

"To keep the deer out," Tim answered Marshall's question. "They eat the young apple shoots and my truck garden." He stopped and pointed to a little ledge in the rocks above him, not more than twenty feet away. "Last fall, as I was coming right by here, to milk my goats in the morning, a fine big buck stood just there. He didn't act a-skeered. 'Well, old-timer,' I says to him, 'you look pretty there, but I don't like you on my property. Shoo!' He went away. And next morning he was there again!—and the top gone off of one of my new trees. 'Look here, old-timer,' says I, 'this is a little thick. Shoo!' That happened three times, and then I got in my boat and rowed around to my neighbour's and borrowed two cartridges of him. I didn't have any at the time. And next morning, when I came to milk the goats, sure enough there he stood again, just as before, right on a little ledge. He looked down at me and I looked up at him. 'Good-morning, old-timer,' says I, 'I reckon this is the last time we will meet.'"

"Oh, you didn't shoot him!" protested Betsy.

Tim turned on her his clear blue eye.

"Why not, Miss Betsy? He and I couldn't work together." He threw back his head and laughed. "And he sure made fine venison!"

They passed between the burlap curtains, through another orchard, and so to a split-rail fence. Outside this were several goats, among them a huge billy. The moment this latter became aware of the presence of strangers, he ran at the

fence, reared on his hind legs, and thrust his nose in their direction.

"Quit it, Billy!" commanded Tim, authoritatively.

"He wants to be petted," said Betsy.

Tim walked to the fence, reached over the top rail, seized the animal's beard in one of his great hands, and deliberately and dispassionately began striking the beast in the face with his clenched fist. The goat shook his head and pulled back; struggling, not to be free, but to retaliate, his yellow eyes blazing with fury. The blows fell heavy and spaced. Betsy cried out in protest.

"No, Miss Betsy, he's got to have it," said Tim, placidly. "I know him. He doesn't want to be petted: he's hostile; and when he gets that way he'd kill you in a minute if he ever could get at you." The goat continued to struggle dumbly for a few moments, but at last uttered a blat. "Got to make him cry or he'd get too big for his pants," said Tim, opening his hand from the animal's beard. The goat walked away a few paces. "It don't look pretty to hit the critter," concluded Tim, "but when a thing is to be done, a man is foolish not to do it. It's Nature. You must work with Nature."

He gazed contemplatively on the goat, whose eye had turned mild and whose bearded countenance seemed to have taken on the inscrutably benign air of wisdom that seems often to go with whiskers.

"Look at him!" said Tim. "Just now he looks like a kind of apostolic goat, doesn't he?"

They returned through the orchards to the house. It proved to be a small, two-roomed affair, redeemed from the commonplaces of the average backwoods shack by a glorious honeysuckle, a luxuriant climbing rose, and gorgeous beds of Shirley poppies planted on a terrace. The interior was jumbled with the careless untidiness that indicates a certain progressive acquisition of blind spots as to habitual surroundings seen only by oneself. Deerskins carpeted the floor. The walls were closely covered by a great variety of pictures clipped from magazines or coloured lithographs. Marshall noted that none of these was vulgar in subject, and most of them were in at least possible taste artistically. But the most significant single thing was a miniature nosegay of flowers in a pill bottle set in the centre of the winter heating stove, now cold.

Tim made directly for a covered object on a table. It proved to be a small portable phonograph.

"We'll have some music," he said, with satisfaction.

He selected a record and started the machinery, his huge gnarled hands looking strangely out of place in the deft operation.

Marshall expected jazz or ragtime, or at least one of the cheap, simply melodious songs of sentiment. It was Jocelyn's Berceuse.

"I'm glad you folks came in. I wanted some music," said Tim, as he changed the record.

"You must find it great company when you are alone," ventured Marshall.

"I never play it when I am alone," said Tim. "I ain't played her now for two months. You got to have company when you listen to music. Here's a pretty one I kind of like." He studied the record thoughtfully a moment before he began his slow polishing. "It's by a man named Wagner, and it's called Tannhäuser."

"You select good music," observed Marshall.

"I don't know: I know nothing about music. Sometimes I get eight or ten before I strike one I like. But I don't hold with this ragtime. Ragtime just makes fun of good music."

He started the record and seated himself, his elbow on his knee, his chin resting on his doubled hand, his eyes fixed steadily on some point a thousand miles away. The rough-hewn lines of his face, the gnarled great fist, the pose,

reminded Marshall of something. For a moment he puzzled. "Rodin!" he breathed to himself.

Several more records followed. They were not all of the highest merit, but none was wholly banal. And with each, old Tim withdrew in spirit, wholly absorbed, oblivious to everything but the music.

At length Betsy arose with decision.

"It's beautiful, Tim; but we must go back and get lunch."

"Come again," said the old man, without objection, "and thank you for the chance for the music."

That afternoon they dug clams on a narrow spit exposed at low tide between a small island and the mainland. The next morning, at Marshall's own suggestion, he and Betsy and Noah climbed to the scene of Tim's hand-logging operations. X. Anaxagoras excused himself on the plea of work.

It was quite a climb, nearly five hundred feet straight up the mountain, which dropped abruptly into the sea. Besides the usual, jungle of salal, salmonberries, and young firs, the way was considerably complicated by small bits of slash, where the detritus of branches and bark from some of Tim's earlier operations cumbered the ground. Noah seemed to consider the going good, but Marshall found himself hot and gasping for breath by the time he had arrived where the old man awaited them; and he promptly sat down on a small windfall to recover his wind. Noah took his place alongside. The first things Marshall's eye fell upon riveted his attention.

These were two massive pieces of iron mechanism. One was a good deal like an enormous automobile jack; the other was a round screw jack, precisely like those one sees under houses that are being moved bodily. It was no peculiarity of their construction that interested Marshall, but rather the mere fact of their presence. He arose and laid hands on one of them. On the insecure footing, he had to exert all his strength to lift it. He estimated it must weigh upward of a hundred pounds. By what device had these great weights been transported to that elevation? He asked Betsy the question.

"He packed them up—on his shoulders—little by little," was the reply. "Now watch him: this part of it is pretty."

With the keen, narrow-bladed, two-bitted falling ax Tim was methodically deepening a notch in a magnificent fir tree of at least five feet diameter. His blows were spaced and deliberate, apparently without effort, yet each time the blade of the ax sank halfway to the helve. The strokes were so accurately placed, moreover, that there was hardly a sixteenth of an inch variation in their point of impact, so that the surface of the kerf—or the inside of the notch—was almost as smooth as though it had been sawed. Marshall, watching at first idly, then in quickening interest, decided with a newly awakened respect that the technique of this swinging blow was quite as definite and as complicated as a stroke at golf. Obviously the accuracy was the same; and the power was delivered in a similar fashion by speed, not at the top of the stroke, but by an acceleration at the very finish.

Tim stepped back to look critically at his work.

"What's the plan for this one, Tim?" Betsy called.

The old man laid aside his ax and approached.

"I'm going to fall her just between that little alder, there, and that small fir," said he.

The marks indicated were not more than ten feet apart and a hundred feet down the mountain.

"Can you make that tree fall just where you want to?" asked Marshall, glancing at the huge mass a little incredulously.

Tim surveyed him with twinkling blue eyes.

"Son," said he, impressively, "if a man couldn't stick that there"—he held out his pipe—"stem up in the ground and

smash it with this tree, he couldn't do hand logging."

He filled the pipe, sat down with them on the windfall, and explained the simple theory of hand logging. The tree was felled; it was trimmed and peeled of all the bark so that it would slide the more easily; it was started on its way by a push from the jacks Marshall had been examining; its weight carried it down the hill to salt water. The essential requirements were equally simple. It must be felled to lie approximately up and down hill, because it must slide point first through the other growth: if it lay crosswise or too much on an angle it would not stir. It must be cut on a continuous slope to the water. All that sounded ridiculously simple.

"Now for this stick." Tim turned to Betsy. "When she starts I figure that the little slant of ground near her butt will swing her crown about ten foot to the right. That will head her down through that hole between the big cedar stump and that fir. She'll ketch a side swipe on the cedar stump, which will fetch her around the other way toward that little hollow that I've bridged down yonder." He waved a hand, and Marshall became aware that over a depression Tim had already cut down three smaller trees crosswise to the hill, over which the big fir should slide in its journey. The old man went on in his leisurely fashion tracing in detail a zigzag and apparently erratic route down the mountain, and pointing out where he had removed certain obstructions or laid skids in assistance. Nevertheless, much of the way seemed to be through what appeared to be a dense growth of good-sized half-grown trees. "Oh, she'll go through them like paper." Tim waved Marshall's questioning doubt aside. The young man became slowly aware that he was listening to expert knowledge, bought by long experience, of the balance of forces, the appraisal of weight, momentum, angles of incidence and reflection, the resultants of many opposing or aiding constituents little and big. If these complicated things were actually in practice to turn out as the old man so confidently described them, it would amount almost to prophecy! He voiced something of this thought.

"I try to work with Nature," Tim replied. "My strength ain't nothing, but Nature'll help if I work with her."

He returned to his ax.

After ten minutes Marshall, following Betsy's direction to look upward, saw that even the relative feebleness of the ax blows as compared with the mass of the tree was causing the top to shiver slightly. Tim delivered three mighty strokes and stepped composedly back. Something cracked with a loud report.

And then, at first slowly and gracefully, soon with an accelerating rush of speed, the tree fell. A faint whispering of air through the branches rose to the roar of winds, was succeeded by a rapid and staccato splintering as the smaller trees and bushes were smashed down or thrust aside. There came a heart-stopping crash and bump. For twenty seconds the contiguous growth was shaken violently as though by a whirl of wind, and a thousand smaller noises seemed to be sucked into the vacuum created by the last great crash. Then the forest was still again. Only a light powder of dust eddied in the sun. The prostrate trunk lay almost exactly centred between the alder and the fir. Noah had departed from the immediate vicinity in disorderly flight.

Tim exchanged his narrow-bladed falling ax for a heavier weapon and methodically attacked the branches. In an extraordinarily short time he had lopped them all off and flung them aside. Then with ax and a short iron bar he cut and pried the bark. It came off in long clean strips, leaving the wood wet and glistening white. Finally, he stood atop and rounded off the front end in a blunt cone.

"That's the snipe," he told Marshall. "It's a sort of nose to make her run easier. Now we'll look her over and see what our prospects are."

The peeled trunk lay pointing downhill. But the snipe was jammed against the bottom of a crosswise windfall four feet thick, and another windfall lay like a jackstraw above that. Obviously the stick could not slide through them. Marshall remarked on this.

"What can you do?" he asked.

"Lift her up on top of them," said Tim. "I aimed to lay her atop them, but she broke just there."

"Do they ever jam so you can't get them out?"

"I ain't lost a log this year," said Tim, with a simple pride, "but there's a plenty lost that way along the coast— plenty. Men don't always know how to work with Nature."

"And all that hard work gone for nothing!" cried Marshall, appalled.

"It's in the game," said Tim. "Well, let's eat. We'll tackle her after lunch."

They sat on the windfall and undid their packages. Noah's assimilative acquisitiveness lured him back. He came gingerly, and for some time continued to eye the scenery with considerable distrust. Noah was beginning to develop a complex on logs.

After lunch Tim surveyed the situation for some time in silence. Then he took his ax and cut wide shallow troughs across the windfalls. These he smoothed very carefully, and ended by anointing them with something from a bottle. The notches, he explained, were both guides and runnels in which the log would slip over the windfalls, and the stuff in the bottle was dogfish oil.

Next he crawled down to where the point rested against the windfall. Here he excavated a hole deep enough to contain the screw jack and a huge flat rock, both of which he carried down. The rock he placed as foundation for the jack. Then he inserted the bar and began to turn the screw.

It was in the motion of rowing a boat, but with this difference: every ounce of Tim's strength was needed for each stroke of the oar. He braced both feet and heaved back until the cords stood out on his neck and the veins on his forehead. Each sweep of the bar made a quarter turn of the screw thread on the jack; and each full turn of the thread raised the head of the jack about an inch. Marshall calculated that the point of the snipe must be raised at least three feet to reach the level of the windfall. The thought made him physically weary.

"She moving any?" Tim's voice broke his calculation.

But that question Marshall was ashamed to confess to himself he could not answer. He had thought to take bearings. But Betsy answered.

"I'm afraid not, Tim."

The old man crawled painfully out from his cramped situation to look for himself. He shook his head.

"Not a hair!" he agreed.

"What's the trouble?" ventured Marshall.

"Must have my foundation in wrong side up," quaintly explained Tim. "When you put that jack between two things and spread it, those things has got to go apart. If the stick don't raise, then I must be a-pushing the foundation rock into the ground."

He descended, reversed the jack, and in ten seconds undid the effects of the gruelling labour of as many minutes. He pulled the jack out of the hole, which he examined. Then, methodically and painstakingly, he collected material and built another foundation. A second ten minutes of last-ounce effort, but without effect.

"This granite is rotten," Tim diagnosed the difficulty. Again he reversed the jack and removed it. Affairs were exactly where they had been in the beginning.

Tim disappeared up the mountain, to return, after an interval, half rolling and half carrying another rock, nearly as big as a washtub.

"That'll fetch her!" he cried, triumphantly.

He placed this new material with great care, levelling it, chinking it; taking as much pains as though he were laying

a foundation for the erection of some permanent structure.

Then, for the third time he inserted the jack, and for the third time applied all his power to the bar.

Suddenly and startlingly, a screeching creak pierced the air. The slowly applied force from beneath had at last overcome the inertia and resiliency of the log and the friction of its end against the windfall. The snipe had scraped upward for some three inches, and like a gigantic slate pencil had shrieked aloud as it made its plainly discernible mark. Marshall drew a deep breath of relief. The trouble seemed to him to be over. He watched the snipe, creeping upward now with the imperceptible steadiness of slowly rising water. He could not see it move; and yet it over-passed the marks he selected to indicate its position. All that remained to be done was to continue until it had been raised high enough.

He glanced down at Tim. How was it to continue? It could not be possible that flesh and blood could endure. The man was gasping for breath, the sweat was pouring down his grimed face. Marshall knew from experience the feeling of powerless collapse that follows too long continued a putting forth of all one has of strength, for he had rowed on his college crew. And as the jack slowly extended itself, a new idea smote him. The huge timber was rising off the ground, and its only support was the spindling shaft and the narrow head of the jack. At the slightest roll, the least preponderance of weight to either side, the gentlest jar, it would seem inevitable that the log must topple off and come crashing to the ground. Tim worked directly under it. Suddenly a new suspense stifled his breath. It was no longer a simple question as to whether the snipe would continue satisfactorily to rise. Would it fall? Like a bear trap?

"But it's dangerous!" He turned to Betsy.

She nodded slowly.

"The hospitals at Rock Bay and Alert Bay are full of the ones who take chances. But Tim generally knows what he's about."

The old man ceased his labours and crawled out from beneath. He wiped his face and breathed deeply, but made no comment on the severity of the labour. At the expression of Marshall's perturbation he smiled.

"She couldn't fall but one way," said he. "On the other side and about fifty foot back she rests agin a little cedar that I calculate is stout enough to hold her. And if she falls off on this side, I've got a hole in view to roll into." He laughed genially. "In this business you always want to look out you've got a hole to roll into," he concluded. "But I guess it's about time to put a sampson on her."

The sampson proved to be merely a stout slanting brace, planted in the ground and in a deep notch which Tim cut in the side of the log. But, this accomplished, he did not return to his galley-slave work beneath.

"She's at the limit of the screw," he explained.

Marshall looked below. The jack was extended to its greatest capacity.

Tim proceeded methodically to fall and trim several trees of nearly a foot diameter. He cut them into lengths and thrust the skids at various points beneath the raised log. Over and over again he tested their bearing on the ground and the solidity of the support on which their ends rested; for they must sustain the full weight of the log when the jack should be removed. Marshall reflected that this amount of chopping would look like a day's work to himself; but it seemed to be only incidental.

Tim crawled underneath and inch by inch slacked off on the screw. The skids creaked and protested as they took the weight; the log groaned. But it held. Tim wormed his way out, dragging his ponderous machine after him. He deposited it to one side and returned.

"That's a pretty solid old rock," said he. "I guess we'd better save her." So the huge rock too he rolled out.

