

GREEN TIMBER



HAROLD HINDS

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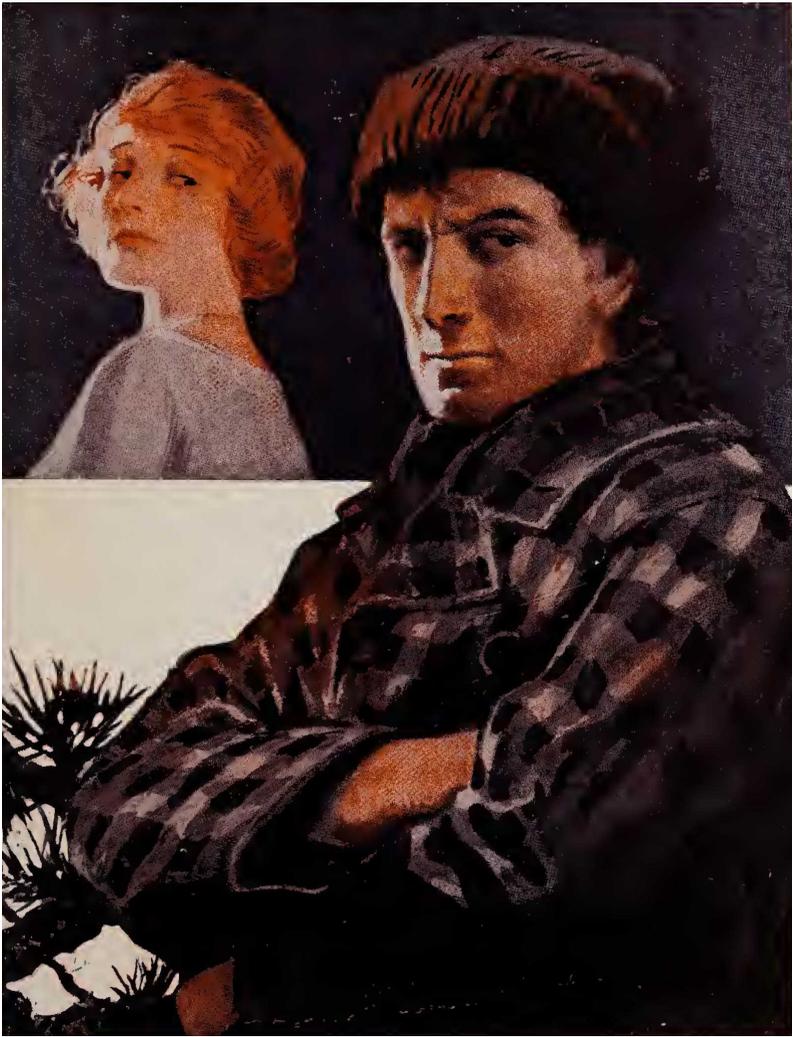
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GREEN TIMBER

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the Wilds,” etc.

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Green Timber

CHAPTER I

ANDREW FOLLOWS HIS BENT

Thunder clouds rolled across the hills and the tide ran down the Firth. Along the Solway shore tides run hard, and when the west wind blows against the ebb an angry sea gets up. The black-sailed boats had lowered topsails, but *Kilmeny* carried hers, and Andrew Grier let her go. The tide helped her to windward, and he risked a look about.

Lead-colored mist broke like foam against Criffel's top; ominous clouds rolled down Skiddaw's slopes across the Firth. In the foreground, the sun touched the water, and wind and tide plowed white-edged furrows in the shining green. Farther off, in the clouds' shadow, a black and purple belt was streaked by ragged lines of foam.

Andrew knew the Solway weather. Perhaps they would get thunder; they certainly would get wind. He ought to lower the topsail, but *Kilmeny* raced for the Murren fishermen's cup, and if he held on until she was round the turning mark, she would carry the big sail before the wind. So long as the mast stood, he meant to hold on.

Kilmeny was thirty feet long, and, as a rule, carried a big shrimp-boiler, a red net, and a heavy trawl-beam. Now she was stripped for the race, and for the most part her lee deck was under water. The foot of the straining mainsail, however, cut Andrew's view, and all he saw to leeward was the foam that lapped the coaming round the well. On the other side, short, angry combers broke against the weather bow, as the surf breaks on a rock.

In the spray a tight-mouthed fisherman crouched by the fore-sheets. Another pumped, for much water came on board. Sometimes when the wire shrouds rang the pumper glanced at the mast. Rob knew the stick was sound; auld Willie Herries had picked the tree in Rowans Woods, and when Willie was satisfied one need not bother about sap and cracks. For all that, Rob's look was thoughtful. Andrew Grier was young and he pushed the boat hard.

Rob himself was old and something of a philosopher. Until they reached the turning mark, his help was not needed and he studied the helmsman.

Andrew balanced on the windward coaming and braced his long legs against the rail to lee. He was six feet tall, his clothes were fishermen's clothes, and he was rather thin but muscular. Although his mouth was firm, the corners turned up and one got a hint of reckless humor. His brows were knit, and the lines met across the space between in a mark like an arrowhead. For the most part the Griers, when highly strung, wore the curious mark.

Andrew's eyes were blue, and his skin was sunburned brown, but his hair was nearly black. Although the Solway Scots spring from Teutonic stock, sometimes a Grier's hair was dark. Tradition recorded that they had inherited a vein of foreign blood from smuggler ancestors, and in some respects their temperament was the Latin temperament. Rob did not know much about this; but he did know Andrew was the *marrow* of his grandfather.

In the meantime Andrew indulged the thrill he got from risk and speed. His nerve was good and the boat was stanch; if she carried her topsail round the mark, she ought to win. Moreover, he was moved by a glorious sense of freedom. Not long since, he carried a rifle with the Scottish Borderers and knew galling discipline. Afterwards he studied Scottish law and was not interested. Now he doubted if he would go back to the Edinburgh Writer's dreary office. Although he could not yet control his inheritance, he was laird o' Rowans and a belt of moorland where sheep and curlew fed.

To speculate about his inheritance, however, would not help him win the cup, and he glanced at the other boats. *Bonnie Kate* was two hundred yards ahead, and her crew got the topsail ready to hoist. *Murrendale*, fifty yards off, flung her bows out of water. She did not carry a topsail and Andrew imagined he would pass her at the mark. All the same, he did not know. Criffel's slopes were black, and an angry squall rolled up the Firth.

"Ye'll see the buoy? Jim's heaving round," said Rob.

Andrew saw the tide break against an obstacle that vanished in tossing foam. *Murrendale* came head to wind, plunged into a sea, and went off on the other tack. The tack was the port tack, on which *Kilmenny* sailed, and Andrew smiled, for when two boats cross, the boat on the starboard tack claims right of way. Had *Murrendale* held on, when they met he must have let her pass.

"I think Jim gives us the cup," he said.

"He's to windward yet," Peter, at the fore-sheets, remarked.

Rob glanced at Andrew and saw the corners of his mouth go up.

“Just that! I’m thinking Mr. Grier kens his job.”

Andrew knew a boat to leeward may luff and force another from her course; but a boat to windward may not bear up and force another to strike an obstacle. Since *Kilmeny* sailed faster than *Murrendale* his plan was obvious, but he thought *Murrendale*’s helmsman concentrated on the advancing squall. If he meant to beat her, he must beat her to the buoy before her crew hoisted the topsail when the wind was fair.

Murrendale was twenty yards off and a little to windward. The buoy, a hundred yards off, leaped on a comber’s top and was pulled under by the savage tide. Andrew steered for the white turmoil and the squall broke. *Kilmeny*’s black jib plunged and her bows vanished. Water flowed across her coaming and the tight shrouds rang like harp strings. By luffing to the wind one could ease the strain, but speed was indicated and Andrew must not yet luff. He knew the stubborn Borderers, and Jim, who steered *Murrendale*, reckoned the cup was his. *Murrendale* was now fifteen yards in front.

Kilmeny’s sharply slanted spire of sail swayed farther down. Andrew heard the mast crack and the sea pour into the well. It looked as if she must go over, but her load of railway iron held her up. *Murrendale* was six yards off, the buoy was close ahead, and Andrew luffed. The wet jib got slack and flapped savagely. The topsail beat the mast and the bowsprit pointed for *Murrendale*. Her skipper must not risk a collision, but he would not let *Kilmeny* go past on his windward side. He luffed, his sails thrashed furiously, and Andrew laughed. Something must be risked, but unless the boat capsized, he would be first round the buoy.

Bracing his muscles, he pulled up the tiller and *Kilmeny*’s bows swung back. Her slack canvas filled and her deck vanished. One felt the combers leap on board, but all one saw was tossing spray and angry foam.

When *Murrendale*’s skipper put up his helm, *Kilmeny* had sailed through his lee and was some yards ahead, but the buoy was ominously near. Andrew saw rusty iron break the savage turmoil, roll about and plunge. When the flat top came up he got the illusion that it forged ahead, as if to force the boat about. To strike the obstacle would smash *Kilmeny*’s planks; but perhaps he had room.

For a few moments he let her go, and then he knew he was round the buoy. When she was before the wind, the *Murrendale*, hoisting topsail, was twenty yards astern. Rob crawled under the side-deck and lighted his pipe. He knew perhaps all a man may know about small fishing boats, but he was

old and Andrew was a first-class helmsman. Rob doubted if he could have beaten Jim.

For a time he was not needed. The seas now broke behind *Kilmeny* and not much water came on board. Long since, Rob had won the Murren Cup, and to sail for another had not much thrill for him. All the same, one must indulge the boys, and Rob was satisfied to smoke.

Andrew's figure, braced against the tiller-line, cut the sky. Although his hair was black, his type was the Viking type, and his grandfather was a famous builder of wooden ships. When Rob was young he greased the ways at the *Anne Musgrave's* launch. For the Griers' yard, the brigantine was large and they launched her sideways. Her load was three hundred tons and she was built of Cumberland oak. For long she went fishing to the Newfoundland banks and carried timber from the St. Lawrence. Then, when old Andrew died and trade with Quebec got slack, she carried Cumberland coal to Irish ports. Now the famous yard was closed and steamers cut down freights, but the *Anne Musgrave* yet crossed the Irish Sea. Well, Andrew was like his grandfather: he knew and loved a boat. His trustees, who thought to make a Writer of the lad, were *fond*.

Rob got up, stretched his cramped legs and looked about. *Kilmeny* had crossed the sands, and in the channel behind the banks the sea got smooth. For all that, the wind was fresh and the sail she carried pressed her hard. Running before the wind, she rolled, and her long boom went up. Her bows were lifted by her speed and foam tossed about her stern. The big mainsail swelled like a balloon, and if the steersman allowed the boom to lurch across, the mast would go. Rob did not bother about it. Andrew knew his job.

Murrendale was fifty yards astern, the other boats were near the buoy, but *Bonnie Kate* was a hundred yards in front. In the background, up the Firth, Rob saw a white house on a bluff, a belt of shining sand, and indistinct rows of posts. The big posts carried salmon nets and the white house commanded Murren water-foot. Behind the sandspit the flag-boat was moored. Then Rob remarked the boom's wild lurch and gave Andrew a tranquil glance.

“Ye're something by your lee, and Jock heids us yet.”

“That is so,” said Andrew, and his eyes twinkled. “If I jibe the sail across, we'll cut the best pine at Rowans for another mast. Anyhow, I rather think we'll round the flag-boat in front of Jock.”

Peter looked up as if he were puzzled. *Kilmeny* crept up to the other boat, but the water-foot was not far off, and Peter thought *Kate* would get there first. Rob was frankly puzzled, but he said nothing.

“*Kilmeny* draws three feet six inches?” Andrew resumed.

“Maybe anither inch; we shifted some iron aft.”

“*Kate* draws four feet. Now she’s off the wind, the extra draught stops her.”

“Just that!” said Rob, and coiled a rope. Although he did not see a light, he thought it typical that Andrew knew the depth of water in which the boats would float.

The channel got narrow and the ebb tide ran like a yellow flood between the sands. Eddies revolved along the banks and tossed about weed and floating scum; but *Kate* and *Kilmeny* stemmed the current and the bluff and salmon stakes got distinct. In the slack by Murren-foot crowded boats pulled about.

“Jock heids ye by thirty yards,” Rob remarked.

“Something like that,” said Andrew. “I don’t think he’ll keep his lead.”

The others saw he had a plan, but they did not bother him. Although the boat was Rob’s, when one races the steersman has command, and Rob glanced astern. *Murrendale* was some distance off, and the other boats were behind her. They were beaten, but so far as one could see, the cup was *Kate*’s. All the same, Andrew smiled.

At length *Kate*, twenty yards ahead, was level with the white house. In front of her, rows of tall stakes bordered the yellow beach, and at one spot a fir tree, stayed by chains, rose from the channel. Between the tree and the stakes the savage current broke in a belt of foam. *Kate* swerved. Jock meant to go round the foaming belt, but it looked as if Andrew did not. He signaled to the others.

“Haul mainsheet.”

Rob seized the rope; Peter looked at Andrew hard and hesitated. A broken stone causeway went from the stakes to the tree and the tide was falling.

“Ye’ll see the perch?” he said.

Andrew’s mouth got straight and the mark between his brows was plain.

“I do see the perch. Haul the sheet!”