At a point farther up the log he made slowly and painstakingly a new foundation. The process was resumed from its inception.

Thus, a few inches at a time, the end of the log was raised. The extension possibility of the jack was very short, and so it had to be often moved. Each removal meant a fresh engineering problem of foundation. Not always, owing to the nature of the soil or slope, could it be placed directly beneath, or vertical. Then Tim cut a deep square notch in the round of the tree in which the head of the jack could push without slipping, and on the other side arranged sampsons to prevent rolling under this slanting pressure. It required nice calculation, but the calculations were always correct. And after each preparation came the slow, terrible heaving at the bar. Marshall had long since given over wondering how flesh and blood could stand it. His imagination had reached its limits as to that. He could merely take it for granted, and look upon the old man as an inexhaustible source of power. Sixty-seven years, he had said!

The afternoon wore away. Marshall and Betsy sat side by side on the windfall. The work was slow, but to them it was not tedious. Each fraction of an inch gained they watched for eagerly and acclaimed with triumph. The log had long since taken on a kind of personality, a personality of brutish sullen reluctance that was being forced in spite of itself. Noah had recovered his equanimity and insisted on perching on the log itself, where he alternately made his toilet and dozed.

At last, the apex of the snipe had been brought to rest at a point only just below the smoothed and oiled channel Tim had cut in the windfalls. He walked down the length of the log and surveyed it critically.

"She'll ride it this time," he said, with satisfaction.

Once more he applied himself to the bar. For some time nothing happened, so that the expectation flagged. Then without warning the great timber came to life. Its end rose as it slid up on the snipe. A shrieking, rubbing sound filled the air, and with it a grumbling and crushing as the butt end scraped along the ground. It was a voice of great and awesome power, a power unleashed by man but now scornfully beyond his control. The huge timber began slowly and majestically to slide forward.

"There she goes!" called Tim, who had miraculously bobbed up on one side. "Watch her!" Betsy and Marshall rose to their feet; almost stood on tiptoe.

Then, beneath the other sound, rumbled a grinding as of gigantic brakes. The log slowed, jerked, came to a full stop. Silence fell, and a blankness compounded of disappointment and dismay. The timber rested in the wide runnels Tim had prepared, but slightly across them so that the snipe pressed against one of the sides.

"We'll give her a shove ahead," said Tim, philosophically.

He shouldered his other contraption, the one like a mammoth automobile jack, and which he named a "Gilchrist," and carried it to the butt of the tree. There he braced it at a slant against the end and began to manipulate it. The result should have been a push ahead, but the interplay of resistances merely caused the timber to roll over slightly without advance. Tim for the twentieth time walked over it from end to end, thoughtfully removing some small obstructions and applying others. Then he tried again. As the long handle of the jack pumped up and down, the two bystanders could discern the quiver, could feel the growing uneasiness that animated its fibres. It was receiving into itself ounce by ounce dynamics which must, when they had been sufficiently accumulated, cause it to manifest in action. As the overflow point drew near, the suspense grew. Each click of the ratchet raised also expectation. Then with all the fearsome preliminary of rumble and crush, the huge timber would move—an inch, two inches, three! Again it lay, sullen and brutishly stubborn. The snipe had scraped by so much along the restraining groove edge.

Each time it seemed that another touch—almost a hand shove—must suffice for the release. Each new placement of the Gilchrist was confident in prediction that now she must surely go. Each occasion rearoused expectation, until expectation could no longer lift its head. The thing at last took on the proportions of a dumb, brutish, heavy struggle whose doggedness could never advance except by inches; a sort of trench warfare that must result in stalemate and yet which must for some inscrutable reason go on.

Thus the late afternoon became early evening, and the sun rays began to lift, and the twilight forest stillness drew close, awaiting only the departure of these aliens to take possession. It was past supper time, but Tim showed no indication of quitting. Twice he stopped work long enough to get a drink of water. He had little to say, but his lips were

pressed tightly together and his blue eyes looked forth steadily. Marshall caught them full and muttered an exclamation. The man was enjoying himself!

The snipe moved forward about a foot. Another inch must take it past all obstruction. But how many times had they thought just that!

And then, as though giving up before it was forced to that last inch, the tree began, quite smoothly and silently, to slide forward. It glided past like the flow of a river, but with an acceleration of motion that instantly became terrible—not because of the sheer speed, but because behind it were the massed dynamics of many tons, and because the mind was seized by the realization that, whereas a moment ago seemingly no human power could affect its inertia, now no human power could leash it again.

But this smooth and deadly gliding advance was of only momentary duration. Out over the windfalls the great thing leaped high into the air. The forest awoke at its descending. The most magnificent spirits of destruction rushed to its attendance, and the exultation of great forces that are but rarely released, and wind devils swooping in accompaniment to swirl the dust, toss the splinters, snatch into mad carnival the placid leaves on near-by trees and bushes; and thunderous and mighty voices that ride with the avalanche and the storm.

And bareback on the monster, roused, horrified, from his placid evening doze, rode Noah. He had, during the long interval of grinding work, returned to his vantage point. He had fallen asleep on a normal and friendly world; he awakened suddenly to find himself flying on a mammoth witches' broomstick, surrounded by the above-named rioting djinns and dæmons and elementals. None of his resources seemed adequate, but although he had not yet his wits about him, he deployed them. He arched his back and expanded his tail to a brush, but without hope. These things sometimes worked on other cats and very small dogs, but not on big dogs, and here was something more terrific than the biggest big dog. So Noah, while at the top of the parabola, emulated the flying squirrel and cast himself into space. Through the air he sailed for a dozen feet or more, his paws outspread, seized a tall straight fir bole, and rapidly ascended to the tipmost top. His complex on logs was complete.

Down the mountain-side the great timber ploughed its way, sometimes rearing its point high, again plunging nose down into a narrow ledge of a thicket of small trees, like a huge and majestic steamship breasting the waves: scornful of minor obstructions, snapping down tall young firs and cedars as though they had been grass, making its way for itself as regardless of impenetrability as an elephant in the jungle. The roar of its going was punctuated by greater smashes and bumps and jars; and echoes from the woods and hills flocked joyously to add their clamour. It disappeared from view in the greenery, but its course could be plainly followed both by the noise of the impacts and the violent agitation of certain tree-tops shaken as though by some giant hand. And then through the trunks, far below, they could see a great fountain of water rise up and a geyser of spray as though a shell from some distant warship had fallen and exploded. Abruptly and authoritatively quiet returned.

Marshall found himself far out on the end of a windfall that projected over the slope, swinging his cap and cheering like a maniac.

Tim picked up his worn old coat.

"We'll tow her to the boom and call it a day," he remarked, prosaically, and led the way downhill.

But Marshall was excited, lifted out of himself. It was the exultation of a victor, a personal victory. His mind was vibrating with the released suspense as a bowstring vibrates when at last the arrow is released. He chattered like a boy, and utterly out of character with his usual self-contained person.

"Aren't you dead tired?" he exclaimed. "I know hard work when I see it, and this is certainly hard work! Didn't you ever get hurt? It seems to me very dangerous. How much will you get for that log? Who buys it? Will they come and get it?" He stopped short in his tracks, struck by a practical thought. "Look here: why do you go so far up the mountain for your timber? Here are big trees—and close together—much nearer the salt water. Isn't it good?" Tim too stopped.

"It's good," he replied; "even better than up higher. But you see I've got to cut trees that have a straight run to salt water. These here would slide as far as that little flat, there, and then they'd stop. I can help them into the path of gravity, but I can't be gravity itself. I've got to work with Nature."

"But that flat isn't a hundred feet wide!" protested Marshall.

"It's wide enough to stop them. You've got to have power to move weight. If you can't use Nature's power, you've got to supply it."

"How's that?"

"Machinery. And engine and a drum and a cable. Haul them over to the edge of the flat and slide them over, and then let them go."

They descended the rest of the way, untied the small boats, and rowed out to the log. It floated, placid and docile, bobbing obsequiously in the wavelets. Tim drove a staple in its end and attached thereto a light line. He was about to take its end into his own boat, but this both Betsy and Marshall emphatically negated.

"You've done enough," said the latter. "Take a rest."

"But I always tow them home," objected the old man, mildly. Evidently this epic struggle was to him but the day's work. However, he acquiesced. The procession made its way slowly down the cove. Marshall was in a brown study.

"It ought not to take very elaborate machinery to haul so short a distance," he observed, suddenly.

"What? Oh, no: there's a small outfit called the Westhope. It's a four-horsepower stationary gas engine and a drum."

"If you had one of those, it would make a lot of trees available that now you can't touch."

"Sure."

"I should think you'd get one."

Tim laughed gently.

"I'm going to, son—someday. This hand logging wears a man out after a while, and I aim to fit myself out before I get too old." (Was it sixty-seven years he had said?) "But those things cost money."

Marshall started impulsively to speak, caught Tim's steady and kindly blue eye, and choked back the words. He fell into another brown study.

By now the twilight had fallen. Betsy and Marshall debarked at the *Kittiwake*, leaving Tim to complete the short journey with the log to the boom. Anaxagoras met them at the rail.

"You're late enough," he remarked. "Grub's ready. When you boom your log, come and eat with us, Tim."

Marshall scrambled on deck and drew his host to one side.

"Look here," he said, a little breathlessly, "I want your advice."

"Professional?" queried the Healer of Souls.

"Hell! I don't know!" cried Marshall, impatiently. "What difference does it make?"

Anaxagoras looked at him quickly, but with keen interest, and led the way to the forward deck.

"Shoot!" said he, laconically.

"Do you know a machine called the Westhope—a sort of logging contraption?"

"I've seen them."

"Are they any good? Are they the best sort?"

"About the best for what they're supposed to do. They are just a sort of one-man affair. Why?"

"Would Tim accept one from me?"

Anaxagoras paused once more to survey his patient, but apparently with more interest in the young man's present animation than in his remarks.

"As a gift?" he answered the question at last. "I shouldn't try it."

"I thought not," said Marshall, with decision. "Thanks. I wanted to know."

"What is your idea?" asked Anaxagoras, curiously.

"My idea is that it's a damned outrage the way some things are arranged in this world," snapped back Marshall; and that is all he would say.

Tim returned after an interval. They ate supper, then adjourned to the deck. The talk wandered here and there. Marshall took no part in it.

"You could get the thing on a part payment," he broke in, abruptly, "and pay for it from the added timber you could get out."

"I couldn't get title to it," replied Tim, understanding at once the reference, "and I'd pay interest to the Jews. And I'm a-skeered of Jews. I've studied over that. It won't do. No; I figure if things go right and I work steady at the hand logging, I'll be able to get her in about two years."

Marshall leaned forward.

"I have a proposal to make," said he. "It is this: if you will allow me, I'd like to go into partnership with you. I want to furnish the money for this Westhope machine and let you supply the timber and the labour. The partnership will last until the machine is paid for—and interest of course."

Tim revolved this in his mind.

"I can't see how that's fair, Mr. Marshall," he replied, equably, at last. "It is a fine offer, but it is too uncertain for you. Suppose——"

"I should want the interest high enough to cover all risks," cut in Marshall. "It would be like the Jews only you would have title, and you could depend on me, I think, not to foreclose on you if there was a delay or an accident or things went wrong."

Tim said nothing. The silence that fell on the little group lasted a long time. Marshall, who had been leaning forward tensely eager, relaxed in disappointment. Then, softly, the old man began to hum under his breath a quaint little wandering melody. When he spoke it was evident he was communing with himself and was for the moment quite unaware of those about him.

"There are four big firs that stand on that second bench that would slide just as easy!" he was saying; "and over in the second hollow that stand of cedar! And when I had the timber out of the dip behind the house, I could plant me my peach orchard!" His great gnarled hands were working slowly one over the other. He was coming reverently close to shining dreams long beheld from afar. Slowly he returned to the present company. His face was impassive, but his eyes shone.

"That is a fine offer, Mr. Marshall," he said, simply. He uttered no other thanks. "I think I must go now."

"You must be tired, Tim," observed Betsy, sympathetically.

He arose and stretched his huge frame.

"Tired, Miss Betsy?" he repeated. "Tired? Not I! But I must go and look at the stars." He paused, the painter of his boat in his hand. "It's true," he said, solemnly, "what I've often said. If you only wish for a thing long enough—

He stepped into the boat and rowed away. After a long interval the voice of Anaxagoras broke the silence.

"Well, Marshall," said he, with a calculated dryness, "you're in the logging business. Do you know what those machines cost?"

"What in the name of seven thousand pink devils do you suppose I care?" burst out the young man, angrily.

Remarks came from the shore.

"S O S !" were they. "Help, help! What the hell! Where are my retainers? Is this the treatment to which I am entitled? Do you expect me to walk on the water? or swim? Just because I'm nocturnal is no reason for abandoning me to a dark, damp, and unfriendly forest chuck full of LOGS! S O S ! S O S !"

They all burst out laughing.

"Poor Noah!" cried Betsy. "We forgot all about him!"

CHAPTER VIII

THE ADVENTURE OF THE SEWING-MACHINE POTLATCH

The *Kittiwake* was proceeding at reduced speed through a fog so thick that a hundred feet marked the extreme limit of visibility. From her deck nothing whatever could be seen except a luminous curtain and a narrow circle of pearl-gray water of almost the same colour as the sky. Nevertheless, the chart would have showed them to be centred in a maze of little islands just off Queen Charlotte Sound. Betsy and Marshall were perched in the bow with instructions to watch vigilantly for the faintest indications of land, but to be especially on the lookout for patches of yellow water or kelp that would reveal underwater dangers. Every few moments the whistle would utter a sharp quick note, as though she were impatient. At such times X. Anaxagoras would lean from the pilot-house window, listening with all his ears for an echo, however faint. This is a favourite device on the British Columbia coast for determining the imminence of land. Even the smaller above-water rocks will reply to an accustomed ear.

Though except at such moments there existed no particular reason for silence, the two forward conversed in low tones. Everything was very still. Even the accustomed beat of the engines had been throttled down to comparative quiet, so that the small lapping of waters at the bow could be heard. X. Anaxagoras had confessed that he had no idea of where he was; had expressed a fervid opinion of the prevalent fogs of Queen Charlotte Sound and an equally fervid hope that the *Kittiwake* would find for herself an anchorage and not try to climb any trees, and had retired into anxious vigilance. Noah had taken advantage of the general absorption to produce a small dead trout with which he carried on a gay carouse of tossings and crunchings to the olfactory detriment of the after deck.

Suddenly Marshall seized the pipe rail with his left hand and his companion's arm with his right, in a grip so severe that Betsy cried out. The young man was staring straight ahead, his eyes fairly popping.

"What is it, Jerry?" she cried.

"I'm going crazy!" he muttered, "stark, staring crazy!"

"What is it?" she repeated, more insistently.

"I saw a fish!" he announced, in hollow tones.

She laughed.

"What of it? There *are* fish, you know."

"This one," stated Marshall, painstakingly, "was right there—in the air. He was forty or fifty feet long and marked black and white, like a zebra."

"Good heavens, Jerry!" she cried, with a slight accent of alarm.

"Of course, it was an illusion," said Marshall. "I realize that. But why should I have it? It was as if the fog had thinned ever so slightly and I saw it through gauze. It was as real as though——"

The *Kittiwake's* whistle spoke. It was almost instantly answered by its echo dead ahead.

"Damn!" cried X. Anaxagoras, and applied the reverse.

But before the *Kittiwake's* headway could be quite checked, she glided forward into bright sunlight. The fog lay directly astern like a perpendicular wall. It is often that way in the Queen Charlotte Sound country. The yacht came to a dead stop.

She was nose on to a small, rounded, treeless island of perhaps two or three acres. At various places on it had been erected slim poles from which, in the gentle breeze that held the fog wall in place, fluttered many pennants of white cloth. Some of these were new and whole and clean; others were weather-stained and torn; a few, in the last stages of disintegration, had become little more than ragged gray wisps. Beneath each of these poles crouched tiny huts built of poles and bark—houses in miniature, a good deal like dog kennels in size and shape. And right down the backbone of the island, extending nearly its whole length, had been erected, exactly as an advertising billboard is constructed, a flat affair of split boards; only in place of being rectangular, it had been cut in the shape of a huge fish with a flat head like a whale. This had been painted white with black markings that attested free and untrammelled fancy rather than any strict adherence to scientific accuracy.

Betsy burst into laughter. Marshall stared with open mouth.

"There's your fish!" she cried, delightedly.

Marshall passed his hand over his forehead.

"I'm afraid I'm a little jumpy about myself," he confessed, apologetically. "For a moment, I almost thought—— What is it, anyway?"

"An Island of the Dead—an Indian burial ground. All those little huts are the graves."

The *Kittiwake* backed cautiously away until her stern was swallowed up in the fog bank. But X. Anaxagoras had no intention of getting back into that trouble. He turned her nose to the right and skirted the end of the island. Once clear of its point, they could see into the bight of a wide wooded bay. It possessed a crescent of dazzling white beach. Behind the beach stood a row of what looked to be a dozen huge warehouses.

"The Indian village," Betsy rapidly explained. "Those are community houses: each one represents a whole family and all its ramifications. That's the way they live. What village is it, Sid?"

"I haven't the faintest idea. There's nothing on the chart hereabouts. But it's an anchorage. We'll drop the hook and wait till the fog lifts."

They proceeded slowly toward the white beach, watching carefully for sunken rocks.

As they drew nearer, strange things came into view. A rounded rock standing ten feet out of water guarded the approach. On it crouched a small wooden figure painted black, gazing intently out to sea. Standing erect just back of the beach was another wooden figure, forty feet high, carved from a single log. This was a woman, nude, grotesque, with a great hewn head. It, too, was all black, except for thick carmine lips and white-circled eyes like a clown's; and she, too, stared intently at something beyond. Before each of the warehouse structures were more carved grotesques, totem poles painted brilliantly and freshly with blues and reds and greens and whites, a series of figures one atop the other, gigantic faces, strange crouched animals, fishes with toothed open mouths, winged creatures, creatures with circular sunbursts of outstanding rays, more huge faces; a jumble of incongruous, unbelievable nightmares, yet with a decorative Aztec feeling, an ultimate harmony design. They stood there, in a long, irregular row, dozens of them, colossal, astonishing. And they, too, as though waiting with a weird and unearthly detachment, all stared out above mere human affairs toward the sea.

There was no sign of life: the place seemed to be deserted. Everywhere the strong rank nettles peculiar to the Northern country had grown high. They were almost to the knees of the woman god in front. They flourished thickly along the buildings. One unacquainted with the rapidity of their development might have imagined the place long abandoned: for anywhere else such a completely obliterating growth could only have been the product of many years.

The *Kittiwake's* hook was dropped. All four got into the dinghy and rowed ashore.

The pure whiteness of the beach proved to be resultant from the fact that it was composed, not of sand, but of clam shells broken fine: mute attestation of many years of occupancy by a people who fancied that bivalve. They reached the dinghy on this dazzling strand and stepped ashore. Noah, delighted as always by shore leave, disappeared in the nettles.

They followed, but gingerly, for the growth was head high and stung cruelly. By dint of kicking ahead they made a way, however; and soon stood on a level with the community houses. These extended in an irregular crescent following the curve of the beach. Their visible structure showed nothing remarkable. Their low-pitched broad roofs were covered with shakes; their sides had been boarded, and at some remote period had been painted white. Across the front of each, however, and occupying the whole space, had been traced, in black, huge faces, or bird-beasts with wide and outspread wings. These, with the totem poles and the feeling of absolute desertion combined with complete ignorance as to the situation on the map, were sufficient to throw about the scene an air of weird unreality, as though the whole affair had been summoned by some magician of the fog and might vanish with the mists.

Under the subdued spell of this they made their way slowly through the nettles from one house to the next. There were no windows, and in each case the double doors were secured by very modern-looking padlocks. Finally, at one end of the row they came to the framework, in place, of a house not yet completed. It was composed of the trunks of whole trees of great size, peeled and hewn round. The girders leaped in single unsupported spans for upward of a hundred feet and were each at least three or four feet in diameter. The uprights were solid columns of even greater size. It was almost Egyptian in the dignity of its mass. But looking more in detail, Marshall had to add a thought of the Greek. Each of the timbers had been carefully hewn along the direction of its length, and the ax marks, following each other with beautiful accuracy, produced the effect of a fluted column. The idea flashed across Marshall's mind that this might indeed be the origin of the Doric and Corinthian columns; that they had evolved from the first wooden pillars hewn out by the ax.

But a more intriguing speculation was as to the means by which these tremendous timbers had been put in place. The men discussed it. Betsy, tiring of technicalities of skids and scissors, wandered away toward the other end of the "street." After a bit they heard her call.

"Here's one that's unlocked," she announced, when they had joined her.

They pushed open the double doors and stepped inside.

There were no windows to admit light, but the shake roof turned out to be far from weatherproof, and through innumerable chinks and crevices, and even by way of wide gaps, the sunlight streamed in long, milky, slanting bars and bands. At first its brilliance dazzled their eyes so that the dimness of the interior became a darkness. Then, slowly, at the other end of the long building, as though actually materializing from the empty void, detail by detail two Presences appeared. They were colossal in size, towering up to the high roof, side by side; and across the whole breadth of the building they held wide outspread wings of black and white. In the murky dimness, behind the slanting bars of sunlight, they seemed to hover, poised and menacing, gods in waiting.

The little group drew together, awed in spite of themselves. The great fluted beams and columns, the size, the twilight, the slanting sun bars, the thick still silence, and the waiting colossal wing-spread gods made of the place a temple. The effect would pass, as details demanded attention; but for the moment it was complete.

Indeed, the effect was already passing. Their eyes, becoming accustomed to the reduced light, were beginning to make out a low divan-like bench running quite around the room, and firestones in the centre, and the dark festoons of soot hanging from the roof above, and a litter of objects here and there. Marshall was on the point of suggesting further investigation when all were frozen to breathless immobility. From the direction of the menacing winged gods came a low and piercing wail. It began on a low key as though under the breath, rose in volume and pitch almost to a shriek, and died slowly away again. Absolute silence fell.

Betsy had clutched Marshall's arm. All three were staring into the dimness, their eyes starting from their heads.

"For the love of Mike!" muttered Anaxagoras.

The voice of the gods spoke again, this time in quick, high, warning notes, as though forbidding profanation. It died to a deeper rumble. Marshall, in spite of his common sense, felt the hair prickle on his head. Then a familiar note caught his ear. He burst into laughter.

"The place isn't quite deserted, after all!" he cried.

In two strides, Betsy still clinging to his arm, he passed the band of sunlight that had lain between the gods and themselves. Immediately what lay beyond it became clearly visible. At the feet of one of the gods crouched Noah; at the feet of the other crouched a wild, long, lean native cat, jet black in colour. They faced each other evilly across the interval, and in the leisurely and declamatory Homeric manner they were preparing combat.

At the sudden appearance of what it took to be reinforcements, the strange cat whisked away. Noah stretched himself with an air of conscious virtue.

"Anyway, it was impressive while it lasted," observed X. Anaxagoras.

They turned to look about them. But at this moment they became aware of the sound of distant voices.

At first the open sunlight dazzled their eyes. Then they saw at the point a concourse of canoes. They were lying motionless on the water, huddled uncertainly together, and their many occupants were evidently consulting over the presence of these strangers. Finally, one canoe detached itself from the group and began slowly to approach the beach.

"Rightful owners returned," surmised Anaxagoras. "I imagine I'd better go down and explain ourselves."

The canoe met him at the shore. Marshall and Betsy, watching from above, saw that it was a large dugout painted black. Its stern had been gracefully prolonged above the water line into a sharp prong, and its bow rose and projected as a high beak ornamented with brightly painted carvings and terminated by wide-spreading deer's antlers. A fat woman wielded the stern paddle, which was painted scarlet, and a heavy-set man occupied the bow. Between the two were miscellaneous things heaped in promiscuously, among which could be distinguished blankets, woven baskets, coal-oil cans, mats, kettles, one or two children, two dogs, and a tame crow in a willow cage. The craft was halted about twenty feet out, and a pourparler begun. It lasted for some time, but its purport was indistinguishable. Finally, the canoe was beached and the man came ashore. He and the Healer of Souls squatted on their heels and resumed their talk. The woman and the children and the dogs remained stolidly where they were. Off the point the rest of the flotilla waited, still

huddled together.

At length, the two men arose. The Indian reëmbarked, turned the canoe prow, and paddled back to his people. X. Anaxagoras, after a brief interval, joined the watchers. He was laughing to himself.

"It seems we've butted in," he explained, "and have created considerable distrust and alarm. It took me some time to convince old Stick-in-the-mud that we were harmless. He thought we were undoubtedly government people come to put a spoke in their wheels and perhaps arrest them."

"What's the idea?" asked Marshall.

"Well, it seems that this village is pretty remote and almost unknown. So they picked it out as the scene of the crime with the idea that it was little likely to be suspected; especially as it is known that its inhabitants went up to River's Inlet for the summer's fishing. When they saw the *Kittiwake* they thought all was discovered: that they'd been tipped off, as it were."

"What's the crime?" asked Betsy.

"They were going to give a potlatch, I think; though my friend didn't commit himself."

"Oh, glory be!" cried Betsy. "What luck!"

"I don't know whether they'll go through with it or not," said Anaxagoras, "but at least they're coming ashore. It's up to us to prove ourselves harmless."

"Why shouldn't they give a potlatch?" inquired Marshall "—and what is it exactly, anyway?"

"It's forbidden—illegal," explained Anaxagoras. "The Government is trying to put a stop to it."

He sat down and produced a pipe. The canoes were gathered in a close knot of consultation.

"A potlatch is a giving-away party," he continued. "The fellow who gives a potlatch gathers the bunch and proceeds to distribute everything he can get together, with the accompaniment of appropriate ceremony and feasting, of course."

"Well, why not, if he wants to?"

"Originally, and in its purity, the potlatch was all right. Indeed, it was a sort of rough old-age insurance. The man who gave a potlatch in his youth was privileged to demand in return potlatches in his age or infirmity. After he had given a potlatch he was entitled to a token in the form of a sheet of copper, shaped roughly like a shield. Each of these sheets had a definite value—fictitious, of course—representing the value of the stuff he had distributed. I have seen them valued as high as five thousand dollars. Some of them are very ancient."

"Five thousand dollars! That must represent considerable wealth to give away!"

"I saw one flour potlatch where the flour sacks made a pile about fifty feet long by twenty feet wide and more than ten feet high. Generally, a potlatch is specialized—only one sort of thing is given away—though sometimes they are general and anything goes. There are flour potlatches, or hoolichan potlatches, or bacon potlatches, or blanket potlatches, or whatever."

"It sounds like a good scheme," submitted Marshall. "Why prohibit?"

"They say the thing degenerated. It developed evils. The element of rivalry crept in. Kickapoo Waterpot would give a potlatch this year, and next year Cultus Harry was bound to give a more splendid one. He'd steal, hypothecate, go in debt, do anything to get the wherewithal to make a bigger showing. One fellow sold or rented his mother in three successive seasons to three different men. And they found that the white man's institutions permitted them to borrow, so that they often involved themselves hopelessly for years ahead. The Indian agents complained that it would take a

clearing house and a bench of judges to straighten out the debts and cross debts and cross-cross debts resulting from a series of display potlatches."

"I see," said Marshall.

"They claim a lot more evils, too. Finally, they thought themselves justified in calling a halt. But it's an old custom and dies hard. They pull off a bootleg potlatch, so to speak, occasionally. This seems to be one of the occasions. Well, they've talked it over; here they come."

The canoes were now coming forward confidently, and shortly they deployed in an irregular line and ran up on the beach. A miscellaneous company debarked: men and women of all ages, children, and a great variety of dogs, cats, and chickens. The canoes were, in addition, well laden with all sorts of things, but these were for the moment left in their places while the squaws and girls set to work vigorously with their paddles knocking flat the nettles. While this task was in accomplishment the men stood or squatted on the beach.

There were twenty-five or thirty of them, but of them all two stood out for particular notice. One was the heavy-set man whom Anaxagoras had held in consultation, and who was remarkable rather for his air of authority than for any personal distinction. The other was a slender young man, taller than the ordinary. He held slightly apart from the others, and appeared to be brooding over something.

No one approached the whites, and after a little Anaxagoras advised a return to the yacht.

"It will be better," he said. "It will give them a free hand and they will be more likely to go ahead with their plans."

So, although the proceedings were just nearing the point of interest, they descended to the beach, boarded the dinghy, and rowed off to the yacht. There for some time Betsy and Marshall sat on deck with the glasses, spying on what they could see from a distance. This was not much. After finishing the nettle job, the squaws began leisurely to unload the canoes and carry their contents up the steep bank to one or another of the community houses. These large dugouts were excellent cargo carriers. After a top layer of household goods and personal belongings had been removed, there were uncovered dozens—it almost seemed hundreds—of wooden boxes, apparently of considerable weight. These, Anaxagoras ventured the opinion, probably contained the materials for the potlatch. They were carried one by one, and with difficulty, to the central house of the row. Then all the adult population disappeared within, shutting the doors behind them. Shortly the interstices of the roof began to smoke.

That seemed to be about all.

It was late evening and dark. Three of the members of the *Kittiwake's* crew were comfortably reading beneath the electric lights. The fourth, being a nocturnal creature, was prancing about on top of the deck house, apparently, to judge by the sounds, engaged in lightsomely moving heavy office safes which he had mysteriously summoned for the purpose. Therefore, a gentle deprecatory tapping at the cabin door came as a complete surprise, for the approach of a canoe had been masked by Noah's daily dozen. Anaxagoras thrust open the hatch, but before he had an opportunity to identify the visitor or extend an invitation, the newcomer insinuated himself deftly through the opening and dropped lightly to the cabin floor.

He turned out to be the tall young man. On closer inspection, his type proved to present quite unexpected variations from that of the usual Northwest Coast Indian.

His figure was slender and wiry, his features more finely chiselled than ordinarily. But these distinguishing differences were instantly forgotten when he spoke, for his voice was clear and musical, and his diction remote from the customary syncopated jargon of mingled English and Chinook. Indeed, it might without exaggeration have been described as chaste and elegant. The three Kittiwakes sat spellbound, staring incredulously, while the graceful young man delivered himself of the following as though it had been a set speech.

"Sirs and madam," said the young man, "you will please pardon this intrusion and the method of my entrance. My visit to you is furtive. If it were suspected, it would involve me in trouble."

Betsy and Marshall sat open-mouthed as fishes, but X. Anaxagoras recovered almost instantly, and at once, with a gleam of joy, adopted the elaborate manner of his professional moments.

"My dear sir, we are honoured, I assure you," said he. "If the emergency is as you describe it, pray allow me to draw the curtains. None would then suspect your presence, if your canoe does not betray you."

"I made that fast alongside," explained the young man, "where the shadow of your hull will conceal it."

"I am gratified that this is the case," observed X. Anaxagoras, courteously, "and that thus the period of your visit will be undisturbed by uneasiness. Will you be so kind as to be seated? And may I offer you this small libation to our further acquaintance?"

"Rum," said the strange young man, "is the curse of my people." Nevertheless, he held out his hand for the glass, which he drained with every appearance of satisfaction. "You will be impatient to learn the object of my call. It is very simple. I have a great respect for the opinion of white people, especially people of means and refinement such as yourselves. I cannot consider the thought of being placed without explanation in what must seem to you a ridiculous situation. It is to give you that explanation and to ask for your understanding—yes, and for your pity, madam—that I have come."

"We shall be pleased to hear it," encouraged Anaxagoras.

"Perhaps it would not be immodest to say that you must already have noticed that my attainments are in some measure above those usual to my people?" queried the youth, diffidently.

"That," Anaxagoras assured him, "needs no statement. I should go farther and say that the elegance of your expression somewhat overpasses what one expects to find even in my own race."

"I thank you," said the young man, with a slight bow. "It is my constant care, in all circumstances, to keep it so. You will wonder how this has come about. I will tell you.

"In my earliest childhood I was taken into the household of a man whose daily companion I remained until his death. He expended the most unremitting efforts on my education, especially that branch of it which has to do with expression in words. He had a deep and justified faith in the efficacy of language, both in the setting forth of thought, and especially in persuading the conduct of others. He believed, and justly, that a command of language is equivalent to a command of power and is the most valuable equipment a man can possess."