Peter hauled and Andrew pushed down the helm. *Kilmeny* swerved and headed for the foaming belt. A man in front of the white house waved his arms, and fishermen on the beach began to shout. The perch was a danger signal. Only when the tide was full did one cross the weir, and the tide had ebbed for some time. Yet Andrew meant to cross and Rob said nothing. He was a fisherman, but he did not know, to half a foot, if the water would float his boat. If it did not, the stones would pierce her bilge and the stream would carry the wreck into the salmon nets. Yet Rob thought Andrew did know and he hauled the sheet.

Kilmeny plunged into the foam and Peter balanced a long pole, on which a mark was scored, three feet six inches from the bottom. Rob frowned, for where he trusted he trusted altogether. The boat stopped and swung on an eddy; then she slowly forged ahead. *Bonnie Kate* was yet in front, but she took the wider curve, outside the perch.

Foam leaped against *Kilmeny's* bows. She was coming round to the wind and her lee deck dipped. Her windward side was high above water, and her canvas slanted sharply, A savage blast struck her, and crossing a slack eddy, she headed for the turmoil on the stones.

Peter pushed down the pole and Rob saw the water touch three inches above the mark. That was all, but next moment the pole went deep and he knew they were across. They were level with the *Kate* and in the river mouth. The flag-boat was in front and on the bank a man stood by an old cannon.

Peter thought *Kilmeny's* bowsprit a handsbreadth in advance of the other's, but he did not know. Then he saw a bright flash and they plunged into tossing smoke. Behind the smoke, people shouted, and although Rob was old, his heart beat, for the shout was “*Kilmeny!*”

The smoke blew away. Peter jumped for the topsail halyard, and Andrew luffed the boat head to wind. The fluttering sails came down and she slowly forged along to her mooring buoy. Andrew beat his cramped arms and gave Rob a smile.

“The cup's yours. How much water was under our keel?”

“Maybe three inches,” Rob replied and his voice was dry.

“Oh, well, three inches was all we wanted, and you let me go.”

“Just that!” said Rob. “Had anither steered the boat, I’d no’ ha’ bided quiete while he ran a risk like yon.”

CHAPTER II

MRS. GRIER DISAPPROVES

Murren water ripples by a small Scottish town and curves about flat pastures where the bent-grass and the hedgerows slant from the bitter wind. A sandy point commands the river mouth, and since the fishermen's cup was sailed for on a public holiday, the townsfolk and farmers from the moors occupied sheltered spots behind the bluff. The sports committee sent important people to a stage, used for drying nets.

Andrew's sister, Hannah; his aunt, Mrs. Grier, and Margaret Johnston occupied a bench. Hannah and Margaret knew something about boat sailing and used their glasses to study the race. Mrs. Grier was frankly bored. The Murren folk were not her sort, but she thought she ought to take some part at the sports. Mrs. Grier knew her importance and liked to think she carried out her duties.

Her face was thin and rather pinched; her mouth was straight and her look was dignified. At Edinburgh she had ruled a small, exclusive circle, but when her husband died and creditors claimed his estate, friends she had bullied left her alone, and to take control at Rowans was some relief. Andrew's father and mother were dead; the trustees approved his aunt's rather parsimonious methods.

Mrs. Grier had useful qualities. She wanted to do all she ought, and she hated extravagance, particularly romantic extravagance. For a time her rule at Rowans was firm, and then Hannah began to claim her independence. Hannah did not altogether rebel; her habit was not theatrical. She did not dispute and sometimes she indulged her aunt, but Mrs. Grier's control went.

Now the race and the people bored her, she mused about her niece. On the whole, she liked Hannah, and she imagined Margaret Johnston's example accounted for the girl's obstinacy. Margaret sprang from good stock and would inherit a useful sum, but she was a typical Borderer and Mrs. Grier did not approve the Borderers. For the most part they were an uncultivated, stubborn, and ridiculously democratic lot. The country-house people used the shopkeepers' first names; artisans, plowmen, and sometimes poachers, in a sense, were their friends. For example, when Andrew went to a Murren shop his greeting was, "How's a' wi' you the day?"

Perhaps it was strange, since Hannah was the rebel and Andrew carelessly acknowledged Mrs. Grier's claims, but from the beginning she was antagonistic to the young man. For one thing, when James Grier died Andrew inherited all, and Mrs. Grier, James's brother's wife, felt her son ought to have got some part. Jim was a lawyer at Glasgow; he had talent and ambition, but since he was poor his progress was slow. Although Mrs. Grier imagined she did not allow things like that to weigh, she felt her brother-in-law was not just.

Moreover, Jim visited with his cousins and it looked as if he were attracted by Margaret Johnston. Mrs. Grier did not altogether like Margaret, but the girl was rich, and for her to marry Jim would help. Yet she doubted if Margaret were attracted; in fact, sometimes she thought Margaret preferred Andrew. Then the club commodore arrived and suggested she should watch the race through his telescope, and she graciously agreed.

When Mrs. Grier went off Margaret smiled. "Willie Robertson's politeness is rather remarkable. Can your aunt use a big telescope?"

"I doubt," Hannah replied. "Perhaps old Willie took the proper line. I imagine aunt began to feel the committee rather left her alone."

"The Rowans' bill is a long bill and Mrs. Grier is a keen housekeeper; but I must not be shabby."

"Oh, well," said Hannah, "aunt does like her importance acknowledged, but to play up does not cost one much and she is really a good sort."

Margaret said nothing. Mrs. Grier was not her sort and she thought Hannah knew her aunt, but Hannah was stanch. Margaret was a Solway Scot, and the Solway Scots' ancestors were North Sea pirates. She was tall and firmly built, her hair was red and her eyes were sea-blue. When she was moved she was frank and her temper was imperious. She hated pretense and shabbiness. As a rule, Hannah was quiet, but her friends knew her firm.

For a few minutes Margaret looked about. She saw the bent-grass ripple in the wind, and smoke roll like a faint blue cloud across the hill that hid the town. A white plume that advanced behind the trees marked the passing of a Glasgow train. Then Margaret rubbed her glasses and studied the race. She saw the buoy plunge in the tideway and *Kilmeny* slant from the squall, until it looked as if the spire of sail would touch the water. Moreover, since the glass was good, she saw the stiff, braced figure at the helm. Margaret's eyes sparkled. She liked pluck, and Andrew's exploit moved her.

“He’s round!” she said. “Now they slack sheets for the run home! But to keep the glasses was selfish. Did you see?”

Hannah knew Margaret was not selfish and rather thought her keeping the glasses significant.

“I saw Andrew beat the other boat and jibe round the buoy. I think he ran some risk.”

“Sometimes one must run a risk.”

“Perhaps that is so,” Hannah admitted. “All the same, the adventure ought to be justified. Then Andrew risked another’s boat.”

“If the boat were his, do you think he’d hesitate?”

Hannah smiled. “Andrew’s habit is to plunge with all he’s got.”

“On the Border, we are like that,” said Margaret. “The Englishman’s picture of the sternly sober Scot is a ridiculous exaggeration. Perhaps one does meet sober Scots, for example, in Aberdeen and Fife, but we are really a romantic lot. For long we stole English cattle and baffled the Scottish kings; then our gentry were for the Stuarts and fought the Covenant. Afterwards we intrigued with Prince Charlie and smuggled goods from France. Reckless adventure is our inheritance.”

“I doubt if it is mine, and the Griers were not gentlefolks,” Hannah remarked. “We were farmers, merchants and shipbuilders, and I think the conventional portrait of the Scot is not unlike my father, the provost. He was calm and just and kind.”

“But Andrew is rather your grandfather’s stamp.”

“It’s possible,” said Hannah. “Black Andrew was something of an adventurer. He built ships on new lines and speculated in Canadian forests; but that is all I know and I doubt if it’s important.”

“It is important. One does inherit——” Margaret urged, and resumed with a smile: “But the boats are getting near and I mustn’t philosophize.”

Hannah mused. As a rule, her habit was thoughtful. Margaret was romantic, generous and proud. Her clan’s crest was the famous Flying Spur; but the Griers were another sort. Yet Hannah sensed in Andrew a strange, reckless vein, and sometimes she was disturbed.

By and by the leading boat was level with the river mouth, and *Kilmeny* was a few yards astern. For all Hannah’s calm, her heart beat. Andrew steered the second boat and she wanted him to win. Pulley blocks rattled and

Kilmeny's bows swung round. She slanted, and steered as if to pass between the perch and beach. Andrew meant to cross the weir, and it looked as if Margaret knew his plan. Her eyes sparkled and she beat the platform rail.

“Splendid!” she said. “*Kilmeny* wins!”

Hannah said nothing. Although she thrilled, she frowned. She knew the tide was falling and Andrew ought not to risk the weir. But Margaret knew and obviously approved. Hannah saw Andrew's rashness moved her. Well, Margaret was straight and stanch and wholesomely proud; if Andrew married her, the marriage would be good. But Hannah did not know: Andrew would not marry because the marriage was good.

Kilmeny plunged into the turmoil at the weir. For a moment the savage tide brought her up and Hannah thought the boat had struck. Then she forged ahead, pushed through the tossing foam, and went faster. People along the shore began to shout.

“He's through! *Kate's* away wi' it. Let her gang, An'rew! Jock Wilson's beat!”

The slanted sails were level, and then one overlapped. A gun crashed, smoke hid the boats and blew away. Margaret's voice helped the shout:

“*Kilmeny!*”

Mrs. Grier rejoined Hannah, and soon afterwards Andrew landed. He gave the group on the stage a smile and Mrs. Grier's thin lips set. The yachtsmen she knew on Forth and Clyde used white caps and badges and pipeclayed shoes. Andrew's brown shooting cap was battered, his clothes were stained by salt, and his rubber boots reached his knees. Mrs. Grier did not know much about small trawlers, but she felt her nephew ought not to look like a fisherman. Moreover, he ought to come to the stage for her congratulations, but he did not.

A girl in the crowd advanced. She was attractive and her clothes were fashionable. Since she steered for Andrew, Mrs. Grier wondered who she was; and then, using Hannah's glasses, got something of a shock. The girl touched Andrew and when he turned gave him her hand.

“Is it not the waitress from the tavern who has stopped your brother?” Mrs. Grier inquired.

Hannah was annoyed. She was Andrew's critic and sometimes his frank monitor; but for her aunt to criticize was another thing. Besides, Mrs. Grier's

voice carried some distance, and Margaret turned. Margaret's color was white and pink, but now Hannah thought the pink was red.

"The *Murrendale* is not a tavern, and Minnie Douglas is the landlord's niece," Hannah rejoined. "Then Rutherford is a keen supporter of the sailing club."

"But does this account for the girl's friendliness? Since Andrew arrived he has not been much at home, but I did not know he loafed about the *Murrendale*."

"I expect he sometimes was at the hotel," Hannah admitted. "Rutherford gave the committee a room and Andrew helped them about the match."

It did not look as if Mrs. Grier were satisfied, but Hannah sensed her aunt's antagonism and was not going to apologize for Andrew. Because she thought Margaret interested, she had accounted for his knowing Minnie Douglas, but it was all she had meant to do.

"The race is over and I suppose we ought to see the sports," she said.

In the meantime, Andrew, Rutherford, the landlord, and two or three more, had started for the sports. When Andrew landed he had meant to join Mrs. Grier's party. He felt that for him to win the cup was something of an exploit. Moreover, he thought Margaret would enjoy his triumph, and he frankly wanted her congratulations.

When Minnie advanced he admitted he would sooner she left him alone, but he saw he must play up. Minnie was friendly; he had joked with her before the committee meetings at the hotel, and when he went on board she had wished him good luck. Andrew's habit was to acknowledge his friends. Besides, now Minnie's eyes shone with excitement and her color was high, her charm was rather marked, and Andrew knew her satisfaction was sincere.

"Your carrying the topsail in the squall was fine," she said. "I knew you would beat Jock Wilson, and I bet half-a-crown on you."

"Then I like your pluck, but you were rash," Andrew rejoined. "*Kate* is really the better boat and we won because she's too deep to cross the weir."

"Just that!" Minnie agreed. "I did not bet on *Kilmeny*; I backed the man at the helm."

Andrew was flattered. Murren folk are frugal, and he imagined Minnie's half-crowns were not numerous. All the same, he ought to join his relations, and he gave the group on the stage a glance. He saw Mrs. Grier's mouth was

tight and it looked as if Margaret did not know he was about. The corners of Andrew's mouth went up and his eyes twinkled. As a rule, he indulged his aunt and tried to satisfy Margaret, but he was not going to be bullied.

"You'll come to the hotel?" Minnie resumed. "When the sports are over Rob will get the cup. The committee expect you at supper."

Andrew did not altogether want to go, but he thought Minnie had noticed his aunt's annoyance. Moreover, the fishermen were his friends, and to celebrate his victory was the proper line.

"I must go to the hotel, anyhow, for my clothes," he said. "We might stop and watch the sports for a few minutes."

The landlord and some more joined them and they started for the field.

Five or six hours afterwards, Andrew left the little town and went up the valley. A full moon floated between thin clouds; the wind had dropped and the night was calm. Corncrakes called in the meadows and sometimes a curlew's whistle pierced the gloom. In the distance the surf throbbed on the sands, and the measured beat moved Andrew, for he loved the sea.

After a time, he stopped, and sitting on a broken wall, lighted his pipe. He had not used much liquor at the hotel, but he had stayed longer than he thought, and he owned himself an obstinate fool. Had he not seen Mrs. Grier's frown and Margaret's unconsciousness, he would have joined the party. All the same, Minnie's wanting him to know she was glad he won was kind and he could not let her down.