"In listening to you I become convinced of the fact," said X. Anaxagoras.

"Thank you," repeated the young man. "This he had fully proved in his own career, for by its means in the exercise of his profession he had within a few years accumulated a sufficient competence to enable him to retire to the calling which most appealed to him."

"Which was?" inquired Anaxagoras, politely.

"He became a missionary among my people. For ten years I lived with him in that capacity. From him I received the education you have so kindly remarked, together with a close and constant daily drill in choice of words and expression. He often told me he looked upon me as his son and successor, and that his ambition was to fit me for marked success in his own profession. For that, he often pointed out, the chief requisite was a complete and elegant command of spoken language, for only thus could distinction from the common ruck be assured. And he was accustomed to add that the fact that I belonged to the Indian race gave me an added advantage not to be underestimated."

"I must congratulate him on the success of his efforts," said Anaxagoras.

"Again I thank you. Having brought my education in this respect to the point he deemed sufficient, he resigned his position with the Missionary Society and resumed his old activities, not so much for his pecuniary advancement as to afford me an opportunity of proof. I must again risk the accusation of immodesty in saying that his confidence was

justified. Before his death I am glad to say I was able to afford him satisfaction by becoming the acknowledged head of my profession."

"Very gratifying, I am sure," observed the Healer of Souls. "And are your activities centred on your own people?"

"They offer but a limited field, I am sorry to say. That of the United States is more extensive. It is there I have won my success."

"They are indeed a sufficiently benighted people to justify the most talented missionary effort," agreed Anaxagoras, drily.

"Ah, I perceive we speak at cross purposes," cried the young Indian. "My master's purpose was to educate me into his old profession, not into his new. Much as he felt himself called to spiritual effort, his thoughts were ever turned toward the scenes of his old triumphs. He had been an acknowledged master, and before he died, I am thankful to say, he saw in me a worthy successor. I can say this without vainglory, for I am entirely of his fashioning. Besides, as he anticipated, my racial origin gave me an advantage. By dressing in what is erroneously conceived to be an Indian costume, and furnishing out my equipage in harmony with that idea, I appealed to the romantic sense which is particularly strong in the starved lives of those isolated women who would naturally be my best customers."

"May I ask what this profession is—or was?" inquired Anaxagoras.

"I am," stated the young Indian with simple pride, "the best sewing-machine agent in North America!"

Betsy choked, coughed violently, disappeared. After a moment she returned.

"Please excuse me," she begged, demurely, "I swallowed the wrong way. Please go on with your most interesting narrative."

"Unfortunately," the young Indian acceded, "my thoughts turned toward the scenes of my youth. My success has always been itinerant. Nor have I found speed either requisite or desirable. Where others have adopted motor transportation, I have found it best to retain the horse vehicle. Outside the fact that my pinto ponies with their feathered headstalls have a certain distinguishing and advertising value, a deliberate approach—— But these are details of the finer technique with which I shall not weary you."

"They are most interesting and instructive," Anaxagoras assured him.

"It occurred to me that the British Columbia coast offered practically a virgin field. Families are scattered and remote. They are almost invariably unsupplied with sewing machines."

"That I can well believe," Anaxagoras assured him.

"I was not able to convince my firm. In an evil moment I resolved to undertake the venture on my own account. With this end in view I procured and fitted out a gasoline boat. This I stocked with sewing machines. Having in mind the great success of my pinto ponies and their unique equipage, I painted my gasoline boat in primary colours with an aboriginal design across the bows. In place of a mast I erected a miniature replica of the totem pole that had stood before my father's house. The effect was at once striking and chaste."

"I should imagine so," murmured Betsy.

"It was a mistake," sighed the young Indian. "Though my recollection of its details was sufficiently clear to permit my accurate duplication, my memory of its significance was not so precise. I am very unfortunate."

"How so?" asked Marshall, as the Indian seemed to have fallen into a muse. The latter aroused himself.

"At Alert Bay I happened upon my own people and foregathered with them quite innocently. By various pretexts they induced me to accompany them. Once away from possible protection I was informed of my situation. In their view

my affiliations with the tribe had never been severed. I was still a member. The chief pointed out to me that I had erected a totem pole without having given a potlatch. In view of my ignorance, in which with some difficulty I induced them to believe, they compounded my offense by allowing me to give the lacking potlatch. That is why you see me here, taking the leading part in a ceremony which is not only silly and barbaric, but illegal."

"And you undoubtedly wish us to do something about it?—take you to the Indian agent at Alert Bay?" surmised Anaxagoras. "Is that it?"

"Not so, kind sir," denied the Indian, earnestly. "No such thought was in my mind. I wished merely to set my position right in your eyes."

Anaxagoras considered this.

"Look here," he said, abruptly, "I'll make that offer. I'll take you to the agent, and he'll see you get your goods back and get safe away."

"Thank you, sir; no."

"Why not?"

For the first time in the interview the young Indian showed signs of embarrassment. Finally he turned to Betsy.

"It is to you, madam, that I must now appeal for understanding," he murmured, sentimentally, "for your fair sex is ever lenient to the vagaries of the human heart. In the houses of my people is one who has all mine. Madam, I will spare you a lover's rhapsodies. Suffice it to say that in my eyes she is as the moon rising in the forest. Since my eyes have rested upon her my mind has had no other thought than to make her my own. I think she looks not unkindly upon me, that my eloquence has won her regard."

"I am sure it must have!" murmured Betsy.

"But her regard is not sufficient. The consent of her father must be obtained, and that can be secured in only one way. I must reinstate myself fully. He is very rigid in his ideas, and ultraconservative as to tradition. He is also of a firm and decided, not to say dictatorial, character. You, sir, held some conversation with him."

"The heavy-set man," supplied Anaxagoras.

"For that reason I must go forward with this most distasteful and expensive performance."

"But you should not think of expense in such a connection," chided Betsy, "if you are in this way assured of your girl."

"I do not, madam. But I am assured of nothing except reinstatement. I can obtain no promise. And, madam, I have a rival, a powerful and dangerous rival, belonging to the people who live in Toba Inlet. He is not now on the ground, but I dread the chance of an encounter."

"What would happen then?" asked Betsy, with interest.

"We should have to fight it out, madam, according to the customs of our people. It would be very destructive. I hope and pray he may not put in an appearance until I have had full opportunity to finish this affair and press my suit."

"Oh, I hope so!" said Betsy. "And I think your father-in-law is a horrid old-fashioned parent."

"He is not unjust, madam, from his point of view. He has kindly permitted me to designate the character of the potlatch."

"Yes?" encouraged Anaxagoras. "And what have you decided to give?"

"Sewing machines," replied the young Indian.

"Sewing machines!" gasped Betsy.

"I get them at wholesale rates," said the Indian.

He bowed gravely to each in turn, then disappeared as suddenly as he had come. The company sat in stifled suspense until they heard the grating of his canoe on the beach, then they burst into mirth, guarded by Anaxagoras's warning.

"For heaven's sake, look out!" he repressed them. "Remember how sound carries over the water!"

"Shut the hatch!" pleaded Betsy. "I shall suffocate if I have to hold in any longer!"

They battened down tight, then finally gave vent to their feelings.

"I have led a varied life," Anaxagoras summed it up at last, "but never in all my experience have I run against anything like this! This is going to be *good*! Sewing machines! An Indian has about as much use for a sewing machine as a dog has for two tails. I wouldn't have missed this for a gold mine. He's incredible! There ain't no sich animile! Oh, Lord!—Look here, Betsy, you've got to get out of here and let me go to bed. I can't stand so much emotion. I'm all worn out!"

In twenty minutes the *Kittiwake* was dark. But for some time explosive, quickly stifled chuckles might have been heard, now from forward, now from the starboard bunk, now from the port, as some newly ridiculous angle of the situation appealed to one or another of the three.

"I feel as if to-morrow were Christmas—I can hardly wait for morning!" Betsy called back, after a while.

The Kittiwakes were up early and early ashore. But, in spite of that fact, preparations were well forward. The boxes had been unpacked and their contents assembled. Sewing machines by the dozen stood all up and down the street: sewing machines enough, it seemed, to supply every member of the community—man, woman, child, and dog—with at least one apiece. Those of the people who were in sight were dressed in new and clean garments: the women in bright calicoes and ultra-violet jerseys or sweaters; the men in work shirts and new Can't-bust-'em or Boss-of-the-road overalls. Occasionally there passed rather hurriedly from one community house to the other a figure in ceremonial costume: long robes of cloth trimmed with weasel, or feathers, or the bills of ducks, or even with bright metal thimbles. Some of them carried wooden tridents or other odd-shaped sceptres. One held in his arms a carved and painted wooden mask, or rather helmet, of fearsome design, into which the head could be inserted completely. But these people were evidently as yet supposed to be invisible, like actors in the wings, for the bystanders rather ostentatiously affected not to see them. From the roof holes of all the community houses rose clouds of smoke.

No one paid the slightest attention to the white visitors, who accordingly sat down to await developments. After a considerable interval, however, they were joined by their acquaintance of the night before and the heavy-set man. Both were in ceremonial robes.

"I have persuaded my people that you are friendly to our intentions," the young man told them, "and you are invited to remain. I regret that the religious ceremonies are private, but we hope you will attend the feasts, the dancing, and the giving."

Anaxagoras appropriately expressed himself. After a moment the chief, who had said nothing, but who had watched them closely, drifted away.

"Which is she?" Betsy asked the young man, eagerly. The latter sighed.

"You will not see her until the feasting. She takes part in the religious ceremonies. I will hope for your good

opinion."

"There seem to be a great many sewing machines," ventured Marshall.

"Very many," agreed the young Indian, sadly. "It is a very expensive potlatch. I am an unfortunate man." He laid his hand on the nearest. "The best hand models, with all attachments. With one of these you can at will do any one of twelve stitches and learn in a day to perform any operation that a skilled needlewoman could accomplish only after a long apprenticeship. In two hours I could so instruct you that with the embroidery attachment you could in your spare moments create most beautiful embroidered cushion covers, mats, doilies, and the like. Designs with appropriate colour schemes are furnished at a nominal extra cost. Two of our most popular designs for pillow shams are entitled, Wide Awake and Fast Asleep——" He broke off. "But I will explain this to you on your own machines."

"Our own machines?" echoed Betsy.

"But certainly. As invited guests you must partake in the giving. It is a very expensive potlatch—even at wholesale rates."

He seemed to be falling into very low spirits as the hour approached.

"But what can they do with all those machines?" asked Marshall. "What will become of them?"

"They will be broken and rusted and thrown to one side," said the young Indian, bitterly. "They will never sew. These beautiful machines! I am a very unfortunate man. I feel that my misfortunes have only just begun."

"Oh, no!" Betsy encouraged him, cheerfully. "You mustn't begin to feel that way. Of course, it's too bad you have to do it in such a silly fashion, but after all, if you get your girl you shouldn't begrudge the mere money. Besides, it's partly your fault, you know. You chose to give sewing machines. You might have given blankets, or bacon, or flour, or something useful to everybody; now, mightn't you?"

"Many people have given such potlatches," rejoined the Indian, "but no one has ever given a sewing-machine potlatch. I shall be very famous. Besides," he added, after a moment, "I get them at wholesale rates."

He raised his eyes, groaned, pointed his finger.

"You see?" he demanded, almost vindictively. "What did I tell you?"

Around the point came a canoe. It was followed closely by another, and yet another, and more, until a flotilla almost equal in size to that of yesterday's arrival was headed toward the beach. Strangely enough, many of the laden canoes towed others that were empty.

"Skookum Charley!" said the Indian, in a hollow voice.

"The deadly rival!" cried Anaxagoras.

"What will they do? Will there be a battle?" asked Betsy, excitedly.

The young Indian stood up.

"No battle of our peoples," said he. "They will watch. But between us two it must be fought according to Indian custom. I am an unfortunate man. It will be very destructive."

He stalked down to the white beach, where he posed alone, with folded arms. Silently the other Indians gathered in a dark and waiting semicircle atop the low bank. The incoming canoes deflected to the left and landed about a hundred yards away. All their occupants but one debarked and swarmed down the bluff to take their places, intermingled with the others. All seemed friendly enough as far as they were concerned. Here and there low, brief greetings were exchanged, but shortly a complete and expectant silence fell.

"I don't believe I'm going to like this," whispered Betsy, uneasily. "What are they going to do? Can't we stop it?"

"I don't know," muttered Anaxagoras, gravely. "It looks like serious business. I don't believe we dare interfere, though."

"Let's get back in the boat, then," urged Betsy.

To this Anaxagoras assented. They arose. But at once the heavy-set man came across to them.

"You sit down," he commanded.

"I just go back to boat," explained Anaxagoras.

"No. You sit down," repeated the Indian. His appearance was in no sense conciliatory. They sat down.

"Now you stay quiet," commanded the chief, and returned to his place. Anaxagoras looked grave. Betsy had turned pale.

The one man who had remained with the newcomer canoes now thrust one of them from the shore and began slowly to paddle it down the beach. He was dressed in a ceremonial robe, and was of a large frame that had evidently earned him his name of Skookum Charley. The canoe in which he sat was large and heavily ornamented.

"He seems to be unarmed," said Marshall. "How do they fight, anyway?"

"I have no idea: looks like a bare-fist affair," replied Anaxagoras.

"Well, Heaven help our friend in that case," observed Marshall.

Skookum Charley brought his craft to a point directly opposite his rival, stood up, and delivered himself of a harangue. To this the other replied at greater length.

"If it's a talking match, Heaven help Skookum Charley," whispered Anaxagoras.

But now the rival thrust the canoe on the beach and stepped ashore. He and the young Indian with folded arms faced each other at ten paces. They stood motionless for some time. Then from the bank descended to them a robed figure wearing one of the huge and grotesque mask helmets. It carried an ax. This it presented to Skookum Charley, who seized the weapon and brandished it about his head.

"But this is murder!" cried Betsy. She half arose; but before she could make further demonstration, Skookum Charley bounded forward with astonishing agility to the attack.

Only his onslaught was not upon his rival, but upon his own canoe!

Crash! the ax sank into the ornamentation at its bow. *Whack! Crash! Whack!* the blows followed one another in rapid succession. Chips flew; long slivers came away; splits opened. A dugout is made out of a solid log, and any log requires considerable chopping to reduce it to cordwood; but that is precisely what Skookum Charley did to his canoe. When he had finished he stood for a moment, panting heavily, amid the ruins, then cast the ax at the feet of his motionless rival.

Sheer astonishment had held the white spectators silent. Now they broke out into rapid conjecture. What was the idea? They could make neither head nor tail of it.

After standing in the same pose for half a minute, the young Indian moved. Up the beach he stalked to where lay the canoes of his people, selected one of them, and brought it to the beach. Immediately two old men, one from each tribe, descended and examined it closely. They nodded and returned to their places. At once the young Indian picked up the ax and in his turn proceeded to demolish the canoe. He was neither as strong nor as skilfull as Skookum Charley, but he did quite as complete a job. Then he, too, stepped back.

Skookum Charley once more went up the beach, got himself another canoe, and returned. This, too, he chopped to pieces. There was, however, no more ceremony about it. His rival no longer posed on the beach, but disappeared in the crowd. As the day was warm and the work hard, Skookum Charley laid aside his ceremonial robe and came forth in an undershirt. Also, he did less wild, fast swinging of the ax, but went at it more like a woodsman putting up cordwood. Nevertheless, the result was the same, a perfectly good canoe knocked into smithereens. When he had finished he wiped the sweat from his brow and went to sit on a rock, while the other paddled up his second canoe and set to work.

The crowd no longer held either its peace or its position. It circulated and chattered. Therefore, the white visitors no longer felt obliged to remain silent.

"Of all the idiotic performances!" exclaimed Betsy. "Can you imagine what it's all about?"

"It looks to me like a poker game—trying to bluff the other fellow out," said Anaxagoras. "May be a sacrifice to the tribal gods, or something like that, before they begin the real trouble."

But at the end of his second canoe, while Skookum Charley began on his third, the young Indian came to sit beside them.

"It is our way to fight," he explained, in answer to eager questions, "where two people only wish to fight by the custom of our people." He sighed. "It is very destructive. I am an unfortunate man."

"It seems a very silly way!" cried Betsy. "How long do you keep it up?"

"Until one or the other ceases." He arose. "It is now soon my turn once more. I must seek more canoes. I have none of my own and must purchase from others."

There seemed to be some difficulty in this. The young Indian could be seen here and there in the crowd, arguing and pleading. After Skookum Charley had finished he stood for some time waiting. At length, the other completed his negotiations, appeared with a fresh victim, and did his ax work. Skookum Charley, evidently much heartened by this evidence that his rival was weakening, had his fourth ready and waiting. The young man returned to his white friends.

"It is finished," he announced to them, dully, but in a low voice not to be overheard. "He wins the combat. I can buy no more canoes to match with his."

"Must it be canoes?" asked Marshall.

"Oh, no, other things would be as good."

"Why not sewing machines, then?"

"They are not mine: they belong to the potlatch."

Skookum Charley, as though he scented victory, was nearing the stern of his canoe and was wielding the ax in a great burst of speed and energy.

"Offer them higher prices," advised Marshall. "Any one will sell anything, if he gets his price."

"It is not price," disclaimed the Indian. "That I would gladly pay. They demand cash, and I have no more cash. I am indeed unfortunate. In bank I have still much money, but that is useless. They will not listen. My life is ruined, for I do not think I now care to live. My potlatch is useless. I am shamed in my people's eyes. No maiden will look on such as I have become."

Marshall stared reflectively on the perspiring and exultant Skookum Charley. Between strokes the latter was grinning malevolently in the general direction of his rival, and hence into the faces of the white spectators. Skookum Charley's countenance was broad and pockmarked, his eyes were dose together, and his expression devoid of amiability.

"Do you know, I don't like that fellow!" said Marshall, suddenly. "Sit tight, old sport, and be of good cheer!"

He dropped down to the beach, shoved off the dinghy, and rowed out toward the *Kittiwake*. So unexpected was this action that, though several arose as though to stop him, he was off before any effective movement in that direction could be made. His absence, however, was very brief. He popped in and out of the cabin and returned. Skookum Charley had finished his canoe and stood triumphantly waiting. The younger Indian was making no move, but sat dejectedly, his arms hanging between his knees. Marshall dropped down beside him.

"Look here," he said, rapidly. "You go buy canoes. Buy the whole blooming caboodle of canoes. Go get 'em! Here's the money right here; and more if you have to have it. But lick that cross-eyed slob! I don't like his looks."

He thrust a roll of bills into the Indian's flaccid hand and gave his shoulder a shove.

"Oh, benefactor!" stammered the young man. "How can I ever thank you! How can I ever repay you!"

"You can repay me from that alleged bank account. You needn't thank me," snapped Marshall. "Go! Get busy!"

The young Indian darted away.

"Do you expect ever to see your money again?" demanded Anaxagoras. "Do you really believe that pompous fakir has anything in the bank, or if he has, that he'll repay you? Do you know what canoes are worth? Do you——"

"No to all of it," interrupted Marshall, cheerfully. "And I don't give a hang. I'm paying for a grandstand seat at the best show I've seen in years. And I want the hero to get the girl. And I don't like the looks of Skookum Charley. Doggone it, leave me be!"

Anaxagoras looked at his face, young and alight with mischievous interest, and smiled to himself. Marshall caught the smile.

"Yes, I'm a damn fool," he acknowledged. "And I like it."

"So do I," struck in Betsy.

The fantastic contest did not much longer endure. Skookum Charley's military estimate of the situation had been good. He had been quite well instructed as to the available resources of his antagonist, and had provided himself with an ample reserve over and above what would be needed. But he had not considered the possibility of reënforcements. Shortly, he ran out of canoes and had to do a little buying himself. On a cash and rising market he soon came to an end. His nerve held out to the last, and he attempted to ring in a small and weather-beaten flat-bottomed skiff. This the young Indian scornfully matched with a dilapidated old barnacled fish box. A ripple of laughter ran over the assembly. The appraisers went through the form of examining it—and nodded!

This was tantamount to an award of victory. Skookum Charley retired in confusion. The assembly began to move about and chatter excitedly. The young Indian, his face beaming, shook Marshall again and again by the hand, voicing his polysyllabic gratitude and assuring the latter that check would follow by return mail.

"You shall have," declaimed the victor, "as soon as I can have it delivered, one of our Model 41 as a souvenir. It is superior to these: it is the best on the market. Its embroidery feature comprehends the ability to do work so fine as to deceive the expert into the belief that it is hand done. You will with it be able to sew anything, coarse or fine—sails of canvas or silken roses on your slippers. Furthermore, it shall be special. It shall not be stock-model. It shall have its bright metalwork like gold, and its enamel shall be of sky blue, and——"

"But," interrupted Marshall, laughing at this lyric outburst, "what use would a machine be to me?"

"In your new household: when you are married." He turned to Betsy. "I will myself teach the lady gladly before the wedding day."

The accused gasped, but further embarrassment was cut short by a complete change in the orator's demeanour. His exultation went out like an electric light; his mouth fell open in dismay; his eye glazed; consternation came upon him. At the same moment, the crowds stopped as though frozen and a collective murmur of lamentation ascended.

"For Heaven's sake, what's the matter?" cried Betsy.

"Pinched!" ejaculated the Indian, hollowly.

Unobserved, a small boat had approached the shore. Its occupant was now leisurely preparing to beach it. He was a small and insignificant-looking white man, dressed in a battered straw hat, a gray flannel shirt, and brown overalls held up by indifferent suspenders.

"Who is it?" asked Betsy.

"It is the Northwest Mounted Police," said the Indian.

Betsy stared. The Northwest Mounted Police! Where the stiff-brimmed sombrero? The natty red tunic? The neat blue breeches and shining boots? Where the ready revolver? No novel or movie had prepared her for this. And where the champing steed? At the moment he was engaged leisurely in baling the champing steed.

"Are you *sure*?" she doubted.

"It is he. I am pinched," the young Indian assured her, sadly. "Now I must go to jail and lose my sewing machines and be made to pay a large fine of money. And I have no potlatch, and my love is hopeless. I am an unfortunate man."

The policeman stepped ashore.

"Who's running this show?" he addressed the gathering. "Step out!"

The young Indian made as though to obey, but Marshall thrust him back and himself descended to the beach.

"Hullo, Foster," said he.

The policeman stared, then drew himself up and saluted.

"Captain Marshall!" he cried. "I *am* glad to see you! That's your yacht, eh? But I *am* glad to see you! The last time was when you caught that piece of HE at Vimy Ridge. You came through all right, sir?"

"Quite all right. But what's the trouble here?"

"Potlatch. I've got to take the giver in. Ulegai."

"What makes you think this is a potlatch?"

Foster grinned.

"I know the symptoms. Sorry to spoil the show, but it's duty."

"You're wrong, Foster," said Marshall, positively.

Foster looked doubtful.

"They've been having one of their absurd smashing-up duels, to be sure; but no potlatch."

"What are the goods laid out along the street?"

"Come up and look at them," invited Marshall.

They mounted the little bluff.

"Sewing machines!" marvelled Foster.

"Precisely. Now, I ask you, did you ever hear of a sewing-machine potlatch?"

"I can't say I ever did. It's a new one on me. But that's nothing. There have been some queer ones. The last one I stopped was a phonograph potlatch—all going at once."

"These sewing machines," stated Marshall, clearly, "belong to a friend of mine—a particular friend. He is agent for them and has been for years. He has been cruising on this coast for the past few weeks, engaged in selling them. This is his display, his stock in trade."

"What's he got them here for?"

"I told you, he is selling them."

"To Indians!"

"To Indians—as well as white people."

Foster shook his head. "Come, now, Captain!" he pleaded.

Marshall turned to the young Indian, who had been hovering in the background.

"Step here a moment, please. Will you show Mr. Foster any papers you may have to prove your profession—letters from your firm, order blanks, anything?"

This was a bold cast, and he held his breath. But his suspense was at once relieved.

"Certainly, sir," agreed the Indian. "If you will excuse me a moment, I will procure them for his enlightenment."

"Well, I'll be damned!" ejaculated Foster, completely overset at this ebullition of language. He examined the invoices and order blanks in silence.

"So you see there is nothing to interest you professionally," said Marshall, looking him steadily in the eye.

Foster stared back. His left eyelid fluttered ever so little.

"If you say so, Captain. But I'll just keep these papers to support my report."

"Now," said Marshall, "if you will just go aboard the *Kittiwake*, I will follow in a few moments. We will have a drink and talk over old times."

"I'll get my gas boat from the next cove first," amended Foster.

Marshall watched him well offshore.

"Now," he commanded the young Indian, crisply, "you call over the chief, and anybody else who has any say-so with this gang. And you bring that girl. I've got something to say."

In three minutes he was confronted by the heavy-set man and the two older men. A pretty girl hovered in the back.

"Look here," said Marshall. "Potlatch finished. No good. Police stop. My friend want girl. He want to give potlatch, but no can do. All right. No sewing machine, no potlatch. Give money potlatch instead." He stared at the stolid and impassive countenances before him. "Oh, Lord!" He gave it up. "Here, you tell them. Tell them the potlatch idea is evidently all off, but that you want to do the important thing. You can't give sewing machine or junk, so you'll give money

instead. Tell them I'll furnish the money—but on one condition: that you get that girl, and that you get her now."

"Oh, sir——!" cried the young Indian.

"Tell them," snapped Marshall.

A long consultation.

"They say," the lover explained reluctantly at last, "that without feast and religion the potlatch is no good."

"You tell them," countered Marshall, vigorously, "that without the Canadian Dominion Government they're no good; and the Canadian Dominion Government is going to be anchored in this bay in about ten minutes. And tell them that I expect them to marry you and that girl right now, to-night, and that the wedding will give them all the feasting and religion necessary."

More long confabulation.

"They say, how much money?" the Indian translated at last.

Marshall threw back his head and laughed.

"I thought so!" said he.

From this point matters ran smoothly. In a half hour the dinghy was headed toward a belated lunch. For a dozen strokes no one said anything.

"Far be it from me to interfere with your aboriginal affairs," then said X. Anaxagoras, softly, "or to be so impertinent as to question the extent of your financial outlay. But may I ask why you have risked what must be a considerable sum on a voluble stranger of both race and calling notoriously uncertain in meeting its obligations?"

"Lord, man!" cried Marshall. "For fun! A good gamble has always been my vice."

"And far be it from *me* to interfere in your aboriginal plans," said Betsy, meekly, "but did it occur to you that the girl might like to have something to say about it?"

For a moment Marshall looked dashed. Then he waved his hand.

"Mere detail!" he said, grandly.

CHAPTER IX

THE ADVENTURE OF THE TEMPORARY PIRATES

The time had gone well into August. The halcyon days had come, when for weeks the water lay like mother of pearl, and the sky was like gray silk, and the thin tender haze of smoke softened the land, and many things had fallen silent. The gulls sat lightly atop of their own reflection saying not a word; the hermit thrushes alongshore had gone about their business, which was now other than song; the crows and ravens had ceased their obscene wrangling and assumed, belated, an air of seemly wisdom. Only the salmon, on their way to the spawning grounds, leaped gloriously, casting themselves, recklessly, two, three, or more feet straight out into the air. All else in this noon of the year took its repose, lying not so much asleep as daydreaming.

The *Kittiwake* cruised idly through multitudes of little islands on the outer fringe, searching out tiny coves, or

curved, sandy beaches from which to swim, or points boldly jutting out over a placid sea where they built evening friendship fires and lay on their backs and looked upward at mellow stars. The days were growing shorter. It was now dark by nine o'clock. But they, in harmony with sea and sky and land, seemed to have slipped away from time. Dates and hours no longer existed for them. They lived a vagrant life in a pearl-gray world where there were neither beginnings nor endings nor the thought of other days. The barometer stood immovably at 30.15.

Early one morning Betsy and Marshall, with Noah in the prow, set out in the dinghy for an all-day expedition, which X. Anaxagoras declined. The objective was an elusively glimmering strip of shore, apparently of white sand, which offered possibilities of bathing, or dams, or both. They were well supplied, not only with food, but with water, for in these outlying islands was no such abundance as farther inland.

Marshall swung into the oars vigorously, for the day was young. The sea was, as usual, glassy smooth, and the air still. Once beyond the compact group of small islands where the *Kittiwake* lay at anchor, he found himself bearing against the strong northward set of a current. All went well for perhaps a third of the distance. Then a vagrant little breeze wandered along, rippling idly a small patch of water and fluttering Betsy's hair as it passed. So unusual was this that Marshall stopped rowing and bared his head to it.

"That feels rather good for a change, doesn't it?" he remarked.

And suddenly they found themselves in a dense fog!

It formed all about them with bewildering rapidity, seeming to come from nowhere in particular, not even from the surface of the water about them; but to materialize in all space, like a thickening of the atmosphere. In five minutes the whole world was blotted out, except for such of it as might float within twenty feet of the boat.

They discussed what they should do, and decided it would be better to return to the yacht. No beach could now possess much attraction, for with the fog had come a chill, slight but sufficient to take the joy out of bathing. Marshall turned about and began to row back.

"Look here," he said, after a considerable interval, "we ought to be among the islands by now."

"Let's listen," she suggested. "We ought to be able to hear the swell against the rocks."

They strained their ears but heard nothing. They shouted in the hope that their voices might either get a reply from the *Kittiwake*, or arouse an echo that might guide them.

"The current has been carrying us north," reasoned Marshall. "We are probably above the islands a little."

"Then, if we row south, we'll strike them," said she.

Marshall pondered.

"Or miss them. There's a lot of ocean in the Pacific. I think Canada is easier to find. It isn't very far. I believe it would be safest to row straight for the mainland and wait there until we can get our bearings. Otherwise we might drift Heaven knows where. Out to sea, perhaps."

"It seems impossible to miss that big group of islands!" she objected, doubtfully.

They discussed the question for some minutes, but finally decided on Marshall's plan. He picked up his oars.

"What is it?" she inquired, at the expression of his face.

"Which way do you think the mainland is?" he asked.

"Why, over there," she stated, confidently.

"It seems to me in that direction."

After disputing this point they agreed that they did not know.

"I'm a triple ass!" he cried, "an empty-headed nincompoop! Why didn't I think of it! While we were talking we swung about in all directions! I haven't the slightest idea of where we are headed right now!"

There was no sun: the breeze that had announced the fog had fallen flat; the slight swell that breathed beneath the ocean's surface seemed to have no direction, but merely to rise and fall.

"The current sets north," recollected Marshall.

But they could not make out its direction. If they moved with it, why, so did all other objects on the water's surface. In vain they tried to recollect what lay north of them on the chart. Neither of them had even looked at the barometer that day.

"Well, I'm a fine sailor!" exclaimed Marshall, disgustedly. "I feel like a fool! I suppose there's some nautical method of orienting ourselves, but I don't know it."

"You tell the north by the moss on the trees," said she.

"That's helpful!" he snorted.

"Well, I offered my best," said she, meekly.

He shipped the oars. "One thing about it," said he, with decision, "we won't add to our troubles by rowing ourselves off the map. The drift can't be very rapid. Perhaps it will clear. Perhaps your brother will blow his whistle."

They were uneasy but not yet frightened. At this time of year there was every reason to rely on the steadiness of the weather. Marshall voiced this thought.

"Including fog," supplemented Betsy, drily.

They settled down to wait. Nothing whatever happened. Then Noah, who had maintained his position in the bow, spoke up.

"Land ho!" he shouted.

"What are you miaowing about, Noah?" said Betsy.

A moment later the outline of imminent trees showed ghostly, dead ahead.

Marshall rowed in. They landed on what proved to be a rocky islet not more than an acre in extent, with bold rocky shores and a little central patch of fir trees.

"At least we're going to stay in one place!" he cried, with satisfaction.

They hauled the dinghy out on a shelving rock to above high-water mark. The relief from the uncertainty had put them in high spirits. It had become a lark.

"Cast away on a desert island!" cried Betsy. "What do we do now? Oh, yes: hoist a signal of distress."

"What for?" objected Marshall, practically. "Who would see it?"

"It's the proper thing," insisted Betsy, impatiently. "And then we explore the island, and fight the savages, and tame a goat."

"You might first look for that moss on the trees and determine our position," suggested Marshall, sarcastically.

"I have. We are at the South Pole. It's north in all directions. They're covered with moss."