Minnie had some charm, and when one bantered her, as Andrew sometimes did, she rejoined with humorous keenness; but this was all. Although Andrew liked a Scottish joke, he was not a philanderer, and for the most part Margaret occupied his thoughts.

He liked Margaret's independence and sincerity, her rather imperious temper and her pride. She weighed things and was not cheated much. Yet she was romantic and sometimes rashly generous. Until one knows the Scots, one cannot judge their qualities, but Andrew thought he did know Margaret. Then she was beautiful and her beauty called. Andrew admitted that if he married, he would like to marry Margaret, but he had no grounds to think her willing, and he doubted if he could properly support a wife.

Although Rowans and two or three moorland farms were his, the rents were small. His father was not extravagant, but Robert, Mrs. Grier's husband, got and squandered his portion, and the shipbuilder's money had

melted. In fact, Andrew's duty was to mend the house's fortunes, but so far he did not see a useful plan. He frowned, and rather moodily looked about.

In the hollow behind the wall Murren Water ran among the stones. Andrew heard a big trout splash and a rabbit plunge into a hole; he smelt wet leaves and the dew on the dusty road. A cloud rolled across the moon and woods and distant hills got dim. The brooding calm was soothing, and Andrew owned he loved the quiet dale.

He was not ambitious, and since it was not usual for a Scottish lawyer to get rich he thought he would be satisfied to stop at Rowans. The house was not large, and Hannah and he were frugal. Anyhow, he was not going back to the Edinburgh office. When he beat *Murrendale* at the buoy, he knew he had had enough. Who, with Border blood in his veins, would study Scottish law, when he could sail a boat and carry a gun about the moors?

Andrew knocked out his pipe and went up the dale. When he arrived at Rowans all was dark, and opening the door quietly, he crept upstairs to bed. Perhaps he was ridiculous, since the house was his, but he felt like a schoolboy stealing home from an escapade.

CHAPTER III

ANDREW'S OBSTINACY

But for the splash of the burn and the pattering leaves all was quiet at Rowans. Bright sunbeams pierced the wood and touched with vivid color the pale green and yellow lichens on the house's granite front. Rowans was old and marked by the austerity typical of the Border strongholds, but it was small and, so far as antiquarians knew, not at any time important. In the old days when the Scots and Cumbrians fought, the wooded glen the house occupied was perhaps a safeguard against the English raids.

For long Rowans was a farm, and granite steadings surrounded the courtyard, but Andrew, the shipbuilder, used some part of his fortune to modernize the house. His work was obvious, and would stand, for Black Andrew built for strength.

The afternoon was hot, but the shadows of mountain ash and sycamore trembled on the lawn and Mrs. Grier's tea table was under a tall Scots fir. A few yards off, the burn splashed and sparkled between mossy stones. Margaret Johnston and Hannah occupied garden seats. Andrew was in the grass, his back against a tree, but Jim Grier used the neighboring bench. Hannah could not picture Jim's loafing in the grass. Jim was fastidious about his clothes, and although he had talent and his industry was marked, Hannah thought him something of a prig.

Mackellar, the Dumfries bank agent and Andrew's trustee, was at the table. His hair was gray, and as a rule his look was stern, but sometimes his eyes twinkled humorously. Now he gave Mrs. Grier his polite attention. Mrs. Grier's habit was to talk; Mackellar's was not.

"If ye're for the flower-show, Mistress Mackellar expects ye to use our house," he said by and by. "She thought ye might make a party and drive over."

"Is not Mrs. Mackellar president?" Jim inquired.

"She is that," Mackellar agreed.

Hannah smiled. At the bank Mackellar's English was good, but sometimes, when others' talk was cultivated, he used the homely Border Scots. Mrs. Grier's and Jim's cultivation was rather marked.

“One ought to support one’s friends, and the flower-show’s a picturesque function,” Jim resumed. “Let’s go. I expect Hannah would like the excursion, and perhaps Margaret——”

Margaret said nothing, and Hannah thought she glanced at Andrew, who did not look up.

“I imagine you were bored another time,” Hannah remarked.

“Oh, well,” said Jim, smiling, “something depends——”

He stopped and Hannah rejoined: “I hope you imply something depends on the show. When you were bored, I was your companion.”

Mackellar’s eyes twinkled, for although Jim’s embarrassment was not very obvious, Mackellar was not cheated. In some respects the old bank agent was fastidious, and he saw the fellow forgot Andrew was host. Then Andrew looked up.

“Jim’s plan is good, and I can get Jardine’s big car,” he said to Mrs. Grier; and turned to Margaret. “I hope you’ll join us.”

They agreed and Jim laughed.

“You’re a lucky fellow, Andrew. My holidays are short, but you have been at home for two or three weeks, and if you wait for the show, you must stay some time yet.”

“That is so,” said Mrs. Grier, and looked at Andrew. “Ought you not to be back at Edinburgh?”

“I’m not going back,” Andrew replied in a careless voice. “In fact, I rather think I’ll remain at Rowans for good.”

Mrs. Grier’s mouth got tight. Mackellar’s glance was keen and Margaret’s frankly interested. Jim smiled, and his smile was indulgent, as if he were willing to make allowances. Hannah studied the group and speculated. She was disturbed, but she had, perhaps more than the others, the Scottish faculty for cool, detached judgment, and she wondered whether Jim had not led Andrew where he wanted him to go. Then, although Mrs. Grier’s annoyance was sincere, Hannah doubted if she were annoyed only because Andrew was rash. Her aunt perhaps had other grounds to be annoyed. All the same, when Andrew was obstinate there was no use in talking.

“If you do not return, the office will break your articles,” Mrs. Grier resumed. “You are not a boy and you lost four years in France. If you give

up your studies, you cannot be a lawyer and you have not another occupation. Your resolve is ridiculous.”

“It’s possible,” Andrew agreed. “In a sense, perhaps, I did lose the four years I was in France; but I don’t know—— At all events, I have done with the Edinburgh office.”

“Since the fishermen’s sports I thought you strange. Until you won the cup you were content to be a lawyer,” said Mrs. Grier in a meaning voice.

“I rather think I was resigned. Well, perhaps my winning the cup had something to do with it. You see, I can sail a boat, but I doubt if I have much talent for law.”

“You’re serious about it, Andrew?” Mackellar inquired.

“I’m certainly not joking, sir.”

Mackellar got up. “Very well. I am your trustee, and although I doubt if I can persuade you, I must state some facts you ought to weigh. If Mistress Grier will give us leave——”

He and Andrew crossed the grass and Mrs. Grier turned to the others, as if she reckoned on their sympathy.

“Since the sports, I expected something like this, but to be philosophical is hard. Andrew is ridiculous.”

“But what have the sports to do with it?” Jim inquired.

“Andrew admitted his winning the cup accounted for something,” Mrs. Grier rejoined in a meaning voice. “Yet I doubt if it accounts for all.”

“Oh, well,” said Jim, indulgently, “Andrew is a sportsman and perhaps he has not the qualities a lawyer needs. Besides, the law’s a strenuous occupation, and, as a rule, the reward’s not generous. Anyhow, I doubt if we are entitled to meddle. Let’s talk about something else!”

The others began to do so, but Hannah pondered. Although she thought Andrew ridiculous, the Scots are stanch to the clan, and Jim’s apologizing for her brother jarred. Besides, when Margaret was about, Mrs. Grier ought not to dwell upon Andrew’s folly. Margaret was Hannah’s friend, but she was not her relation. Moreover, Mrs. Grier had implied that Andrew’s resolve to remain at Rowans dated from the sports, but was not accounted for by his winning the cup. Although Mrs. Grier did not indicate his object, Hannah imagined Margaret thought she saw a light. In fact, it looked as if

Mrs. Grier had reckoned on something like that. Well, if Margaret were satisfied to talk to Jim, Hannah was not, and she went to the house.

Mackellar and Andrew stopped at a bench in the shade and the banker lighted his pipe.

“Ye’re a grown man and I cannot force ye to go the way ye ought. But I have some power.”

“That is so, sir,” Andrew agreed. “For a time you control supplies. Well, my father’s estate was his, but perhaps he need not have barred my using it until I’m twenty-five.”

“I’m thinking James Grier knew his son,” Mackellar remarked dryly. “The important thing is, the estate is small.”

“Oh, well, I’m not extravagant.”

“I have some grounds to think ye frugal. Had ye stuck to the law, I had hope for ye, but if ye’re ambitious to be Grier o’ Rowans, I doubt—— A peat-hag laird is not a farmer and, as a rule, he’s not a gentleman. But ye ken the type.”

Andrew admitted that he did so. Anyhow, he knew two or three who haunted hotel bars, swaggered at farmers’ dinners, and engaged in puzzling speculations at third-class race meetings.

“I think you’re not altogether just, sir,” he rejoined. “I’ve tried the law and I’ve had enough, but I don’t want to loaf. In France I used my muscles and I may find an occupation at Murrendale. For example, when Elliot’s lease runs out I might work his farm; or I might start a fishery with modern boats and nets.”

“There’s a drawback,” Mackellar remarked. “Ye would need to use some capital and ye’ll not get the sum from me.”

“Then, I must wait until your control is gone.”

“Ye’re *thrown*, and there’s no use in talking; but Mistress Grier declares your dissatisfaction with the Edinburgh office began when ye won the fishermen’s race.”

“I don’t know if it’s remarkable, but the sea calls,” said Andrew, in an apologetic voice. “When I hear blocks rattle and the black sails go up I feel I must get on board. Then the spray in my face and the plunge for the buoy, so to speak, fired my blood. I expect I bore you, sir, but you don’t know the

thrill one gets when one drives a good boat to windward across a steep head sea.”

Mackellar smiled. “I like fine to see a big trout splash and feel the line get tight, but for a’ that, I stick to my desk at the bank. Well, ye declare the sea called; no’ a bonnie lass?”

“It certainly was so. I don’t see why you imagine I was persuaded by a girl.”

“Mistress Grier implied something like that.”

Andrew’s look was puzzled, and then he frowned. “Now I think about it, perhaps she did so, but I don’t see her object. Well, I was polite to Minnie Douglas, but to imagine she had something to do with my remaining at Rowans is altogether extravagant.”

Mackellar pulled out his watch and got up. He thought he did see Mrs. Grier’s object, but to meddle was awkward.

“I cannot bully you, but until ye’re entitled to claim your inheritance, ye’ll need to be content with the allowance fixed. To ken ye must use economy is some satisfaction. But I must away home and I’ll take my leave o’ Mistress Grier.”

Mrs. Grier was willing to let him go. Although he was agent for a famous bank, she did not approve of Mackellar. She acknowledged him a good trustee, but he was not polite and she felt he was not her friend. Moreover, if his plans and hers jarred, he might be an awkward antagonist.

Mackellar, in fact, did not trust Mrs. Grier, and when his car rolled down the valley he pondered her remarks. He saw she meant to excite Margaret Johnston’s jealousy, and it indicated that she thought Andrew attracted the girl. Mackellar hoped her supposition was accurate, because there was the marriage for the lad. Andrew, however, was something of a fool, and Mackellar doubted if he knew when his luck was good.

Yet the lad’s fortune must be mended, and Mackellar did not see a plan. James Grier was satisfied to use his portion of the money Andrew, the shipbuilder, left, and when he died his son’s inheritance was small. For one thing, the Quebec sawmills Black Andrew started only ran when timber was dear. The trees along the river were gone; one must push back into the rocks for good logs, and the combines, cutting roads and building expensive skidways, knocked out the small millers. Mackellar thought the mills and timber leases ought to be sold, but Turnbull, the Canadian partner,

stubbornly held on, and since the old fellow owned the larger block of shares, one could not force him to agree.

Somebody ought to go to Quebec, and had Andrew been another type, Mackellar would have sent the lad. Andrew, however, was careless and, so far as one could see, not at all a business man. In fact, Mackellar was satisfied because it looked as if Andrew did not bother about the mills.

Then the car lurched into a hole and the jolt banished Mackellar's disturbed thoughts. He was trustee for others and a bank agent's job was strenuous; in the meantime, he must let the Rowans business go. Some sheep were on the road and he concentrated on his driving.

When the car started Andrew went to the house. Hannah was on the terrace, but the others were not about.

"Hello!" said Andrew. "Has Margaret gone?"

"She went a few minutes ago. If you take the waterside, you ought to join her."

"I'm not very keen about joining Jim," Andrew remarked moodily.

"Jim didn't go," said Hannah with a smile. "I think he was willing but Margaret was not."

Andrew hesitated. He was disturbed, because, if Mackellar's remarks were justified, Margaret had perhaps some grounds to think Minnie Douglas accounted for his staying at Rowans. He felt he ought to enlighten her, but the ground was awkward. Then his look got resolute.

"Since Jim did not go, perhaps I had better start," he said.

CHAPTER IV

MARGARET'S PRIDE

Not far from Rowans a bent larch spreads its branches across the river and the smooth stones on the bank. The shade was inviting and Margaret stopped. In the cornfield the sun was hot, and her mood was thoughtful. When Mackellar and Andrew went off she was disturbed and angry, but since the others must not notice her disturbance she engaged Jim in careless talk. The effort was hard, and now she wanted to weigh things. Besides, since Hannah knew she went by the waterside, she imagined Andrew would take the path.