"One thing," observed Marshall, who had been taking stock, "for the first time in my life I'm glad of the feminine propensity to bring enough picnic lunch to feed a regiment. We may need it."

"Shell fish!" cried Betsy, delightedly. "And we make a fish line by unravelling your socks—if we can find out how; and a fish hook out of a hairpin. And we draw lots."

"What for?"

"How do I know? We'll have to decide on that. Come on, I'm going to explore."

That did not take long. Their resources, outside of those they had brought with them, proved to consist of sixteen stunted fir trees, a couple of million barnacles, a large mussel population, and an army of small and distrustful crabs. They returned to the boat, where they spread their rugs and made themselves comfortable.

The hours passed, but not so the fog. At noon they ate a sandwich apiece. Both had the same idea, though neither expressed it. These fogs had been known to last for several days and to clear with a high wind. In spite of themselves, they could not keep from speculation, nor from frequent quite useless examinations of the weather.

"I hope your brother won't worry too much," Marshall broke a long silence.

"He'll do all he can, but he won't worry," said she.

They fell silent again. Noah, after calling their attention to the lack of milk, had curled up on one of the rugs.

Suddenly the sound of oars in rowlocks became clearly audible. Electrified, they sat up and shouted. The rowing ceased for a moment, then resumed. A small boat glided around the point of the islet.

The occupant stepped ashore and made fast to a projecting rock. He was a young man, very dark, very pale under a coat of tan, with deep, burning eyes. He wore a peaked cap, a checked shirt, and knickerbockers. The cap he raised politely on catching sight of Betsy.

"I beg your pardon," said he, in a cultivated voice, "but can you tell me how far it is to Canada?"

His intonation and manner were quiet, but with an underlay of nervous tension, as though some great excitement were with difficulty held under.

"It's about five miles," Marshall told him, "but I haven't the slightest idea in what direction. We are lost in this fog and are waiting for it to clear."

"It is in that direction." The stranger pointed, confidently. "I have a boat compass. Are you hungry or thirsty? I have provisions in my boat."

"Thank you, neither. We have a picnic lunch. Where are you from?"

"Forty-seven twenty-three north latitude, and one hundred and fifty-one west longitude," replied the stranger, promptly.

Marshall looked dazed for a moment. He had no precise knowledge of their present position, but it was more than fifty north, and he vaguely remembered Vancouver as being about one hundred and twenty-five west. In other words, the man claimed to belong something near seven or eight hundred miles westward and three hundred miles to the southward. Marshall knew that a degree of latitude equalled a mile, but was uncertain as to the value of longitude.

"No, I mean just now," he recovered himself. "Where is your ship?"

"At the point I named."

"But——"

"I am a castaway," explained the stranger. "I have been twenty-nine days in that boat."

"On the open Pacific!" exclaimed Betsy.

"Yes, but the weather has been fine. I was well provisioned. I have suffered no hardships except a certain anxiety of mind. But even the Pacific in a storm would have been preferable to what I left behind me." The last words were spoken with a fierce energy. It was as if an inner fire had flared up, to be instantly smothered.

"Your ship was wrecked?" inquired Betsy, eagerly.

"Worse," said the stranger, sombrely.

Marshall started to speak, but Betsy imperatively motioned him to silence.

"Won't you tell us?" she begged, fixing the stranger's attention entirely upon herself.

The latter shifted uneasily.

"Please do!" she pleaded. "I should so much like to hear."

"You would not believe," he expostulated. "It is too terrible."

But at last his reluctance was overcome. He accepted a cigarette from Marshall and sat down, but he sat tense and without ease.

"I am," he began, "in a way a victim of the war. Though I came through without major wounds, the effect on one of my temperaments was profound. It was as though the cords of my being had been struck to so swift a vibration that nothing could still them. All other means of relief failing, I was at length advised to try a long trip on the water, quite cut off from all contact with the world."

He paused and passed his hand vaguely across his brow.

"I forget who advised that, and I forget in what manner or through whose offices I made my arrangements. My memory up to the doings of the past six weeks is somewhat uncertain; due, I suppose, to my condition. It does not matter. The important thing is that I arranged—or someone arranged for me—so that I took passage on a two-thousand-ton tramp steamer bound for the Orient. The length of the voyage, combined with the fact that I would be utterly divorced from all human contacts except those of the captain and crew, I hoped would aid my condition.

"Parenthetically, I may state, in that respect my hopes were justified. My memory has cleared and my command of myself has been resumed. Had it not been for the circumstances which I am about to narrate, my cure would have been complete. As it is, I am still a little nervous; that is all.

"The ship was a small iron affair, of the typical tramp sort. My quarters, which were, of course, aft with the officers, were small but clean and adequate; and the fare, though coarse, was wholesome. I had an abundant supply of books. Had it not been for the captain and the men under him, I should have been quite happy. He was a complete brute, and with one exception the men under him were like the master. His name was Amos Barkeley." Again he passed his hand across his forehead. "I wish I could remember how it happened that I selected that ship!" he said. "No choice could have been more unfortunate!

"Captain Barkeley," he resumed, after a moment, "was a resolute man, of great physical strength, domineering and brutal in character, vindictive in disposition, primitive in intellect, and of abysmal ignorance. His first mate was a worthy second to such a man. The fourteen members of his crew were a profane, rough, lawless band, quarrelsome, reckless, little better than so many dangerous beasts. The Captain and his mate went always armed. They ruled by sheer brute force. Though I must confess," added the castaway, thoughtfully, "that such was perhaps the only possible method

with such men.

"I could naturally have little intercourse with them that could be pleasing to me. Unfortunately, Captain Barkeley seemed to look upon me as the only person on board with whom he could converse on terms of equality. His discipline was—perhaps necessarily—so rigid that he held himself aloof even from his mate, except in matters of the ship's business. Me, however, he singled out for his company; and many weary hours I had to endure in listening to his crude theories, his violent prejudices, and his equally violent hatreds. With these I shall not weary you. Suffice it to say, he was a curious combination of Anarchist, of Bolshevist, and of individualist. No existing human institution had his approval, to no class other than his own did he accord the smallest virtue. Nevertheless, he looked with envy on those more fortunate than himself. He seemed to consider in some strange way that he had been defrauded of all that others possessed and that therefore he was fully justified in taking any unscrupulous advantage to redress the balance. He was restrained by nothing but his conviction of superior force. I am convinced he would have made an excellent pirate had he lived two hundred years ago.

"The exception I mentioned was the second mate. This young man was as much out of place in that company as myself. He was a thorough seaman, active in all his duties; but he was, in addition, of an ambitious temper and a tolerable education. I think that in any walk of life he would have been called 'a fine young man.' I would have found much pleasure in his society had not the captain's jealousy, disguised under the maintenance of the ship's discipline, held us almost wholly apart.

"We took, as I understand it, the Northern circle. Our speed was very slow. For many days we had sailed a tenantless ocean. Then, early one afternoon, a transoceanic liner passed us.

"She was a beautiful sight, with her graceful lines, her flawless paint, her fluttering flags and pennants, her white bow wave curling away from her prow. But Captain Barkeley chose to see in her only a text for one of his diatribes. Everything about her displeased him; from her speed, which was thrice our own, to her cost of maintenance, her luxury, even the waves of her wake in which for some moments we bobbed about. He shook his fist after her in an ecstasy of rage, exclaiming blasphemously that she and her like carried riches that rightly belonged to himself. In fact, he acted like a madman, stamping around the deck."

The stranger paused for some moments in deep reflection, then shook his head.

"Did you ever hear of the birth of an island?" he asked, abruptly. "One of those volcanic upheavals that suddenly appear in the open ocean?"

"I've heard there are such things," assented Marshall.

"Just before we sailed," added Betsy, "I saw in the paper an account by some ship's captain of having seen one of them rise. I think it was somewhere in the South Seas."

"Well, within five minutes of the liner passing us, we saw that happen. It came up rather suddenly, a jagged peak of bare rock, a good deal like the appearance of something in the Hippodrome tank. There was a dull rumbling sound, and an agitation of the water like that in a teacup violently shaken, only, of course, on a great scale.

"The liner was nearer than we, and was considerably tossed about. Then she held off on her course, but apparently under reduced speed, probably in fear of underwater pinnacles.

"'Look at the fool!' Captain Barkeley remarked, bitterly. 'Why doesn't he sheer off? Any idiot would know enough to give the thing a wide berth!'

"And, indeed, his criticism seemed well deserved. The *Maru*—for that was her name—seemed to be edging closer and closer to the newborn island.

"'He's willing to take any chance just to gratify idle 'curiosity and make a show!' cried our captain, 'and he'll get a lot of credit by reporting it in!'

"We watched for some time. Shortly the *Maru* actually drew up alongside the precipitous shore and came to a stop. Captain Barkeley's contempt and anger at this it would be impossible to describe. But soon his attention was drawn to his own concerns. We ourselves, in the absorption of the spectacle, seemed to have drifted rather closer than was desirable. Under command the helmsman turned our bow a point or so outward. But soon it became evident that though we progressed through the water, nevertheless, the distance between ourselves and the island was slowly decreasing. Some strong current seemed to be setting us in that direction. As soon as he became aware of this, Captain Barkeley headed directly away.

"We'll leave the thing astern!" he cried, with his customary oaths.

"But soon we found that this would not do. We did not gain. It became evident that the disturbance that had thrust up the island had also set up a current of extraordinary strength. Captain Barkeley ordered the helm down.

"If we can't go against it, we'll go with it," said he, "and pass the thing to port."

"As soon as we were headed in the opposite direction, we drew up on the island with great rapidity. It almost seemed to fly toward us, and we bore straight at it.

"Keep her off! Keep her off, you fool!" cried the captain to the helmsman.

"She's hard over now, sir," called the man, frightened.

"The captain with one bound was himself at the wheel. It was as the helmsman had said. The rudder was hard over, but without effect. At terrific speed we were bearing down on the island, but on the opposite side from the point where lay the *Maru*. Another five minutes must bring us to a disastrous collision unless the set of the current changed, as seemed most unlikely. Captain Barkeley promptly ordered the engines reversed. This instantly relieved the danger of the situation, though not its character. Instead of helping the current, the engines now worked against it. As a result, our speed was checked, but we still continued to be drawn slowly but inexorably toward the rocky cliff.

"At this moment the cook, who was a Negro of gigantic size who had always followed the sea, burst wild-eyed from the galley shrieking madly something about his pots being bewitched and flying through the air. The captain, being full of anxiety and resenting this disturbance, snatched from the rack an iron belaying pin. As he raised it to strike, it seemed to be jerked from his hand and to go sailing away through the air as though possessed of life and wings. We watched it, paralysed with astonishment. It flew, light as a feather, overside and away; and though we followed it to the limits of vision, not once did it falter in its flight.

"All was now confusion. The cook fell on his knees howling that he was bewitched; those of the crew who had witnessed the incident ran about the deck bewildered. Captain Barkeley stared for a moment at his open hand. Then he leaped to the deck and with heavy blows knocked the panic-stricken sailors to their senses. He roared that whether the devil were back of it or no, a collision was imminent and that they should take measures accordingly. Some semblance of order was thus obtained. Fenders and rope balls were hung overside. In a few moments, our screw still turning violently in reverse, we sidled up to the steep rocky side of the island and came to a stop. Luckily there were no underwater rocks. We were held there by the force of the pressure, apparently as securely and rigidly as sometimes you may see a stick held against some obstruction in a mountain stream."

The stranger paused and looked about him a little vaguely.

"I wish," said he, "I could remember why I elected to go on that particular ship!"

Marshall offered him another cigarette, which he accepted, and, after a moment, resumed his tale.

"We had hardly come to rest when the cook, who had been babbling prayers, uttered another yell. His eyes were fairly sticking out of his head. We looked to where his trembling finger pointed. There against the cliff was our belaying pin. It stuck straight out from a glassy-smooth perpendicular surface of rock.

"At this new evidence of witchcraft it seemed likely that the cook would go stark and staring crazy, and that the

crew would fall into an utter impotence of terror. Even Captain Barkeley's iron nerve was shaken. But the phenomenon that so terrified the others had illuminated my own mind. I took my knife from my pocket, held it out, and opened my palm. Straight as an arrow it flew from me through the air, hit the cliff with a faint smack, and clung quivering alongside the belaying pin.

"It was now only too evident what had occurred. The whole newborn island was nothing more than a lodestone, a monstrous magnet. Our ship—and the *Maru*—being constructed of iron, had been drawn to it irresistibly."

"Good Heavens!" cried Betsy.

"I never heard of such a thing!" exclaimed Marshall.

"Nor I. But there we were. As quickly as may be I explained the situation and abated the alarm of those aboard. But though this removed the element of the supernatural it offered no practical solution to our difficulty. We were there hard and fast, and my scientific education was too slight to enable me to offer suggestion. It might be possible that the *Maru* might be better informed, but when we attempted to lower a boat with the purpose of visiting her, we found this impossible. The boats too were of metal construction.

"I shall not weary you with an account of the next few days, nor more than suggest the petty annoyances to which we were forced to submit. Portable objects of metal had either to be lashed down or handled very carefully. At the least carelessness they flew overboard. Of course, we could always recover them from the cliffs, but it was a great nuisance. Inside the ship it was not so difficult, as all such things simply plastered themselves against the walls on the side toward the island, whence we could pluck them as needed. The cooking had all to be done in brass or copper pots. We had to keep a very firm hold on such iron or steel implements as we used. I remember that Captain Barkeley, relaxing carelessly his hold on his table knife, cut the side of his mouth while eating canned green peas.

"However, as is usual in strange circumstances, we adapted ourselves very quickly; and in a short time we were leading what might be called a normal life, disturbed only by speculation as to how we were to release ourselves from our predicament.

"Now, in this enforced leisure, Captain Barkeley's active mind had its opportunity. Early the first evening he had set men to work building a raft of wood, by means of which he purposed visiting the *Maru*, which was, of course, unaware of our presence. His intention, I am convinced, was at first merely to seek superior knowledge, but his evil genius soon suggested an opportunity.

"The afternoon of the fourth day I was lying on my bunk when I heard the captain and his two mates descend the companionway. They were either unaware of or indifferent even to my presence, for they talked freely, with no lowering of their tones.

"To my horror I soon learned that Captain Barkeley was proposing no less than piracy. He pointed out the riches to be acquired in taking over the *Maru*, dwelling in his usual fanatical and vehement manner on what he considered his rights and wrongs. He called attention to the fact that the liner was quite helpless and at their mercy. The disparity of numbers he dismissed with contempt.

"'One of my bully boys is worth twenty of those milk-fed sops,' said he. 'We are armed, and we have the advantage of surprise. If we can't handle that lot, I miss my guess.'"

The castaway turned courteously to Betsy.

"I paraphrase his language in deference to yourself," said he, apologetically, "but the substance is as stated."

"Go on; do go on!" begged she, breathlessly.

"He proceeded to unfold his plan in detail. I will admit that from a military standpoint it was excellent and could hardly fail of success.

"Will they join, think you?' he asked, at last.

"To a man!" growled the mate.

"And will they stick?"

The first mate answered for that. But then Mr. Hardy, the second mate, and my friend, spoke up. He hesitated, and was evidently guarding his words.

"But, sir, if so be it we do succeed in this venture, how do you plan to get away to the enjoyment of the loot?"

The captain cursed his lack of education.

"But if our milksop of a passenger cannot remember his college well enough to find a way, surely in so large a ship's company are some who know the ins and outs of this magnetism," said he. "Except in the way of resistance, there must be strict orders that no one is to be killed until after all have been questioned as to their attainments. I only fear lest some such may already release the *Maru* before our attempt. But we shall know that, for we could not fail to hear her engines were she to get under way. I will offer his life to any one who can get us free. I shall not say how long he can keep it," he added, with grim humour.

"And the others?" asked Mr. Hardy, in a small voice.

"Dead men tell no tales," replied the captain. "Do you take me for a fool?"

"I could hear Mr. Hardy leap to his feet.

"That would be massacre!" he cried. "There are hundreds aboard—women, children too! Would you kill them in cold blood?"

"How else?" demanded Captain Barkeley, coldly.

"It is a crime! An incredible, monstrous crime!" cried Mr. Hardy, excitedly.

"Aye? And is it so with you?" I heard the captain's voice drawl.