For a few minutes she looked about. The corn rolled in the wind and blue hills cut the shining sky. Behind the bright green larch, dark alder branches tossed, and the river splashing softly, stole through the shade. Where the alders stopped, a willow-bordered pool sparkled like polished steel.

The landscape, however, did not interest Margaret, and she searched the path along the bank. She had expected Andrew to start as soon as Mackellar went, but he did not arrive, and she admitted she was hurt. Andrew ought to look for her, because his doing so would indicate that he had no grounds for embarrassment. She had known him since he was a boy and she knew his drawbacks: a rather generous rashness, obstinacy, and hatred of control. That, however, was all, and to some extent the drawbacks were hers.

Margaret thought Mrs. Grier's annoyance justified, but her trying to account for Andrew's obstinacy was not; in fact, it looked as if malice prompted her remarks. For all that, when Minnie Douglas stopped Andrew, Margaret had noted his smile and the girl's blush. She frowned, and turning her head, saw Andrew in the path. He went slowly and his slowness jarred. In the shade she was not conspicuous, and since he did not seem keen about overtaking her, she thought she would let him go. Andrew, however, saw her and stopped. Sitting in the grass, he pulled out a cigarette.

"I hoped you would wait for me," he said.

"Do you expect your friends to wait for you?" Margaret inquired.

Andrew's eyes twinkled and the corners of his mouth went up.

“I didn’t expect you to be nasty; I rather thought you’d sympathize. Anyhow, Mackellar stayed for some time, and when he resolved to go his car wouldn’t start. Since our talk was not altogether harmonious, I was forced to be polite.”

“Then Mackellar did not sympathize? Did you think it remarkable?”

“I tried to make allowances; the old fellow’s a banker and his point of view is a business man’s point of view. You’re a sport and love the hills and moors; I don’t see why you think I ought to be resigned at Edinburgh. Anyhow, I’m not resigned; I hate the gloomy office and our clients’ greediness. Besides, I haven’t a lawyer’s qualities; I’m not at all logical, and when I ought to argue I swear. I can’t pretend importance; I like to wear old clothes, to carry a gun, and handle sail on board a tarry boat.”

To some extent Margaret did sympathize, but she was anxious for Andrew, and his careless humor jarred. Then Mrs. Grier’s remarks, after all, carried weight.

“In fact, although you really know you ought to stick to the office, you would sooner loaf about Rutherford’s with fishermen and poachers?”

“I’m not much at the hotel. Then Rutherford’s a good type and the Solway fishermen are a fine lot.”

“It’s possible. All the same, I doubt if they and their relations are proper friends for you.”

Andrew’s mouth got straight and his eyes began, to sparkle. He noted Margaret’s rather scornful glance and the color the blood brought to her skin. When she looked like that she was beautiful, but she took the wrong line and his temper was hot. Since he did not see his fault he was not going to be punished. At the beginning he had thought he might indicate that he was not moved by Minnie Douglas’s charm. Now he knew he could not. The job was awkward and he hated a shabby part.

“Oh, well,” he said, “the fishermen are my friends. I’m not going to apologize for them; they don’t need my apology.”

Margaret’s look got kinder. She liked his stanchness, for she herself was stanch; and then she reflected that Andrew perhaps refused to apologize for the girl at the hotel.

“The trouble is, you cannot belong to two circles,” she remarked. “One, so to speak, absorbs and molds you. On the Border, we imagine ourselves democratic, but I doubt if our democracy carries us very far. At all events,

your friends won't mix. Perhaps your fishermen are a good lot; but their rules are not our rules. Well, I think you ought to see my argument!"

"You argue like a philosopher, and I'm not very dull. You imply I can't belong to your circle and the others'?"

"Something like that," Margaret agreed.

Andrew turned and studied her. Margaret's hair, against the leaves, was like red gold, and a little green ornament she wore sparkled in a beam that pierced the shade. The dim background emphasized her vivid color, but the white was not as white as he had known and the red was very red. Her look was imperious and her proud beauty moved him. Moreover, he knew she had qualities.

To quarrel was ridiculous, but Mrs. Grier had annoyed him, and to be polite to Mackellar had cost much. Then he felt his giving up his study of the law was justified, and he had reckoned on Margaret's support.

"You know I want your friendship, and I hate to dispute," he said. "Suppose we talk about something else?"

Margaret was willing. After all, her object was to lead Andrew where she thought he ought to go, and perhaps she had not used much tact.

"Very well. Let's admit you have not much talent for the law, but you have some talent, and you ought to follow a useful occupation."

"It looks as if you took my idleness for granted, I'm not remarkably lazy."

Margaret blushed. "Perhaps I am rather a prig, Andrew. Still, you see I've known you long and I'd like you to make your mark. I want you to be famous, but I doubt if your haunting the *Murrendale* will help."

"I thought we had done with the *Murrendale*," Andrew rejoined. "Your object's good and you began to persuade me, but you don't know where to stop. Well, I expect women are like that. For example, my aunt's a good sort, but where she ought to leave me alone it looks as if she's forced to talk. You, so to speak, revolve about an awkward point. Anyhow, I don't want to talk about the *Murrendale*."

Margaret tried for calm. Her object was good, but she was not at all like Mrs. Grier, and Andrew ought to know she was not. Moreover, she had some grounds to think his refusal to talk about the hotel ominous. Then her clan's badge was the Flying Spur, and she had inherited something of the old moss-troopers' fierceness.

“Perhaps I do revolve, but if the point is awkward, I am not accountable. However, we don’t make much progress, and I mean to stop. You must stick to the friends you like best; but I expect you see what it implies?”

“I think I see,” said Andrew in a moody voice.

He knew himself ridiculous, but Margaret was ridiculous, and to enlighten her about Minnie Douglas now was impossible.

“Well,” he resumed, “since I’m obstinate, I suppose I must bear the consequences.”

Margaret got up. “I don’t expect the consequences will bother you much. But we have stayed some time——”

She started, and when they followed the river Margaret was quiet and Andrew looked straight in front. They were young and their blood was hot. Mrs. Grier had planned better than she knew.

A few days afterwards Andrew one evening stopped in front of the *Murrendale* hotel. Three or four dusty cars blocked the side of the street and a group occupied the steps. The men wore leather coats and the women expensive furs. Somehow the strangers jarred. Andrew did not like fashionable tourists; he felt the Border was for the Borderers.

He admitted he was moody. Since he declared he was not going back to the Edinburgh office he had borne some strain. As a rule Hannah supported him; now he knew she disapproved. Jim rather sympathized, but he seemed to think Andrew’s obstinacy a joke, and when Andrew was about Mrs. Grier was ominously quiet. Well, if his relations were resolved to be nasty, he had other friends. He hesitated for a few moments, and then went up the steps.

In summer the front of the *Murrendale* is occupied by motor tourists, but at the back is a room in which nobody who uses English is welcomed, unless he follows the sea. Andrew went along a dark passage, and meeting a girl advancing from the other end, stopped and blocked her way.

“Let me by!” she said in a haughty voice. “If you’re needing something, ring the bell for the waitress.”

“Why, of course!” said Andrew. “All the same, I hardly thought you would send me off like that.”

Minnie Douglas stopped and blushed. She was short and rather prettily molded than beautiful. Her color was delicate white and pink, and the rudely grained yellow paneling was a proper background for her blue and white

clothes. Perhaps Andrew was romantic, but in the gloomy passage, tainted by the smell of food and tobacco, he thought Minnie like a flower.

“I didn’t know you, Mr. Grier,” she said. “The place is that dark——”

“Anyhow, I knew you. Perhaps it’s important,” Andrew rejoined.

Minnie gave him a coquettish glance. “Oh, well, I was not expecting you. Now the boat racing’s over, I reckoned we wouldn’t see you much.”

“Then it looks as if you don’t know me. When we fixed for the races you were kind and Rutherford gave us a good prize. When I won you were the first to congratulate me. The Borderers dinna’ forget.”

A door opened and the landlord came along the passage. He gave Andrew a keen glance, and then went by. Andrew, noting his twinkle, was rather annoyed.

“It’s weel you’re not a stranger,” Minnie remarked. “Had uncle not seen who it was, you would not have bided long.”

“To be trusted is something, but Rutherford knows my soberness. Anyhow, since he didn’t send me off, my luck is pretty good.”

“If you are sober, save us from the other sort!” Minnie rejoined. “But the tourist bodies in the dining-room are wanting supper, and I mustn’t stop. Maybe, if you’re not gone when they start——”

She smiled and went off, and Andrew opened a door at the end of the passage. On the whole, he thought if Minnie were not about when the tourists started he would be resigned.

When he went into the room three or four men looked up and gave him a friendly nod. They were big, muscular fellows, and their skin was darkened by wind and spray. The Solway fishermen are a democratic lot, and they acknowledged Andrew their friend because he knew much about a boat. A window on the west was open and the light touched his face. His look was frank and steady; he was big, and but for his dark hair, his type, like the others’, was the Viking type. One who was old and bent motioned him to his table.

“I’m telt ye’re no’ going back to Edinbro’.”

“That is so, Jim,” Andrew agreed. “If I can get the money, I’d like you to build me a yacht.”

The old fellow gave him a queer, fixed look. “A yacht, says he! A toy to play wi’ in fine weather, and ye auld Andrew’s marrow? Is that a’ ye want?”

“Now I think about it, my trustee’s argument was not unlike yours,” Andrew remarked. “Anyhow, if I sold Rowans I doubt if I could build a ship.”

“The banker’s no’ a fool, but if ye want a ship, the *Anne Musgrave’s* yours, and she’ll last to be your son’s. Built wi’ Cumberland oak and copper bolts she was, auld Andrew’s grandest job! I mind I drove the trennels in her starboard frames.”

“She was a grand job, Willie, and the steamers have not yet knocked her out. She carries coal to Ireland, and Mackellar not long since told me she pays five per cent. on her selling price.”

The old ship carpenter’s smile was dry.

“Just that! Five per cent.’s a banker’s sum, an’ the investment’s sound! Man, your grandfather’s ships didna’ pay interest; they paid their cost. The Black Griers were hard, and they went where hard men got money: to Newfunland fishing and the Quebec woods. They sailed the ships they owned, and their office was on board.”

“After all, they were business men, and if my grandfather came back, I expect he’d own his methods were out of date,” said Andrew with a smile. “But there’s no use in speculating. Black Andrew and his methods are gone for good.”

“Aweel; so long’s ye’re satisfied!” said the carpenter dryly. “For a’ that, I hae my doots.”

He brooded about the old days, when, twice a year, the equinoctial tides carried the Griers’ wooden ships across Solway sands, and Andrew joined two men at a table in a corner.

“How’s the salmon-fishing, Jock?” he inquired.

One looked up, rather moodily. “It weel might be better. For two-three weeks we have trailed the net aboot the Firth, and we havena’ got a fin. The license is paid, but the net is no’, and I’m thinking we must try the flounders. The salmon are going for Esk and Eden, but ye must not fish the pools at the heid o’ the Firth.”

Andrew sympathized. A salmon license and net are expensive and may only be used in the sea channels. One may draw a net for flounders in shallow water, but the fish were small and not numerous. In fact, when one’s boat and gear cost much, to fish for flounders did not pay. Then Jock’s companion smiled.

“The moon’s by the change and the tide is full about two o’clock. The night’s going to be dark and the water will reach the pools at three-quarter’s flood. Jock’s thinking we might try a draw about the Scar. Would ye like to go?”

Jock’s look was rather grim, and Andrew thought he saw a light. When the moon is new, tides are big and run out far. Shallow channels go dry and the fish, forced into the pools, cannot move until the flood covers the sands. A dark night is not the best night for the draw-net, but Andrew doubted if Jock meant to draw for flounders. He had bought a salmon license, and as yet he had not caught the nobler fish.

For a few moments Andrew hesitated. To go with the men was rash, and he did not altogether see why they wanted him, but sometimes his mood was rash. Then his relations’ disapproval hurt and he was obstinate. He was not going to be bullied into soberness and he humorously pictured Mrs. Grier’s disturbance if she knew about his poaching. Anyhow, he would go.

“I’ll get my sea clothes and long boots from upstairs,” he said. “When do you start?”

“We’ll away soon and sort the net,” Jock replied.

They went off by and by, and Andrew did not notice that Minnie was at the dining-room door. Minnie’s face got red, but when her annoyance began to go she knitted her brows. The party took the road to the water-foot, and she knew Jock. If he meant to poach, he did not want Mr. Grier’s help to steer the boat. Minnie thought he had another use for Andrew.

CHAPTER V

SOLWAY SANDS

The wind was light and sometimes the black lugsail flapped, but the boat made good speed. In the west the moon was low and the tide ran hard. A dull throb, like the throb of a heavy train, pierced the dark and marked the flood's advance.

Andrew lay in the folded nets and smoked his pipe. His clothes were fishermen's clothes, and he wore rubber boots over his wading-stockings. The boat's draught was two feet, and when the net was used somebody must go into the water. In the meantime, Jock steered for the fishing ground and Andrew looked about. Ahead, the curving channel vanished in the sands, and a vague broken line indicated trees behind the marshes on the English shore. The pools shone with faint reflections, the banks were black, and although open water was some distance off, the channel got wider fast. Flakes of muddy foam and trailing weed floated along by the boat. One heard the current fret the bank and sometimes a heavy splash.

Jock was obviously going to poach, and Andrew admitted his helping the fellow was foolish, but the glimmering moonlight and the wide sands called. Perhaps it was not for nothing he sprang from moss-trooper stock and his ancestors drove stolen cattle across the Solway flats. Anyhow, he felt Mrs. Grier and Margaret had not taken the proper line. The resolve for which they punished him was justified, and after all his adventure was something of a joke.

When he looked up again the bank was some distance off. Angry ripples splashed about the boat. The sail slanted and did not flap; the moon was gone and the sky was dark. In the distance a faint light twinkled, and Andrew imagined it marked the water-policemen's house.

"The wind's coming from the east," he said.

"The tide calls the breeze, and when the banks are covered we'll get a' we need," said Jock. "I reckon it willna' freshen much for maybe an hour, and we'll no' be very long drawing the Hallows pool."

Andrew wondered how Jock would find the pool. The night got dark, and all one saw was shadowy sand and vague, rippling water. Outlines melted; flats and channel were blurred, but the surf was no longer distant,

and the tide, scouring the shallows, chimed like bells. By and by Jock knocked out his pipe, and Tom, his mate, jumped on the deck. When Tom signed, Jock let go the tiller, and for a few minutes all were occupied.

The black sails dropped, the boat's keel touched bottom, and Tom jumped overboard. Andrew pulled out the folded net, and when fifty yards was gone got into the water. Jock pushed off the boat and hoisted sail; Andrew and Tom seized the draw-rope and advanced along the water's edge. The sand was soft and sometimes their boots slipped in greasy mud. Their part was to pull the weighted net through the water and the effort was hard, for they must keep level with the boat, which hauled the other end. The leads touched bottom, the cork floats buoyed up the top, and the net was perpendicular, but curved from end to end. So long as boat and haulers did not stop, the fish inside the curve would not get round the ends.

Andrew's thick clothes and rubber boots embarrassed him, and he labored for breath. To strain and sweat for a basket of flounders was ridiculous, but he had undertaken the adventure and must see Jock out. Moreover, he doubted if flounders were all the fish in the net. He and Tom did not talk. When a Scot is engaged on a strenuous job his habit is not to talk.

At length Jock steered for the bank, and when he jumped overboard they labored to drag the net to shore. The middle of the curve was now a bag, hung with weed and slippery with yellow scum. The men, plunging into the water, grappled the load, and the tide splashed about their long boots. Sometimes the stream tore the meshes from their grasp. They fought the savage current and at length pulled the bag on to the sand. Flounders flapped in the phosphorescent tangle, but Andrew saw a bright silver gleam. Laughing softly, he pulled out the noble, shining fish.

"A grand salmon! Twenty pounds, I calculate, and fresh up from sea. Well, I suppose the proper plan is to throw it back?"

"D'ye see me throw back a clean fish?" Jock inquired. "At Carlisle saumon's two-and-six the pound; but I reckon yon will go to Leeds."

He began to pick up the flounders, and Andrew climbed the bank. The dark was thick, but he saw the sand was vanishing and the pools combined. The measured throb was gone, for the surf no longer broke, but one heard swiftly running water and the splash of undermined banks. Andrew went back to the channel and Jock began to push off the boat.

"Maybe we have time to draw the Scar pool," said the fisherman.

Andrew put his back against the bow and sank to near his waist. A whirlpool revolved about the boat, washing the sand from under her and packing it against her planks on the other side; but they pushed off, hoisted sail, and plunged into the dark. Andrew imagined Jock knew where they went, but he himself did not. All he saw was curdled foam, drawn out in uneven lines. By and by, however, a white turmoil broke the gloom ahead, and he knew Jock had found the Scar pool. The Scar was a bank of granite boulders, over which the current surged. On the other side was a deep hollow in the sands.

A shrill, humming noise pierced the clamor of the tide. The east wind had begun to blow down the Firth, but the breeze, in its proper strength, had not yet reached the pool. One heard its advance across the flats. Jock luffed the boat, and when her keel touched bottom Andrew and Tom got overboard.

To land the net cost them stubborn effort, for the current seized the slack folds. The water frothed against Andrew's legs and the heavy meshes pulled him back. He and Tom got the end on the bank, and grasping the ropes, braced themselves against the strain. The boat went ahead, and Andrew could hardly distinguish her thirty yards off, for the east wind blew a gray mist across the Firth. He thought the lugsail was lowered, and Jock was satisfied to use the jib.

By and by Jock ran the boat aground and carried up an anchor, and they hauled the net. A salmon shone in the tangle, and he threw the fish some distance across the sand, for as they dragged up the net the tide advanced. In the bag flounders flapped about, and for a few minutes the men loaded a wicker creel. Then Jock stopped and turned his head. Andrew thought he heard a faint measured beat; but the noise melted in the splash of the tide.

“Oars?” he said.

“The police boat!” Jock agreed. “She’s pulling down the English gutter. I’m thinking we’ll get the net aboard.”

Andrew remarked his coolness. The proper plan was to put the salmon in the channel, but all a Borderer gets he keeps, and for Jock to throw away the fish was unthinkable.

They got to work and used speed, but nothing was done with nervous awkwardness. The net must be folded and stowed where it would not embarrass them when they hoisted sail. Andrew did not know when the police would arrive, and although he rather thought they pulled against the

tide running up the gutter, his habit was to concentrate on his job. His skin was wet by sweat and the water from the meshes got inside his oilskin coat. Hands and brain worked mechanically, but the folds of net he carried to the boat were ready for Jock to stow away.

At length all but two or three fathoms was on board, and Andrew braced his back against the bow. Tom pulled the end of the net down the bank, and Jock, balancing on the deck, used a pole. He stopped, and Andrew, turning, saw a white boat swing across the channel. Water splashed against her bows, and the beat of oars was loud and fast.

“We’ll away,” said Jock, and jumped for the halyard.

The black sail flapped noisily and the boat listed down on her side. Tom, carrying the anchor, plunged into the channel, and Jock signed.

“Coil the warp clear o’ the sheets. Ye brought the saumon?”

Tom admitted he had not brought the fish, but his job was to put the anchor rope on board, and Andrew looked about. The police boat had grounded at a shallow spot, and the men, jumping into the water, tried to drag her off, but one waded for the bank, as if he meant to reach the whammle boat. Andrew thought Jock could now push off, and all indicated that they ought to go. Jock, however, seemed to measure the distance to the floundering policeman.

“Two-and-six a pound!” he said. “They mustn’t get yon fish.”

Andrew agreed. The salmon, by Border tradition, was Jock’s; moreover, it, so to speak, was awkward evidence. Andrew thought he could beat the policeman, and he started for the bank. He seized the slippery fish, and turning to the water, saw the dark sail was hoisted. The policeman, however, was on the sand, and Andrew started for the channel.

The policeman swerved, as if to cut his line. He was a big fellow and went ominously fast. Moreover, Andrew knew the Cumberland folk were as stubborn as the Scots, and he was embarrassed by the salmon. The race would be a close race, but he must win.

Slipping in muddy spots, he plunged down the bank. His boots sank, and to hold the fish was awkward. He heard the other’s labored breath and braced himself for the effort to keep in front. He reached the channel and the tide splashed about his knees. Jock held sheet and tiller; Tom was in the water and tried to hold the boat.

The policeman was two or three yards off, but he did not carry a slippery load. The water got deeper. Andrew could hardly front the stream, and when he dropped into a hole somebody behind him seized his shoulder. Andrew stuck to the salmon and Tom seized his arm. Then Jock, carrying the tiller, jumped on deck and swung the oak bar.

The policeman let go and Andrew heard a splash. Turning sharply, he wondered where his antagonist was, and then saw an indistinct object in the water some yards off. The tide ran fast and, so far as Andrew could see, the police had not yet pushed off their boat. In a few moments their unconscious comrade would be carried away into the dark. Andrew plunged forward, and seizing the fellow, tried to keep his feet. The whammle boat was coming, but her sail thrashed and it looked as if her keel was in the sand. Jock kept her head to wind, and the current forced her along.

Tom pulled him and the other on board, and for a time he was strenuously engaged. The boat did not altogether float, and to push her off was awkward because the eddies forced her into the bank. Behind the Scar the current revolved like a whirlpool. Oars beat in the dark, and Andrew, pushing on a long pole, looked for the police boat. He did not see her, but she was obviously not far off. Then an eddy swung the whammle boat into the stream, the sail filled, and Andrew threw down his pole. Mast and canvas slanted, short waves splashed against the weather bow, and the water crept up the inclined deck. She was going up-channel, and Jock indicated the policeman, who lay in the wet net.

“Maybe ye had better ha’ left him for his friends.”

“The man was stunned,” said Andrew. “I thought he’d drown.”

“I’m thinking we could spare a few o’ yon sort,” Tom remarked. “For a’ that, we canna’ pit the fella’ overboard, and I dinna’ ken what we ought to do wi’ him.”

Andrew agreed that the policeman was an awkward passenger. To carry him to Murren-foot had obvious drawbacks, and the channel was two or three miles from land. The tide was near the flats and would soon advance across the level as fast as a man could go. Moreover, the sands were pierced by winding creeks.

In the meantime, a short angry sea got up, and the boat, burdened by her sail, dipped her lee deck in the foam. The police had vanished, and Jock concentrated on his steering; but by and by he brought the boat round, and

when she was on the other tack beckoned Tom to the tiller and studied the policeman.

“I hae’t,” he said. “The Tongue bank’s three or four miles frae the watch-hoose, and the sand’s high and firm. Dryholm creek cuts the bank, but the tide will no’ be in the channel yet. If we land the fella’ on the Tongue-end, he ought to win across.”

“It doesn’t look as if he could walk; I doubt if he’s conscious,” Andrew rejoined.

“Cauld watter’s wonnerful bracing,” Jock remarked, and used a bucket generously.

The policeman turned round, swore in a hoarse voice, and tried to get up. Jock firmly pushed him back.

“Ye’ll bide in the net. When we want ye on yere feet, ye’ll ken.”

Now Andrew was not occupied, the wind and spray were cold on his head, and he noticed that his hat was gone. He looked about the boat, but did not see the hat, and the others thought he did not have it when they pulled him on board. To lose his hat was not important, so long as it was in the water, but it carried a yacht chandler’s stamp, and since he meant to land with the policeman, he might need a hat. Andrew felt he ought to see the other out. The fellow had got a nasty knock, and unless he made good speed across the sands he might run some risk. After a time Jock luffed the boat and ran her bows against a steep bank. Tom pushed the policeman.

“Noo ye can get up and get over,” he remarked.

The policeman got up awkwardly, and balancing on the side-deck, looked across the sands. In the foreground a muddy belt glimmered with dim reflections; farther back all was very dark and somehow daunting. Andrew touched the hesitating man.

“If you know where the marsh-top is, I’ll see you across.”

“Then ye’re for Cumberland? I doot ye’re rash,” said Jock. “Onyway, ye’ll tak’ the spare tiller, and if the fella’s no’ as shaky as ye think, ye can use the knob. I dinna’ trust the watter po-lis.”

He gave Andrew the oak bar and pushed the policeman from the deck. Andrew jumped, and when he climbed the bank he saw the boat’s sail melt into the dark.

CHAPTER VI

A SUMMER NIGHT'S EXCURSION

At the top of the bank Andrew stopped and tried to study his companion. The policeman carried himself rather awkwardly, as if the effort to plow across the soft sand had cost him something, but he had got up the short incline.

“How far is the marsh?” Andrew inquired.

“Two miles,” said the other. “If you’re coming, we’d better start.”

Andrew nodded. The dark water lapped noisily along the bank, and the splash of the small, angry waves indicated the current’s speed. The sand in front was ominously level, and when the tide flowed across the top Andrew thought the flood would not stop until it reached the marsh. The night was dark, the land had vanished, and a dreary wind swept the flats.

“I’d sooner ye went in front,” Andrew remarked. “If ye’re beat, I’ll try to help ye along.”

The policeman started, and although his steps were not even, he went fast. Andrew carried the thick oak tiller, but he imagined his companion would not risk another knock. If they talked, he resolved to use Border Scots; for the other to think him a fisherman had obvious advantages. The fellow did not hesitate; he pushed on as if he knew where he went, and since Andrew did not know, he was willing for him to lead.

In the meantime, he pondered. Although he would not have agreed to put the policeman on the sands and sail away, he admitted his landing was risky. He was on the English side, and he had no hat. To get a train for Scotland he must reach Carlisle, and he reckoned the city was fourteen miles off. When one wears long rubber boots, fourteen miles is an awkward walk. Jock had stated the watch-house was three or four miles from the Tongue bank, and Andrew doubted if the policeman could get there. Andrew did not want him to do so; he meant to leave the fellow when they reached firm ground. The tide would carry the police boat up the Firth and the men could not pull back until it turned. Andrew reckoned three or four hours would go before they landed and used their telephone.

By and by the policeman stopped and rather noisily got his breath.

“Sand’s soft and my coat’s heavy,” he said. “Will ye lend me your stick?”

Andrew hesitated, but resolved to risk it, and when the other leaned on the tiller he thought he was justified.

“When we’re over the creek ye can tak’ a bit rest. Had I kent ye could walk as weel, I’d no’ ha’ gone wi’ ye.”

“We’re no’ yet across t’ creek,” the other rejoined, and laughed. “When I came round on board your boat, I found a lump on my head like a duck’s egg. My job’s to take hard knocks, but I ken when I’ve had enough. Then I thowt, if I was quiet, you might talk——”

“Just that! I reckon ye did not get a useful hint?”