There followed instantly the crack of a revolver shot—a groan. Then, after a pause, someone laughed.

Shortly I heard the conspirators ascend to the deck. I ventured into the cabin. Poor Hardy lay where he had fallen, half across the table, shot through the head. I heard from forward the cheers of the crew as they greeted the plan. Shortly there were footsteps on deck returning, so I reentered my cabin.

Here I gave myself over to serious thought. It was only too evident to me that my own life was not worth a penny. Indeed, I doubted not that I should by now have shared Hardy's fate were it not for Barkeley's hope that I might possess some knowledge by which he might escape away from the island. I heard through the partition sounds accompanying the removal of Hardy's body and an attempt to clear away traces of the crime. Shortly after, I was summoned to the noon meal.

I called on all my resolution to meet the criminals as naturally as might be. It was manifestly absurd to pretend ignorance, so I took the bolder course. I heartily approved of the whole plot, demanded eagerly a share both in participation and plunder, and even made one or two suggestions—God help me!—which earned the captain's approval. Whether he was deceived or not I do not know. At least he pretended to take my statements at their face value. Especially did I throw in a lot of balderdash concerning 'polarization' and 'depolarizing' which I hashed up in a kind of Sunday-supplement fashion, in the implication that I might still be of use. At least, I was not murdered as I sat!

After dinner I ascended to the boat deck to try to think. If only warning could be conveyed to the people on the *Maru*, the project must fail. But how? The cliffs of the island itself were like glass, and almost perpendicular. All our

boats were of metal, even to the jolly boat, which was the only one small enough for me to handle alone. The wooden raft was not yet overside; and in any event, it was both cumbersome and under observation. The thought came to me that I might try to swim, but I am a poor swimmer, the water was cold, and the distance to the *Maru* around the island could not be less than a mile. A life preserver might help, but that thought was soon crossed from my mind by the sight of at first one or two, then dozens, finally hundreds of dorsal fins cutting the water. I verily believe in all history no such concourse of sharks has ever taken place. Possibly the disturbances leading to the upheaval of the island had attracted them in hope of prey. Perhaps in the mysterious labyrinth of Nature's ways some prescience had come to them, some glimpse of instinct into future events, some foreknowledge of a dreadful feast not yet prepared."

Noah at this moment leaped from the top of a near-by rock into Betsy's lap. She screamed.

"Oh, I'm sorry!" she cried. "He startled me. Do go on!"

"While I was still at a loss," the castaway continued, "one of the men came by and opened the door of a little closet known as the paint locker, evidently in search of something needed on the raft. My eye fell on something that gave me an idea. No sooner was he gone than I proceeded to put it into execution. From the locker I took the can that had attracted my attention, together with a paint brush. With them, and a belaying pin, I retired behind the jolly boat. The belaying pin I carefully coated with the compound from the can. Then, my heart in my mouth, I released my hold on the bit of metal.

"It fell to the deck!

"Don't you see?" he insisted, a little excitedly, as the others failed instantly to respond. "It did not fly to the lodestone: it fell to the deck! All that remained for me to do was to paint the jolly boat with the same compound to release it from the fatal attraction."

"What was the compound?" asked Marshall.

"Rubber paint. Rubber is an insulator, as you know. I spent the rest of the afternoon treating the boat, in deadly terror lest I be interrupted and my purpose inquired into. Fortunately, all hands were very busy in preparation for their act of piracy. I also made it a point to appear among them from time to time, lest a too protracted absence should be noted. Each of these excursions served a double purpose, for I managed on every occasion to smuggle back some provision. My intention was to warn the *Maru*, but I foresaw that, if this should fail, I must provide myself. It took some time to stock the boat, and I had several narrow escapes from discovery. Each lifeboat habitually carries water breakers and pilot bread, so all that was needed as far as they were concerned was to transfer a sufficient supply. However, other articles had to be brought up from below. My mind was working very clearly and accurately. In my twenty-eight days of voyaging I have lacked for nothing in the way of health and comfort. I even, as you perhaps noted, took off the latitude and longitude from the chart room.

"But, this task completed, I was at a loss. It was manifestly impossible for me to put the jolly boat overside without being instantly discovered; nor could I invent a pretext for doing so. In fact, if my insulation worked—of which I was not yet certain—that would merely place her at the disposal of their designs. I could see nothing for it but to await the event, and, to my growing horror, I began clearly to realize what was the fact—that I would have no chance to warn the *Maru*.

"I hardly know how time passed. But near midnight the expedition left the ship. They were seventeen strong, for even the Negro cook went along, and they were armed to the teeth. Indeed, I was the only man left aboard. For policy's sake I expostulated.

"'You'll get your share,' Captain Barkeley told me, gruffly, 'and I don't intend to leave my ship alone.'

"This, of course, suited me to perfection. I barely waited until they were safely away before I was on deck loosening the lashings that held the jolly boat in place. To my great joy she did not stir in her chocks. I hoisted on the falls. She hung from them vertically, without the slightest sway in the direction of the huge magnet alongside. My insulation was successful!

"I lowered away as rapidly as I could. But you must understand that to do this successfully, singlehanded, from an upper deck, and without oversetting the contents, must be a slow job. It was accomplished, but it consumed a

heartbreaking amount of time. I tumbled in and seized the oars.

"For a new thought had come to me. The *Maru*, as nearly as I could guess, was directly opposite us on the other side of the island. The pirates had gone around to the left. I would row around to the right. The raft must be very slow: perhaps its sluggishness would make up for my delay in launching; perhaps I might arrive before them!

"I laid to my oars and rowed with a will. The distance proved farther than I had anticipated, and I found a current against me. Indeed, as I at once understood, that was the reason the raft had taken the direction it did. Nevertheless, I made good time, and at length rounded a point from which I could see the lights of the *Maru*. But almost at the same instant those lights went out, and a burst of rifle shots was succeeded by a dead silence, which in turn was followed by a confusion of sound. I was too late!"

The stranger paused, overcome by the recollection.

"For some time," he resumed, "I lay on my oars, hoping against hope that the attempt might have failed, that the people of the *Maru*, though surprised, might have gained the upper hand. Then I heard Captain Barkeley's hoarse voice bellowing orders. The lights all went on again. There was a succession of splashes as of heavy objects thrown overboard. More orders were given. Little by little the confused hubbub died down to silence.

"I think," said the narrator, "that I might have lain there indefinitely, or until discovered, for I was paralysed with horror. Then a woman screamed, a long-drawn quivering shriek, suddenly stifled. It brought me to myself. I rowed away."

He seemed to have finished his narration; for he made as though to rise.

"And then? What then?" cried Betsy.

"I rowed a short distance, then rested until daylight, which was only an hour or two away. Through the dark, at intervals, screams quivered and were stilled. It was rather horrible."

"I should think so!" shuddered Betsy.

"When daylight came I was perhaps a mile or so away. I was soon discovered, of course; but as to that I was careless, for I knew I could not be pursued. They trained a gun upon me, but it was a small affair, and I easily pulled out of its extreme range.

"Then, as I watched through the glasses with which I had provided myself, I noticed that the *Maru* seemed to have settled somewhat in the water. The red water line, which for ornamental purposes had been painted considerably above the level of the water, had disappeared. I trained my glasses on her draught marks. Soon there was no doubt that she was slowly sinking in the water. Had the pirates already loaded the raft with what booty they desired and then scuttled the ship? That hardly seemed credible. Then the reasonable explanation occurred to me. It was simply the rising of the tide. The ship was held immovably against the island by the magnetic attraction, and the tide rose and fell against her side as against the rock itself. Curious how amid all that tragedy this obvious phenomenon interested me!

"But after a little I suddenly realized that it would not do. No tide, save in a confined space, ever rose as this tide was rising. It covered steadily one after the other all the draught marks; it rose to the rub-strake; it covered that. Now it was lapping away at the closed lower ports. And all at once I understood what was happening.

"The island was sinking as it had arisen; and the two ships, fastened to its sides, were sinking with it!

"After the first shock of this discovery, I watched as at a spectacle. I think there are tragedies so great—as there are wounds so deep—as to benumb. Black figures ran to and fro, indulging in vain activities. A swimmer struck out for the raft, which had gone adrift. He was sucked down in a whirl of sharks. It did not seem to me to matter that they were human beings. The spectacle was so much bigger than they were. The ships and the island went down slowly and calmly, without haste and without turmoil. Again it was like a Hippodrome spectacle. The waters seemed to rise placidly and inexorably. The hull, the various decks, the funnels, the top-masts vanished quietly. One by one the peaks and spires of

the island withdrew. Finally, the waters dosed over the last of them all. I was alone on the sea."

So absorbed had the two been by the castaway's story that they had not noticed a change in the weather. The fog was lifting and a light air was ruffling the water to the westward. And now they discovered that the islet on which they had awaited was, in fact, one of the group that sheltered the *Kittiwake*. They recognized the island behind which she lay not more than a quarter of a mile distant.

This short space they covered in a brief time. X. Anaxagoras received them placidly. As the weather had been calm, the mere fact that they had been befogged had failed to alarm him. The newcomer he greeted with cordiality, which speedily quickened to interest when, under Marshall's and Betsy's eager urging, he repeated the story of his adventure. He listened with deep attention to every detail.

"You have had a most extraordinary experience!" he said, when the story was finished. "And I can see that you have suffered profoundly both physically and mentally. I am by way of being a physician. What you need is a complete relaxation, first of all. If you will follow me into the cabin, I will prescribe for you."

He was gone for some time. Marshall and Betsy conversed excitedly in low tones concerning the tragedy they had heard narrated. At length X. Anaxagoras reappeared, carrying with him the coast-pilot and a newspaper. They pounced upon him with eager desire for his comment. He led the way to the forward deck.

"Sit down, children," he said, in his ordinary cheerful tones. "What do you think of it? Oh, you needn't lower your tones: he'll sleep now for some hours."

He listened to their varied comments, nodding from time to time.

"You apparently believe all that," said he, when they had finished.

"Don't you?" demanded Betsy.

"I'll stake my last cent he isn't lying," struck in Marshall, with conviction.

"Oh, he's sincere enough, poor chap. But as Sherlock Holmeses you are a pair of Dear Watsons. Didn't you notice anything?"

They cast their minds hastily back, but had to shake their heads.

"Well, for one thing, he must have shaved aboard his small boat: his face is perfectly smooth."

"Well, why not?" demanded Betsy, indignantly. "It may not be usual to do so when cast away in an open boat, but I know an Englishman who dresses for dinner when he's bear hunting."

"Quite so," agreed X. Anaxagoras, equably. "Possibly you noticed his breeches? The tailor's crease mark was still plainly visible. I suppose he pressed his clothes regularly in an open boat?"

"It is not inconceivable that for some reason he has changed that recently into a second pair," said Betsy, scornfully.

"Quite so," repeated her brother. He opened the blue-bound coast-pilot, fluttered the leaves for a moment. "Listen to this: 'The effect of magnetic masses external to the ship diminishes so rapidly with distance that it would require a local centre of magnetic force absolutely unknown to affect a compass ½ mile distant.' To affect a compass, mind you, it says; and a compass is a delicate instrument."

"*Heretofore* absolutely unknown," Marshall pointed out, but with uncertainty.

"Oh, quite so: granted! I might go into the scientific aspect further, but it is unnecessary. I would call your attention to one fairly obvious matter you overlooked in your quite pardonable excitement. His boat is not a ship's jolly boat: it is a St. Lawrence skiff. It is not of metal painted with rubber paint: it is of wood painted with white lead. Besides, rubber

paint has no insulating effect whatever. And just to shorten discussion, read this." He handed Marshall the newspaper. "Observe it is the latest paper we got at Haldane. To-day is the nineteenth of August; the paper is dated the thirteenth—six days ago."

Marshall eyed the indicated paragraph, then passed it silently to Betsy.

"Arrived," it said, briefly. "Yokohama Harbour, S. S. *Maru*."

CHAPTER X

THE ADVENTURE OF THE ABRUPT TERMINATION

All the morning following the Adventure of the Temporary Pirates, X. Anaxagoras remained below decks closeted with the man who had so strangely arrived in the St. Lawrence skiff. Toward noon he came on deck, closely followed by the newcomer. The latter had lost something of his nervous tensity, but his eyes still burned deeply in their sockets. Only when they rested on the Healer of Souls did their expression soften somewhat, and a faint and vague bewilderment film their brightness. He watched Anaxagoras much as a dog watches its master.

"I have persuaded Mr. Norcote that he will best reach the end of his journey in our company," announced X. Anaxagoras, cheerfully. "He feels that, though it is too late to have any practical effect, it is due the world and the relatives of those aboard to learn how the *Maru* perished. We will have lunch and then hoist the dinghy aboard. We will tow Mr. Norcote's boat."

Under this arrangement they journeyed all the daylight hours of the next two days, dropping anchor in snug coves at night. The stranger had little to say, except to Anaxagoras, with whom he spent much time in the pilot house. He slept at odd periods and waked at odd periods, like Noah, with whom he spent queer night hours on deck. Marshall and Betsy, under instruction from Anaxagoras, did not press him with company, but treated him casually. They had talked it out the first evening of their journey.

The anchor was down and all stowed.

"I'll borrow your boat to get some water, if you don't mind," Anaxagoras said to Norcote. "Just have an eye to see if the anchor bites, will you? Want to come along?" he asked Marshall and Betsy with a significance that caused their instant acceptance.

They beached the boat, took the water cans, and walked toward a little ravine where possibly water might be found. Once out of sight of the *Kittiwake*, however, Anaxagoras sat down on a log.

"Now, listen," said he, and gave them their directions.

"Is it possible he might turn dangerous?" Marshall suggested.

"Dangerous? Why?"

"He's crazy, isn't he?"

"Boards of lunacy would call him so, and commit him to an asylum. And that would be as great a crime, in its way, as the one he talks of. As a matter of fact, he is not at all crazy. His mental processes are quite clear and logical."

"But his story——"

"That does not happen to be based on fact," acknowledged Anaxagoras, "but it is not at all crazy. Indeed, it is perfectly sane in its logic and its sequences, remarkably so. He remembers it with great accuracy, just as it occurred."

"But it didn't occur!" objected Marshall.

"Oh, yes, it occurred. But it occurred inside rather than outside. The only little point of confusion in Mr. Norcote's mental processes is that he has forgotten that fact."

"But I don't quite see how——" began Betsy.

"Suppose, for example, that this experience had been a very vivid and detailed dream," went on Anaxagoras, "or perhaps an invented story, a flight of the imagination. And suppose Mr. Norcote were aware of that. He would detail it to you, quite as interestingly, and as an experience that had happened to himself. Only he would tell it as an experience that had happened *inside* him, and not outside. In the present case he has merely, and quite sincerely, confused the location of his experience."

"I see your point," conceded Marshall, "but in the one case a man appreciates the fact that he is inventing a story, piece by piece; and in the other case, incidents present themselves to him ready-made and without his intervention."

"Not necessarily. The subconscious is quite capable of seizing on a tiny fragment and, with it as a starting point, of building a complete and elaborate and entirely logical structure. Furthermore, it can and does accomplish this entirely beneath the threshold of the conscious attention. Then when that finished structure is finally presented to the conscious self, it appears to be 'complete and ready-made' from outside the person. That happens constantly in the case of those in the artistic professions.

"That, I conceive, is what happened in this case. Some little thing—perhaps that sentence in the coast-pilot, perhaps an anecdote or story—started Mr. Norcote's subconscious to work. Following, subterraneously, the logical sequence, it evolved this experience. I have not yet come to the point where I dare touch upon Mr. Norcote's antecedents; but I hazard the guess that he is a writer of some sort. At the moment when normally this experience would have revealed itself to him as an 'inspiration' for a corking good story, some aberration caused it to appear to him as a thing *that happened*. The rest is a mere matter of recollection and of the narrating of that recollection."

"Isn't that being crazy?" demanded Marshall.

"So the lunacy boards would hold," repeated X. Anaxagoras, "but there is here no cerebral degeneracy or lesion, no essential confusion of process, no mistake even of reality—for thoughts are realities also, though of a different kind. It is a mere mistake of identification."

"What prevents more mistakes in identification?" asked Marshall. "And why isn't that lunacy?"