“I saw three fine salmon in the well,” the policeman remarked. “But I’m puzzled. Your skipper knocked me out. Why did you pull me on board?”

Andrew enlightened him and he nodded.

“Well, tide’s running hard, and we must get over t’ creek.”

They pushed on, and Andrew approved the other’s awkward speed. He could not see water; all in front was dark, but the tide’s ominous throb pierced the dreary wail of wind. The sand, however, got firm and they made good progress, until the level flat slanted to a gloomy hollow. Andrew stopped and frowned. Dark water rolled along the hollow, and the splash of a fretted bank indicated that the stream went fast.

“I dinna’ ken if the channel’s deep, but since the tide’s yet rising, we must trust our luck,” he said, and gave the other an anxious glance.

The policeman’s legs were not steady, but his pluck was good.

“We’ll try ’t,” he agreed, and using the tiller for support, started down the bank.

On the incline the sand was soft and broken by muddy spots. Andrew stumbled about and plunged down for some yards. At the water’s edge he stopped for the policeman. The fellow’s advance was awkward and he leaned on the oak bar.

“Come on!” said Andrew, and when the man arrived pulled him into the stream.

The bank broke and the sand beat their legs. The water was at their knees and where they put down their feet the current scoured a hole. One could not

get hold of the bottom, but to lose hold altogether was to be beaten down and rolled along. When new-moon tides sweep the sands Andrew knew one might drown where one had not depth to swim.

He saw the policeman stagger, and he put his arm round him. The fellow had not yet recovered from the knock; his brain was dull and his muscles were slack. He leaned hard on Andrew, and when the water was at his waist and his long boots filled, Andrew thought the stream would carry them away. All the same, he meant to stick to the other.

Then the water got shallow and his feet got hold. The main current swept the other side; they had reached the slack, and the small noisy ripples did not bother him much. After a few moments he was on the bank, and although the effort cost him something, he pushed his companion to the top. The policeman sat in the sand and gasped. Andrew pulled off his boots and poured out the water.

“Maybe we can risk stopping for a minute or two,” he said. “How do ye expect to get to the watch-house?”

“If I can borrow a trap at Dryholm, I won’t be long on the road,” the other replied, and Andrew imagined he had an object for his frankness. Perhaps the fellow did owe him something.

“Very well,” he said, “I’ll see ye to the marsh-top, but when we’re on the dry bents I’ll push off.”

The policeman said nothing, and after a few minutes they set off. The noise of the tide was duller, and by and by a low bank loomed in the dark. Andrew pulled the other across broken peat to the short sea-grass, and found a cattle track winding across the marsh.

“I expect ye ken where ye are, and I won’t stop, but I’d like the tiller,” Andrew remarked.

“For a poacher you’re a kindly lad,” said the policeman, and gave him the bar. “I reckon I must let you go; *but keep off main road.*”

Andrew laughed and started across the marsh. Now he must think for himself, for he imagined the policeman would use the telephone as soon as he reached the watch-house. When Andrew had gone some distance he pushed the tiller into a whinn bush and steered for a clump of trees. The tiller knob was scored and the marks felt like letters.

A road went by the little wood and presently forked. Andrew thought the fork joined the main road to Carlisle, but the policeman had given him a

useful hint and he went the other way. His plan was to follow the head of the Firth and then steer for Carlisle by small, lonely roads. Moreover, the road by the marsh was straight and level, and now the tide was full the wind began to drop. If the police landed and got a car in order to follow him, he would know some time before they arrived. All the same, he doubted if they could get to work for an hour or two.

He heard a wild duck's wings beat and corncrakes in the grass. Plover called across the marsh, and in the distance a dog barked, but that was all, and he pushed on tranquilly. The damp grass and dust smelt, the soft dark was soothing, and he began to muse.

He was rather puzzled by Mrs. Grier's implying he had resolved to stay at Rowans because Minnie Douglas attracted him. He really was not attracted, and his aunt ought to know he was not. All the same, if she were persuaded he ought to go back to Edinburgh, she had, perhaps, grounds to be annoyed, and sometimes when people were annoyed they were nasty. Anyhow, she was his aunt, and although she had not used much tact she was disturbed for him.

Andrew did not know about his cousin. As a rule, when his exploits rather jarred the others Jim saw the joke, but Andrew began to think his humor ironical. In fact, it looked as if Jim thought Andrew himself a joke. Jim, however, was not important, and was only at Rowans for week-ends and holidays. Andrew let it go and looked about.

The wind was nearly gone and the night got clear. In front were rolling ground and indistinct trees; across the level fields white farmsteads dotted a long smooth slope. A curlew called on a high, trembling note and an owl hooted by a hedge. Andrew calculated he would reach Carlisle about six o'clock and the sun would soon be up. His clothes were old and wet, his boots were long, and he had no hat. Since he did not want to be conspicuous, to cross Carlisle like that was awkward.

He pondered another thing. His poaching was, of course, ridiculous; but the adventure thrilled him and the thrill was worth the risk he now saw he ran. It looked as if he had inherited something of his ancestors' reckless vein. Anyhow, he was not going to philosophize; he wanted to speculate about Margaret's line if the police got on his track.

Margaret would not approve, but he thought, to some extent, she ought to sympathize. She sprang from famous Border stock; she was a first-class sportsman, and she loved adventure. Not long since, they had quarreled, but Margaret was not revengeful, and when she thought about it coolly, she

would see Minnie Douglas had nothing to do with his remaining at Murrendale.

Andrew knew Margaret was the girl for him. He liked her pluck, her imperious moods, her steady sea-blue eyes and her red-gold hair. She was stanch and generous, but her pride and temper were awkward and sometimes she did not see Andrew's jokes. Well, he admitted his humor was primitive and Margaret's was fastidious. For example, if he stated he had gone poaching and carried off a policeman, he doubted if she would smile.

For long he was Margaret's playmate and confidant, and it accounted for his knowing her qualities. He was not her acknowledged lover, but if he could mend his fortunes, he hoped she might be satisfied with him. The trouble was, he did not see a plan, and his fortunes were rather badly broken. Sitting down in the hedgerow, he lighted his pipe and tried to concentrate.

The sea called and he imagined he would always hear its call, but to loaf about the Solway would not help. His grandfather had used the sea and got rich by adventure. He built the sawmills by the St. Lawrence, and Andrew mused about the old fellow's struggle. He pictured the French-Canadian lumber gangs at work in the woods, and the Griers' wooden ships, cumbered by the deck-load, plunging through the Newfoundland fog. To go to the St. Lawrence for timber was a man's job, the mills had not altogether stopped, and perhaps by using modern methods, one could recapture the vanishing trade. All the same, modern methods were expensive and Andrew was poor. Then he began to get drowsy and he knocked out his pipe. In the east, the sky was red and the police would be soon on his track. He resolved to think about the mills again.

When he started birds were singing in the reeds and he heard a lark. He was not tired, but his long boots were an embarrassment and began to gall his feet. After a time he got hot and pulled off his coat. The coat was old and stained by tar, but Andrew dared not throw it in the ditch. His boots were sufficiently conspicuous, and since he imagined the Carlisle police would look out for him, he wanted something to cover his fisherman's jersey.

When he got near the rising ground he took to the fields. At the bottom of the rise houses and white steadings began to glimmer in the trees and he saw thin smoke. North country farmers get up early, and since the police would make inquiries, Andrew would rather nobody saw him on the road. At the other end of the ridge, a monument cut the distant sweep of misty hills, and marked the spot where Edward, hammer of the Scots, ended his last march.

After a time, Andrew joined another road and went slowly by tall hedgerow oaks and narrow fields. The smell of clover floated down the wind, the morning was fresh, and the larks sang, but Andrew frowned and knit his brows. His feet were badly galled and the smoke staining the sky in front indicated that Carlisle was yet some distance off. All the same, he must reach the town; the Eden flowed between him and Scotland, and the bridge was at Carlisle.

Andrew began to get disturbed. Speed was important, but he could not go fast, and he did not want to hide in the fields and wait for dark. Before long all the police in the neighborhood would be warned to look out for him. Perhaps they had already begun the search and he ran some risk on the quiet road, but he must trust his luck and push ahead.

By and by he heard a motor engine and jumped for a gate. Dust rolled about the hedges, but when the dust got nearer milk cans rattled and he went back to the road. A small, flat lorry rolled up behind him and stopped.

“If you’re for Car’el, jump on,” said the driver.

Andrew did so. To rest his feet was some relief and the side screen would hide him from people they met. At Carlisle it might be awkward, but in the meantime he need not bother and he must try to account for his being on the road. The driver’s curiosity was soon satisfied and he began to talk about cattle and the small price one got for milk. At Carlisle he drove to the station and Andrew anxiously looked about. A railway constable was at the main entrance and a city policeman watched the square in front. Andrew’s heart beat, but the driver stopped at a side door and glanced at the big clock.

“I’m later than I thowt and Newcastle train goes in ten minutes. D’ye see a porter?”

Andrew did not, but he thought his luck was good. If he occupied himself with the milk cans it would look as if he were a farmer’s man, and a train for Glasgow started soon.

“Go for a truck; I’ll help you unload,” he said, and they got to work.

When a porter arrived Andrew helped him push the truck to the van and put the cans on board. The railway constable gave him a careless glance, and when they went by with another load did not turn his head. The train started and Andrew crossed the bridge to the Scotch line. It looked as if the police were satisfied to watch the doors, for the clerk gave him a ticket, and in a few minutes he got on board the Glasgow train.

CHAPTER VII

MRS. GRIER'S JEALOUSY

A day or two after Andrew got back from Carlisle he joined the small party about his aunt's chair on the terrace at Rowans. The evening was hot, but the shadow of the house touched the terrace and the smooth grass at the bottom of the steps. Across a tall beech hedge, the mountain ashes' bright leaves shone in the slanted sunbeams. In the wood the burn splashed and dark branches gently swung.

Mackellar had driven over to talk about a farm lease, and Margaret had arrived in the afternoon. Jim was at Murren, and Hannah imagined he did not know she expected Margaret. All were languid. Nobody talked much, and Andrew was content to lean against the terrace wall by Margaret. He rather hoped Jim would not return before she went. He had begun to think Jim studied him and Margaret, and sometimes he got a vague hint of hostility, although he did not bother about it. Andrew's habit was not to bother about things like that. He would sooner trust his friends.

So far, he had no grounds to think anybody knew he had helped the poachers, and although the police would make inquiries, he doubted if they would find out much. On the Solway shore poachers were numerous and the fishermen who did not themselves poach would not give away their friends. Andrew knew his relations speculated about his going off at night, but he had gone off before, and he did not mean to satisfy their curiosity. On the whole, he thought his adventure done with.

By and by he looked up. Jim crossed the grass and stopping on the steps pulled out a newspaper.

"When I was at the post office, Gordon talked about a recent exploit by Solway poachers, and I bought the *Carlisle Journal*," he said. "Andrew's friends are a humorous lot; to carry off a river policeman is something of a joke! If you like, I'll read you the story."

The others were interested and Jim opened the newspaper. When he stopped, Andrew gave him a keen glance and the mark between his brows was distinct.

"Do you know the poachers were my friends? The *Journal* does not state the boat was a Murren boat."

“That is so,” Jim agreed. “Still I expect all the fishermen on the coast are, to some extent, your friends. Well, I like the fellows’ pluck!”

“They are a rude and lawless lot, but I do not think their recent exploit at all a joke,” said Mrs. Grier. “I hope our police will soon find them out, and it ought not to be very hard. What do you think, Mr. Mackellar?”

“I expect the police will use some effort. The new Fiscal’s keen and the poachers fixed on an unfortunate time. One makes allowances for Solway folk, but stake-net rents are high, licenses are expensive, and people who honestly pay their dues declare the others, who pay nothing, get the salmon. Then the fellows who steal salmon sometimes steal game, and the landlords have had enough. In fact, I imagine the police will get strong support.”

“I don’t see why the poachers carried off the policeman,” Margaret remarked.

“The fellow was hurt——” said Andrew, and stopped, for Jim looked up.

“Then, you know he was hurt? The *Journal* states nothing about it.”

Andrew frowned. “It’s obvious. The Cumberland river police are a stubborn lot. Unless the fellow was hurt, the others would not have got him on board.”

“But why did they pull him on board?” Margaret resumed.

“The narrative indicates that the policeman tried to stop the poachers pushing off their boat. Suppose they knocked him out? If they left him in the water, he would drown. The moon was new and new moon tides run fast.”

“Andrew’s argument is logical,” Jim remarked with a smile. “I wonder whether he has told us all he knows.”

Andrew said nothing. He was embarrassed and Jim’s humor annoyed him. If Jim saw he did not want to talk about the poachers, he ought to play up. Then he heard the gong for dinner and to get up was some relief.

Soon after dinner Mackellar went off. Hannah, Margaret and Andrew were in the garden, and Mrs. Grier joined Jim, who smoked a cigarette on the terrace. Jim did not see her advance and she gave him a thoughtful look. He was a handsome fellow and she knew his talent. Mrs. Grier was ambitious for her son, but his poverty was an awkward handicap. She felt James Grier’s will was unjust; the sum his nephew got was ridiculously small, and her antagonism to Andrew sprang from maternal jealousy.

“I expect you saw Andrew was not frank?” she said.

“I imagined he knew more than he was willing to admit,” Jim agreed. “In fact, I think I hinted something like that, but I don’t see that Andrew’s running a foolish risk has much to do with us.”

“If he were found out, it might have something to do with Margaret,” Mrs. Grier rejoined meaningly. “Are you willing for her to marry your cousin?”

Jim threw away his cigarette. “It would frankly hurt; but if Margaret is satisfied with Andrew, I suppose I must be resigned.”

“Margaret is not satisfied; she sees his rather numerous faults. For all that, I think she will marry Andrew and try to mold him to her pattern. Margaret likes to exercise control.”

“Then I suppose we must let it go, and I’d sooner talk about something else,” said Jim in a quiet voice.

Mrs. Grier noted his thoughtful look. Jim’s code was not very stern, but he was fastidious and in the meantime she must indulge him.

“Very well,” she said. “Andrew has not told us where he was the night the policeman was carried off.”

“That is so. You gave him two or three opportunities,” Jim agreed with some dryness. “Perhaps he went to Dumfries.”

“When the Dumfries train started he was not at the station, and he did not use the car.”

“Well, suppose we admit he helped the poachers?”

For a moment or two Mrs. Grier was quiet. Her mouth was straight and her eyes were hard. Jim thought her look was mean and somehow vulgar. He had not known his mother look like that, and he was jarred.

“I’m interested rather to know where Andrew was than what he did,” she said. “I certainly do not think he was on board the poachers’ boat.”

“You imply he stopped at Rutherford’s?”

“All I do know indicates it. He was at the *Murrendale* after the train for Dumfries went. If he did not go to the sands with the poachers, he stayed at the hotel.”

Jim began to see where his mother led, and he frowned.

“But if he did stay? The *Murrendale* is a first-class house and Rutherford’s a sober, respectable fellow.”

“Andrew is laird o’ Rowans; the landlord’s niece has some charm, and I expect she is ambitious,” Mrs. Grier rejoined in a meaning voice. “However, the subject is distasteful and we have not yet much to go upon. Perhaps you can find out where your cousin really was.”

Jim said nothing, but he did not like his job. After a few moments the others crossed the lawn, and when they came up the steps he joined their careless talk. For all that, he was disturbed. His mother planned for him, and although he had not yet agreed to help he felt shabby. Margaret’s beauty moved him, a good marriage would remove the obstacles that stopped his progress, and Margaret was rich.

By and by a man came up the drive and Hannah turned to Andrew.

“A policeman! I think it’s Sergeant Morton.”

Andrew waited until the sergeant reached the bottom of the steps; and then got up and smiled. Hannah noticed his smile, but she knew his pluck.

“Do you want to see me, Morton?”

“Perhaps you can give me a few minutes, Mr. Grier——”

“Come in,” said Andrew and indicated Jim. “My cousin’s a lawyer; I’d like him to join us.”

They went to the house and the others were quiet. Hannah was anxious, but her look was calm; Margaret looked straight in front, and Mrs. Grier pondered. If the police had found out Andrew helped the poachers, he was guilty of a lawless exploit, but of nothing worse. Although Mrs. Grier admitted it ought to be some relief, her relief was not very keen. Jealousy and ambition for her son carried her away.

In the smoking-room, Andrew indicated a chair for the sergeant and put out liquor and cigarettes. Jim noted that he received the fellow as if he were his guest.

“You have walked some distance, Morton; I expect you’ll take a drink?”

“I’ll take a smoke,” the sergeant replied. “When I’m on duty I leave drinks alone.”

“The rule’s good, but I doubt if it’s altogether the police’s rule,” Andrew remarked with a twinkle. “However, you wanted to see me.”

Morton gave him a thoughtful glance.

“We have got to find the poachers, Mr. Grier, and our job’s not soft. Maybe the farmers and stake-net men will help, but for the maist part the herds and fishermen are the ither lot’s relations. Weel, ye ken the Border folk!”

“I’m a Borderer,” said Andrew, smiling.

“Ye’re laird o’ Rowans, and we reckon on the landlords’ support. To carry off a river policeman is no’ a joke!”

“Do you imagine I had something to do with it?” Andrew inquired coolly.

The sergeant smiled, a Scot’s meaning smile.

“We reckoned ye might know something about it, but that’s a’. Ye see, we ken where ye were.”

Andrew looked at him with surprise, and then braced up.

“On the whole, I doubt if you do know; but so long as you are satisfied _____”

“Ye have useful friends at the hotel, Mr. Grier.”

The blood came to Andrew’s skin. For his sake, Minnie and Rutherford had conspired to cheat the police, but since Morton was not a fool, they ran some risk. There was another thing: the hotel was not far from Rowans and Andrew thought his soberness was known. Nobody would imagine he had stopped for the night because he could not get home.

Jim noted his embarrassment. He knew his cousin and doubted if Andrew did stop at the hotel. All the same, Andrew could not declare he had not. In a way, the situation was humorous. Andrew’s friends had perhaps plotted better than they knew, but Jim wondered whether his mother’s supposition were not accurate. Andrew was rather a handsome fellow and laird o’ Rowans. Suppose the girl was attracted, and the landlord was ambitious for his niece? It was possible they wanted to entangle Andrew. In fact, it looked as if they had done so. Then Andrew faced the sergeant, rather haughtily.

“Since you admit I was not on the sands, I don’t see what you want.”

“We reckon if ye had the mind, ye could give us a bit clue.”

“I have not the mind,” said Andrew, and forced a smile. “For one thing, a number of fishermen are my friends, and though all are not poachers, I think the lot are resolved not to help the police. You imply the fellows, to some extent, trust me. Well, you don’t expect I’d take their confidence and then give them away?”

“They’re certainly resolved; there’s the trouble,” Morton agreed. “But ye’re a landlord and a sportsman, and many’s the partridge ye lose.”

“That is so, but if I turned informer, I might lose all. Then to catch poachers is not my duty. In fact, nothing’s doing, sergeant; but I admit you have got an awkward job.”

“It’s a’ that,” said Morton, and getting up, gave Andrew a steady glance. “Weel, Mr. Grier, I cannot force ye to be frank, but I dinna think ye take the line ye ought.”

Andrew let him go and Jim pulled the decanter across the table.

“In the circumstances, I thought your line good and saw no grounds to meddle. Anyhow, to know the police won’t bother you is something. Don’t you want a drink?”

“I had enough at dinner, and although folks imagine I haunt the *Murrendale*, I don’t indulge much,” said Andrew in a moody voice.

“When you resolved to stay at the hotel you were lucky,” Jim remarked, and looked at Andrew rather hard. “Your friends are stanch, but sometimes for a hotel keeper to embarrass the police is rash.”

Andrew said nothing. Jim knew one could not force him to admit he had not stayed at the hotel.

“Anyhow, it’s done with and I don’t see where I can help,” Jim resumed.

“Your part’s to satisfy your mother I wasn’t poaching; that’s all,” said Andrew.

He went off and Jim drained his glass, for he did not mean to stop where his cousin indicated. At the beginning, Mrs. Grier’s implication jarred, but when Jim weighed her plan he saw its advantages. Yet Andrew was his cousin and his generous host.

After a few minutes he joined Mrs. Grier on the terrace. The light was nearly gone and when she tried to search his face she was baffled, but she thought him disturbed.

“Margaret and Andrew have started. Her trust is rather remarkable,” she said, and stopping for a moment, resumed: “Sergeant Morton soon went.”

Jim nodded. “Morton will not bother Andrew; he wanted his help.”

“Then, he knows Andrew was not with the poachers?”

“Morton stated something like that.”

“But if Andrew was not poaching, he was at the hotel.”

Jim hesitated. He knew his shabbiness, but he knew his mother’s resolution, and he thought her plan would work.

“I think the police are satisfied he was at the hotel. After all, however, he might have stayed there because he meant to go fishing in the early morning. The tide was full at two or three o’clock.”

Mrs. Grier’s face was indistinct, but Jim knew her scornful. His mother’s pluck was better than his.

“If Andrew had gone fishing, he would have told us. He said nothing because he dared not.”

“It’s possible,” said Jim.

He did not like his part, but to play up was not hard, since his agreement was all that was required. To some extent, his mother was sincere; she wanted to think Andrew a wastrel and was able to persuade herself he was. Jim knew Andrew was not; but he thought the evidence against him carried some weight.

“I must ponder all we have found out,” Mrs. Grier resumed. “Andrew is my nephew and sometimes to meddle is rash. Yet where one’s duty is obvious, one ought not to hesitate——”

She went to the house and Jim lighted a cigarette. He felt horribly shabby, but he thought his mother’s conception of her duty humorous. Anyhow, for her to meddle would be an advantage for him, and he knew she would not hesitate for long. Jim resolved to leave her alone.

CHAPTER VIII

THE OILSKIN CAP

Andrew and Margaret took the valley road. All was quiet and the river's faint turmoil hardly disturbed the brooding calm. Silver firs like dark spires cut the serene sky, and the hills were black against the glimmer of the rising moon. One smelt resin and grass wet by dew. For the most part, Andrew said nothing and Margaret left him alone, for although her curiosity was excited, she knew where to wait.

Margaret imagined she knew Andrew; to some extent his temperament was hers. He did not weigh things, he plunged ahead and did not bother about the risk; but, since he was a Scot, his romantic extravagance, so to speak, was marked by a practical vein. Andrew had an object for his freakish exploits. For example, when he steered *Kilmeny* for the weir he won the cup, and when he went poaching Margaret imagined he loaded his net.

On the whole, Andrew's sometimes poaching did not bother Margaret, but she hated to think him content to loaf about the water-foot and the hotel. In a sense, her thought for him was motherly; she wanted him to go soberly and take the proper path. Since she was persuaded he loved her, she had thought he might be influenced, but she had recently begun to doubt. Now she noted his moodiness, she speculated about the sergeant's visit. Yet she was proud, and if he did not enlighten her, she would not inquire.

"You won't admit your curiosity," he remarked after a time. "For all that, when Morton arrived I expect you got a jolt."

"I rather thought you would give me your confidence," Margaret replied. "Did you get a jolt?"

Andrew laughed. "I certainly did. When you indulge in adventures like mine, to be looked up by the police is disturbing."

"You are laird o' Rowans," said Margaret, meaningly. "Isn't it ridiculous for you to be disturbed?"

"Oh, well, sometimes I am ridiculous; but Mackellar is really laird. I have the title; my trustee has control."

"Perhaps you are lucky because that is so," Margaret rejoined.

“We won’t dispute about it. The old fellow satisfies my tenants and gets their rents. I expect you know a farmer’s hard to satisfy. His notion is, the rent ought to be used for repairs and new buildings.”

“I don’t yet know why Sergeant Morton wanted you.”

“Ah! you admit you are interested! Well, to see I’ve got my freedom ought to be some relief. It seems Morton’s resolved to stop the poaching and he expected me to help.”

Margaret knew Andrew’s humorous carelessness, but she thought his humor forced. She was hurt because he did not confide in her.

“He wanted you for King’s evidence?” she said dryly.

“Not at all; I imagine Morton knows me,” Andrew rejoined. “King’s evidence implies a bargain; if you will fix your accomplice’s guilt, you won’t be bothered about yours. Do you see me in the part?”

“I do not. Perhaps I was rather nasty,” Margaret admitted in a gentle voice.

“It’s not important. Morton’s argument was: I’m a landlord and a sportsman and I ought to help. He said he knew I had nothing to do with carrying off the policeman.”

Margaret felt Andrew kept something back. Although he tried to joke he was moody. Moreover, since the police knew he had not gone with the poachers, they knew where he was and he had not enlightened her. Margaret thought his reserve significant. To study him might have helped, but the dark baffled her. He went rather fast and looked straight in front.

“Oh, well,” she said, “to know you were not accountable is some satisfaction.”

For a few moments Andrew was quiet, and then he said: “You didn’t like my poaching?”

“But you were not poaching, and perhaps I’m not entitled to criticize. I like adventure, risk, and pluck, but you are not a boy, and to risk much for two or three salmon that you do not want is foolish. People declare you have inherited your grandfather’s qualities; his risks were justified and his adventures paid.”

“Then, so long as an adventure does pay, it is justified? That’s your standard?”

“Oh!” said Margaret, “I’d sooner you didn’t joke. You ought to be serious, Andrew. Perhaps you haven’t a lawyer’s qualities; but cannot you find an occupation? A job that absorbs you, on which you can let yourself go?”

Andrew knew her sincerity. Margaret was anxious for him, and he was moved.

“I expect I’m a careless fool, and one must pay for one’s carelessness,” he said. “Anyhow, I hated the Edinburgh office, and I thought I’d go fishing and play about, until I found a proper job. That’s all; but to get entangled is not hard——”

Margaret thought his talking about an entanglement ominous; but he resumed: “Sometimes I do weigh things, and I speculate about the sawmills my grandfather built. At the beginning Black Andrew was not rich, and his buying the Canadian timber rights was something of a plunge. Well, in his time, I expect five thousand pounds was a useful sum, but a modern combine doesn’t think much about a million dollars. Anyhow, if I pawned all I’ve got, I could not bring the mill up to date. There’s the trouble——”

He went faster, as if he tried to banish disturbing thoughts, and Margaret sympathized. She imagined Canada called him, and he was not resigned because he could not go. Andrew had inherited something from the old shipbuilder; his line was romantic effort, stubborn toil, and facing awkward risks. Margaret was rich, but unless Andrew married her she could not help, and she thought he would not marry her so long as he was poor.