"A pertinent question. More mistakes might occur; and it would be lunacy, in so far as lunacy may be defined as a failure to coordinate with material surroundings in approximately the same fashion that other human beings coordinate. And they will occur, unless not only the fact of this mistake can be brought to Mr. Norcote's consciousness, but also in a reasonable manner an explanation of exactly why that mistake occurred. Then, in all probability, he will be safe."

"Psychoanalysis," observed Betsy.

"Exactly; and a most interesting case."

"I see brother has another patient," said she.

Just after noon of the third day they arrived at Alert Bay. The Indian village with its community houses and totem poles, the sawmill at one end, the salmon cannery and hospital and wireless and white men's houses at the other, offered a strange and interesting contrast. At once on mooring to the float, Betsy and Norcote disappeared.

"She is taking him to Doctor Matthews, who is the hospital head here, together with an explanatory note from me," said the Healer of Souls. "I have asked him to enact the part of wireless chief for the occasion, and to listen to the man's story. It will relieve his mind of what he conceives to be a duty; so when he returns he will be at ease. I know Matthews well and can rely on him to understand and to carry out my intention."

"I think I'll look over the village," suggested Marshall.

"If you will kindly wait ten minutes," requested Anaxagoras, and went into the cabin.

Supposing that he wished to accompany him, Marshall thought nothing of it. In two minutes, however, he heard his name called, and descended the companion ladder to find himself once more in the presence of the white-clad professional. So long had it been since the last of these formal consultations that he experienced a slight shock of surprise.

"Please be seated," X. Anaxagoras requested him, formally. "Do you recall the day of the month?"

Marshall calculated rapidly.

"Why, it must be the twenty-second," said he.

"Precisely. Do you realize that to-day is the last of our three months' agreement?"

"Why, so it is! I hadn't realized it."

"So our experiment is at an end. There remains to take stock of ourselves and come to a settlement."

Marshall reflected. Instantly he saw what course he intended to adopt. He remembered well the fantastic terms of the agreement: that in event of a cure he was to pay nothing but expenses; in event of a failure he was to pay ten thousand dollars. He tried to tell himself that he could not state positively whether or not he had sloughed off the old dead and exhausted indifference. To be sure, he now enjoyed the incidents and accidents of the cruise with a zest he had thought would never return to him; but the cruise must come to an end some time, and then what? He could not on the spur of the present moment determine what he would want to do next. If he had been quite honest with himself, he would have admitted that this didn't worry him in the least; but he did not intend to be quite honest with himself. He had a strong desire that X. Anaxagoras should have that ten thousand dollars.

While these thoughts passed through his mind, the Healer of Souls had picked up a sheet of paper.

"Let us take up the matter of expenses first," he suggested, "and clear all that away for a discussion of essentials. Here we are:

Gasoline and oil - - - - -	\$381.25
Provisions - - - - -	232.40

"If you want an itemized list of them, I have it."

"Not necessary," disclaimed Marshall.

"To hire, one bootlegger with boat - \$900.00

"That was really cheap for Bill," said Anaxagoras, aside. "You see, it took him off his regular run where he could have made much more."

"I beg your pardon," interrupted Marshall, blankly, "but what was that last item?"

"For Bill. You remember Bill? I had to pay him, of course. He lost a trip."

"Go on," said Marshall, grimly.

"To hire, Silas Dolliver and boat, ½ day \$35.00

"Silas really didn't want to charge that, but I told him his time was worth something, and he ought to be paid for the risk, even if it was only slight."

"Who is Dolliver?" demanded Marshall.

"He's the fellow who was off Graham Bank in the nor'-wester. You remember?"

"Oh, yes; I remember! So that was a fake, too!"

"It was arranged."

"I suppose you hired the red cod and the cat," said Marshall, sarcastically, "and perhaps my big salmon!"

The Healer of Souls leaned forward interestedly.

"I had already identified and recorded the cat and the salmon as indicating points of progress," said he, laying his hand on the fever-chart affair. "But what is this about a red cod? That seems also spontaneously to rise in your mind as significant."

"Ask your sister," advised Marshall, shortly.

"No." Anaxagoras went back to Marshall's previous statement. "The only other item that might be there is for Tim. When I had explained the situation to him, he refused absolutely to take a cent. As he based his reason on much the same grounds as I should myself have adopted in the same situation, I could not but acquiesce. I want you, however, to appreciate both his effort and his sacrifice of woodsman's pride."

"What may you mean by that?"

"In falling his tree so as to allow it to jam."

Marshall rose angrily to his feet.

"In other words, I've been fooled like a child! I've been made sport of by a stage-set mummery for which I am now expected to pay, by Jove!"

"Sit down!" commanded the Healer of Souls, authoritatively. "You do both me and yourself injustice. You have been accorded the best treatment within the compass of my skill. I have used my ingredients as an allopath uses his drugs; and like the allopath I have procured them to fit my requirements. If your physician fails to discover in the food you normally eat the medicinal properties he desires you to have, he does not hesitate to have recourse to the nearest pharmacy. I have made you permeable to life, and I have done so by exposing you to living. When the succession of normal days did not bring to my hand what I have required, I have not hesitated to supply a laboratory compound."

Marshall hesitated and finally reseated himself.

"At first," went on the Healer of Souls, equably, "it was necessary to administer doses more frequently and of a more drastic nature than later. Your shell needed cracking. No life-giving waters could penetrate. And those doses had to come at what I judged to be the appropriate crises. Why should I not make them happen when I needed them, instead of depending on a thousand-to-one chance of their occurring of themselves?"

Marshall for the moment could find no reply.

"And mark you," continued X. Anaxagoras, "I have given you no synthetic and unnatural compounds. Bill does run liquor; and he is an object of pursuit by the revenue officers; and he does not want to be caught. In all fairness you must admit that the nor'wester was quite a genuine bit of scenery, and that the situation was in all truth both serious and dangerous."

Marshall's anger returned as this thought was thus deliberately brought to his attention.

"You came within an ace of smashing both boats, and if it hadn't been for your sister, I should have been drowned," accused Marshall, bluntly. "Do you think yourself justified in deliberately hazarding life in that fashion?"

"I do," stated the Healer of Souls with equal bluntness. "Your condition was then serious enough to warrant dangerous remedies. And," he concluded his former argument, "you saw on Tim's mountain only what comes occasionally to all hand loggers. It is the hardest work of all the industries on this coast. I wanted you to see how hard it could be. All these things I showed you were, to be sure, arranged to happen at the time I wanted them to happen, but they were genuine Life for all that."

He paused.

"The results were gratifying," he went on, after a moment. "Like any competent physician, I discontinued the drugs the moment they became no longer necessary. Once the initial breaking up was accomplished, I could safely stand aside, except for an occasional directing touch, applied rather to yourself than to your correspondences. Life itself, in its normal flow, could be left to do the work. Do you still find the items of my expense account unjustified?"

"Well—no—I suppose not," admitted Marshall, grudgingly. "But I hate to think I have been made a fool of."

"I should hate to have you, for such is not the case. I am confident that private reflection will convince you of that."

Not only had Marshall's resentment passed, but he was even beginning to see a little humour in the situation.

"I hardly know what to believe in!" he confessed. "You didn't arrange that potlatch, did you?"

X. Anaxagoras laughed.

"No sane mind could have conceived that potlatch," said he. "No; I have submitted all my account. The financial situation, I believe, is clear."

"Not quite," negated Marshall, who had regained his original point of view. "There is the ten thousand dollars."

"That," Anaxagoras pointed out, "I was not to receive except in the event of failure to cure you."

"I do not consider that I am cured," stated Marshall, flatly.

X. Anaxagoras surveyed him for a moment.

"I consider my powers of observation sufficiently acute," he said at last, "and my knowledge of psychic symptoms quite adequate. It is my measured opinion that you are at this moment an entirely normal young man, with quite your share of interest and zest in what life offers. You owe me nothing."

"'At this moment,' you said," repeated Marshall. "That is true. But, as I pointed out to you some time ago, the question is not of the present moment. The circumstances in which I find myself are unusual. I cannot go on for the rest of my life cruising with you on the British Columbia coast in search of adventure. I must lead a life of my own. As to that future I am still in my former state of complete indifference. I owe you ten thousand dollars."

The eyes of the Healer of Souls twinkled.

"I can have little to say in contravention of your direct statement, except to repeat my belief," said he. "In final analysis the decision must rest with your own acknowledgment. But the agreement between us has still several hours to

run. If by three o'clock this afternoon you are not willing to admit a vivid and continuing interest in the future, I shall acknowledge my failure."

"That seems fair. But my opinion is little likely to change in that space of time."

"We shall see," said Anaxagoras. "My treatments may not be quite at an end. But before they come to an end, allow me to express the personal pleasure I have had in our association and my regret that that association is finished. I shall miss you."

Marshall looked a little blank at this.

"The steamships from here to Vancouver are very comfortable," went on the other, "and I am sure you will enjoy the trip."

Marshall looked still more blank. Somehow it had not occurred to him that the cruise would be terminated so abruptly. He had thought he would be returned on the *Kittiwake* to Vancouver; and Vancouver was distant. He ventured to express some such thought.

"I had hoped for the privilege," Anaxagoras replied to this, "but my professional duty has decreed otherwise. A doctor's pleasure is always subject to his duty. In the person of Mr. Norcote I see not only a most interesting opportunity for study, but an obligation to save a very fine mind. He must now take your place here."

Marshall could say nothing to this. He could not but admit that the *Kittiwake's* after living quarters were inadequate for three. But his whole being was filled with a blank dismay. The whole thing was too abrupt. Ten minutes before, the cruise had seemed to extend into an indefinite haze of future; now it was finished and he was on his own. But it wasn't finished—it was broken off! It seemed to him that there were dozens of things he had intended to do and had put off lazily because he had lots of time. What they were he could not for the moment recall, but he hadn't done them! And all of a sudden no more waking to scalloped dancing sunlight on the ceiling over his head, or towering peak, or placid pearly sea! No more scream of gull and splash of leaping fish! No more Noah jumping on his chest with a prrt! at the first sign of his awakening! No more quizzical X. Anaxagoras commenting drily and wittily across the breakfast table! No more Betsy——

Marshall's heart turned a complete somersault at that and his thoughts stopped squarely as though they had run against a wall. It was impossible; that's all there was to it. It couldn't be done. Hang Norcote!

Then he met the eye of X. Anaxagoras watching him intently. It had to be done, he concluded reluctantly. But it would only be a little while. He'd get himself a yacht and cruise in convoy——

"Norcote's case will prove most interesting," X. Anaxagoras spoke at this point. "I think I can safely prognosticate a cure. But it will require a complete solitude. Except for my sister or myself, no other human being shall I permit him to lay eyes on, if I can avoid it."

Smash went the convoy idea! How did the man contrive always to speak so apropos? But the moment they returned, the moment they reached Vancouver—— Thank Heaven, the bad weather set in early up here! After all, it couldn't be very long. Marshall realized all of a sudden and very vividly one of the neglected things. He set his teeth grimly on a resolution to speak to her about it before that day was over. The thought of delay was intolerable. How could he endure the time unless his suspense could be relieved? For though he had become burningly certain of his own feelings in the matter, he was suddenly assailed with a panicky doubt as to hers. How did she look on him, anyway? As he would have her, or as a moderately interesting patient of her brother? Like Norcote. Damn Norcote!

"I regret," Anaxagoras was saying, "that it is improbable that my sister will return before the departure of your steamer. Doctor Matthews, I fear, will detain them for tea in order to study this case. I shall convey your adieux for you."

What was this? Marshall stared.

"My steamer?" he repeated.

"She is now rounding the point of Cormorant Island. She will sail from here in about half an hour. That will give you sufficient but not excessive time to pack your belongings and arrange for your passage. I am sorry matters have culminated in such haste."

"But I cannot run off like this!" cried Marshall, aghast. "I'll wait over until the next steamer. If you cannot keep me aboard, I'm sure I can find some place ashore to stay."

For answer X. Anaxagoras picked up the agreement.

"This document is still in force," he said, with an air of authority that seemed to shut off argument. "By its terms you have agreed, on your word of honour, to do unquestioningly what I command you to do, whether you agree with its advisability or not. I order you to take this steamer."

Marshall swallowed hard and collected himself.

"Very well," he said, coldly, "if you insist. You leave me no alternative. I think I can guess at your motive. I had thought myself personally in your good graces, and can myself discern neither in my conduct, my condition in life, or my personal character, anything that should cause you to intervene in what is after all only indirectly your affair. If your sister is not of age, she soon will be; and I warn you, sir, I shall take the first opportunity of permitting her to make her own choice of conduct."

For a single instant the grave professional aspect of the Healer of Souls was crossed by a gleam.

"That, of course, is your privilege," he replied. "I may say that I will interpose no difficulties other than those inseparable from the situation. They seem to me sufficient."

"What do you mean by that?" demanded Marshall, struck by something significant in the tone of the last statement.

"I will detail them. The name Anaxagoras is a pseudonym."

"That," said Marshall, drily, "I had gathered. Proper inquiry will penetrate the disguise."

"I doubt it."

"I suppose your residence is taxed under that name," Marshall pointed out.

"I have no residence. The house in which we made our acquaintance was rented—under my pseudonym—for one week. It was an experiment—and is now vacant."

"The *Kittiwake* is undoubtedly a registered yacht."

"But not under that name. She is—illegally, I admit, but only for the time being—herself under a pseudonym."

"These things may be so"—Marshall thrust them aside in cold anger—"but there are other methods. Rest assured, sir, that I will find them. I must confess that I cannot understand the reason for your sudden disapproval of myself. But I suppose that it is not essential that I understand. May I ask you one question: is your sister party to all this anonymity?"

"My sister has long since given over all attempt to understand the rationale of my surprising ways."

"Will you give her a letter from me?"

"I will not."

Marshall flared up.

"By God, I'm not going to be bullied in this fashion! I am a free agent and my affairs are my own! I insist on seeing your sister, and I shall not leave this place until I do so!"

X. Anaxagoras was unruffled.

"You fought in the war, Mr. Marshall. Though an American, you joined our troops, and it was for the duration. You must, therefore, have done so from a deep conviction." He laid his hand on the document between them. "Do you consider this agreement also a 'scrap of paper'?"

Marshall answered nothing but began sullenly to throw his things together. Anaxagoras continued to sit behind the table, inscrutable.

"I shall take the cat," Marshall stated shortly, after a long silence.

His bags packed, he produced his check book, wrote out a check, and laid it on the table.

"I think the amount is correct," he said, briefly. "It is for eleven thousand five hundred and forty-eight dollars and sixty-five cents, which covers your memorandum of expenses plus your fee. No receipt is necessary: the cancelled check will be sufficient."

The steamer's whistle was heard. He carried his bags up the float ladder to the wharf. X. Anaxagoras did not move. Marshall returned and got Noah. He did not look toward the Healer of Souls. As he was about to ascend the companionway, X. Anaxagoras spoke. Marshall turned. The professional manner of the Healer of Souls had vanished. He was smiling.

"Wait a minute, Jerry," said he. "Now, I'm going to leave this thing to your sense of fairness. You seem to me to have quite a few future interests. You are going to identify the *Kittiwake*; you're going to try to find out who X. Anaxagoras is; you are going to try to discover where they both are. That's going to keep you busy for quite a little while. Nor is that quite all. After you've done that, you have just begun. You know my sister quite well by now, but there appear to be one or two things you still want to find out about her. And when you've found them out, unless I mistake her greatly, life will not be entirely devoid of interest. I think I am conservative in saying that my sister might be an engrossing profession in herself."

He picked up the agreement and laid it down again.

"I have just given my last treatment under this," said he. "It has been effective. Whether you are willing to acknowledge it in words or not is immaterial. Your conduct in the past half hour has spoken louder than words. If there is anything indifferent about you now, then Noah is a Chinaman."

"You mean—you mean——" stammered Marshall, unable to about-face quite so fast.

"I'm sorry about Norcote, but that's duty. But unpack your bags. Stay over if you like; there's a steamer every day. God bless you, boy! I'd be tickled to death!"

He picked up the check and eyed it thoughtfully.

"Now be honest about this: how about it? Is this made out right?"

Marshall tore it to pieces.

"Well, I tried to pay ten thousand dollars to be a liar," said he.

"Don't you suppose I know that?" asked X. Anaxagoras.

THE END

[End of *Skookum Chuck* by Stewart Edward White]