“But could you not interest speculators in the mills?” she asked.

Andrew laughed, a rather harsh laugh. “I think not. Our machinery’s old-fashioned and our trade is vanishing. Besides, to get people’s money you need some persuasive talent and I have none; I doubt if Mackellar would give me five hundred pounds that’s properly mine. The age is a coöperative age of combines and big companies but I’m an obstinate, independent individualist. I’d hate to use another’s money, and if I were willing, I expect nobody would trust me with a useful sum. Well, I think that’s all. I’ve rather let myself go, and perhaps you’re bored.”

Margaret was not bored. She liked to see Andrew moved and to know she could move him.

“You mustn’t bother,” she said quietly. “One does not see very far in front, and perhaps your luck will turn. But when it does turn you must be ready——”

She stopped at an ornamental iron gate and gave Andrew her hand. Andrew opened the gate and went off moodily. When Margaret was kind she was bracing; she, so to speak, stimulated him, but he did not want to be stimulated. He rather wanted to be left alone. He was poor, and unless he could mend his fortune Margaret was not for him. To get rich was a long job, and his talents were not remarkable. Anyhow, he could not use others and get rich by exploiting their trust. He would sooner use his muscles. He hated pretense and the false importance that persuaded greedy fools.

So long as he was willing to be sternly frugal, he could remain at Rowans, but monotonous soberness had not much charm. For example, he did not see himself provost of Murren and an elder of the kirk. Besides, he was disturbed about his recent adventure. Perhaps it was not yet done with, and he had entangled Rutherford and Minnie Douglas. Although Andrew knew them stanch, he would sooner they had not meddled. He felt his supposititious stopping at the hotel might be awkward. People talked, and perhaps the Murren folks' standard of morality was not very high. Yet he must not deny he was at the hotel and let Rutherford down. That was all he really did see and he resolved to let it go.

Andrew had not reckoned on Mrs. Grier. Mrs. Grier's conventional morality was stern, and she felt Andrew had robbed Jim; he had got all where Jim ought to have got a part. Her jealousy had for long worked upon her, and to persuade herself Andrew was a wastrel was not hard. Now she was persuaded, her duty was obvious. Andrew was engaged in an intrigue with the landlord's attractive niece, and Margaret must not, ignorantly, marry a man like that. Mrs. Grier did not admit her wanting Margaret to marry Jim accounted for much.

In the morning Andrew started for the little town, and Mrs. Grier saw him take the valley road. The window commanded the road and she saw that Sergeant Morton pushed his bicycle up a hill. He vanished behind a clump of trees, and since Mrs. Grier did not see him on the other side, she imagined he had stopped Andrew. After some minutes, the sergeant's bicycle sparkled in the sun, and for a few yards Andrew went with him. Then the sergeant rode down the hill and Andrew took a field path. Andrew did not return until some time after dark, and his creeping upstairs disturbed Mrs. Grier's sleep. She got a light and studied her watch, Although the hotel was long since shut, she thought she knew where he had been.

When Morton met Andrew in the road he got down and put his bicycle against the hedge.

“I’m glad I met ye, Mr. Grier. I’m thinking ye’d sooner I did not call at the house.”

“Oh, well, I haven’t grumbled, but your coming to Rowans had some drawbacks, and I hoped you didn’t mean to keep it up.”

“Ye were polite,” said Morton. “I doubt my arguments did not carry ye very far, but I thought ye might begin to see your duty.”

Andrew gave him a keen glance, and the corners of his mouth went up. He knew the sergeant and he knew the Scottish habit of implication.

“I suppose you have got a fresh argument?”

“Aweel,” said Morton, and pulled out a small packet, “we do not claim ye were with the poachers, and your friends at the hotel declare ye were not. The English fisherman’s finding the cap on the sands was queer.”

He gave Andrew a souwester cap. The oilskin was not the heavy stuff fishermen use, the pattern was neat, and a band inside carried a famous yacht chandler’s stamp.

“Since I expect you inquired whether the Glasgow house supplied the cap to somebody in the neighborhood, I’ll admit it’s mine.”

“Just that!” said Morton. “The shrimper was on the sands the night the river policeman was carried off, and he found the cap by the Scar Pool.”

“Did he state if the cap was wet?”

Morton hesitated and Andrew smiled. “It looks as if the Cumberland police did not know their job! You see, if the cap were dry, somebody lost it since the tide was full; a wet cap might have washed about the Firth for a week. Anyhow, it implies nothing. Two of my caps went overboard not long since.”

“Where did ye lose the one I’ve just given ye?”

“Ah!” said Andrew, “that’s another thing!”

“Then, we must let it bide. I’m not superintendent, Mr. Grier, but an old sergeant’s word goes, and I’ll risk stating the police’s line. Maybe ye were foolish, but we ken ye’re not our man. For a’ that, we reckon ye could put us on the proper track——”

“Do you reckon you could force me to put you on the track?”

“Our plan’s no’ to bully ye,” Morton replied in a meaning voice. “Ye’re a landlord and your father was provost. We think ye ought to help.”

“You’re a good sort,” said Andrew. “Perhaps I ought to help, and if the poachers give fresh trouble, they won’t get my support. All the same, I can’t let down my friends.”

“Ye stated something like yon before, but I dinna’ yet ken *whom* ye meant.”

Andrew knitted his brows. Morton obviously knew something, and his keenness was awkward. The *Murrendale* was a good hotel, but when the tourists were not about Rutherford’s customers were fishermen, and Andrew imagined when the boats went out at night some used the back room after the proper hour. Then he had known bets made there, and so forth. Rutherford, so to speak, must not get up against the police. There was the trouble. Andrew must be stanch to two lots of friends, and if Morton thought his cap indicated he was on the sands, he was obviously not at the hotel.

“I’m sorry, but I cannot give you the clue you want,” he said. “I’ll take my cap.”

Morton smiled. “In the meantime we’ll keep the cap. I ken why folk trust ye, Mr. Grier, but I think ye *thrawn*.”

He got his bicycle and Andrew pulled out his watch. High water was not long since and the boats sailed for the fishing grounds on the ebb. Andrew felt he needed bracing and he took the field path for the river mouth.

CHAPTER IX

JIM SEES HIS OPPORTUNITY

A keen northwest wind rolled white clouds across the sky. In the glen by Rowans burn the mountain-ashes tossed and dancing shadows checkered the sunny grass. The morning was bracing, and when Margaret crossed the lawn her mood was buoyant. For a time she had been disturbed about Andrew, and she was perhaps not yet altogether satisfied, but since the evening they went up the valley she had resolved to banish her doubts.

One must not exaggerate Andrew's rather boyish escapades. His talk about the Canadian sawmills indicated that he began to ponder and was not content to loaf. If he went for a time to Quebec, he would use the qualities Margaret believed were his. Then he was not a philanderer; to think him really attracted by the girl at the hotel was ridiculous.

Margaret carried a basket of raspberries. The gardens at the Garth were famous, and when the sunbeams touched the basket and the splendid red fruit shone among the cool, glossy leaves Margaret remarked its beauty. Beauty moved her, but she was unconsciously fastidious. She liked simple flowing lines and harmonious color; she hated pretentious ornament. In fact, Margaret was marked by a touch of the austerity that rules in the dark North.

By and by she saw Mrs. Grier on the terrace, and somehow was jarred. The jar was rather instinctive than logical, because she had reckoned all at Rowans her friends; but she felt Mrs. Grier's look was mean. Her mouth was firmly set and one remarked her thin lips; her glance was fixed in front. Then she turned her head, and although Margaret thought she started, she advanced with a smile.

"I did not know you were about," she said, and when she thanked Margaret for the fruit resumed: "I thought myself alone and I expect I brooded."

"Sometimes one does brood," said Margaret. "As a rule, however, I find out I have not much grounds——"

"Oh, well, perhaps I ought to be philosophical, because in a sense my troubles are not really mine. Jim is keen about his occupation and makes good progress. In fact, he is all I want my son to be; but I feel myself accountable for my nephew."

“Then, you were brooding about Andrew?” said Margaret, and thought the other’s frankness strange. “Perhaps he is rather careless, but one mustn’t exaggerate. At all events, the police acknowledge he had nothing to do with the poachers. I expect it was some comfort.”

“The police know where he was,” Mrs. Grier rejoined.

“Since he was not with the poachers, I suppose he was at Dumfries?”

“He was at the *Murrendale*,” said Mrs. Grier.

The blood came to Margaret’s skin. She saw where the other led and she felt she hated her.

“Did Morton inform you Andrew was at the hotel?”

Mrs. Grier hesitated, but she noted Margaret’s high color. To cheat the girl might be risky.

“He did not. When Andrew took the sergeant to the smoking-room he called Jim.”

“Then Jim informed you?” said Margaret in a scornful voice. “Well, I expect Andrew could account for his stopping at the hotel. It’s possible he meant to go fishing at daybreak.”

“Jim is Andrew’s cousin, and he was disturbed. He thought I ought to know. Andrew did not go fishing. He was at Rowans for breakfast, but we did not see him arrive. It looks as if he stole into the house.”

For a moment or two Margaret was quiet. Mrs. Grier’s implication was ridiculous, but Andrew was a fool. He ought to see. Besides, it really did look as if Minnie Douglas, to some extent, accounted for his stopping at the hotel. For a few moments Mrs. Grier waited. If Margaret thought her part was to champion Andrew, it would be awkward. She must work on her jealousy.

“To steal into the house is rather Andrew’s habit,” she resumed. “We have some grounds to think he stopped at the *Murrendale* before.”

“After all, Rowans is his, and I do not see Andrew using much caution,” Margaret rejoined.

“You inquired why I brooded and I reckoned on your sympathy.”

Margaret turned her head. She thought she got a hint of malice, but she did not altogether doubt the other. Anyhow, to dispute about Andrew was not dignified and Mrs. Grier must not imagine she was hurt. Then she saw

Hannah and Jim and Andrew on the path. Andrew was first to reach the steps, but when he advanced Margaret looked straight in front.

“Hello!” he said and stopped, for he knew Margaret. “I wanted to talk about our excursion to Dumfries. I’ve got Jardine’s car.”

“I’m sorry you borrowed the car, because I’m not going,” said Margaret.

Andrew studied her, and the corners of his mouth went up in a crooked smile.

“Mrs. Mackellar sent a note and she expects us. Even if you don’t much want to go, you ought to indulge her.”

“I am not going.”

“Well, if you’re resolved—— All the same, I don’t know my offense.”

“Sometimes you are rather dull; but I wonder——”

Andrew frowned. It looked as if Margaret knew about his supposititious stopping at the hotel. Perhaps he might enlighten her and bind her to say nothing, but he doubted if she would be persuaded easily, and he was proud.

“I’ve borrowed the car. Mrs. Mackellar’s president, and she has a job for you and Hannah, but if I don’t arrive, I expect she’ll be resigned. Suppose Jim drives and I stay at home? Will that meet the bill?”

Margaret hesitated. Andrew’s face was red, but his glance was steady, and she thought him rather annoyed than embarrassed. For all that, Margaret was angry. If Andrew were not the man his aunt implied, it looked as if he were, and his carelessness deserved some punishment. In fact, if he refused to think for himself, he ought to think for Margaret.

“Were you with the poachers when the policeman was carried off?” she asked.

“We were talking about the flower-show,” Andrew rejoined. “I suggested that I might stay at home and Jim would drive. Does that satisfy you?”

Margaret’s eyes sparkled and her look got hard.

“If the plan suits your aunt and Hannah, I don’t see why I should refuse,” she said, and joined the others.

The party stopped on the terrace, and when Andrew fetched some chairs he said to Jim: “I find it will be awkward to get off the flower-show; but I’ve got the car and you can drive.”

“You fixed to go,” Jim remarked.

“When we arranged the excursion I didn’t reckon on an obstacle.”

Mrs. Grier looked up, and Hannah wondered whether she could account for Andrew’s change of plan. Then she studied Margaret and thought her annoyed. Margaret was annoyed. Andrew ought to have waited until the others went. His awkwardness had humiliated her, for it was obvious that they had quarreled.

“The president expects you. You stand for the clan; I do not,” Jim resumed.

“Mrs. Mackellar knows I’m not reliable. Are you willing to drive?”

“Of course; if you really don’t want to go,” Jim replied.

“I can’t go,” said Andrew in a moody voice, and went off.

A day or two afterwards the party started for Dumfries. The flower-show was a picturesque function and Margaret knew much about gardening, but she was not interested. She thought about Andrew, for a reaction in his favor had begun. Perhaps his refusal to state where he was the night the poachers carried off the policeman was ominous, but she knew his pride and obstinacy. Besides, it was possible Mrs. Grier had cheated her. On the whole, Margaret was sorry she had forced Andrew to stay away, but he was not revengeful, and if he would satisfy her curiosity, she thought she could put all straight.

When they returned in the evening she sat in front by Jim. Jim’s mood was gay and Margaret liked his humorous talk. The evening was fine and she had nearly recaptured her serenity. The road, however, was straight and monotonous. Tourists’ cars trailed clouds of dust, and after a time Jim took a winding lane.

In the afternoon Andrew got his fishing-rod and went to the river, but the water was low, the sun was hot, and the trout did not rise. Although he threw the flies across sparkling shallows and over dark eddies in the alders’ shade, hardly a splash rewarded his labor and the line did not get tight. On a hot day, when one is embarrassed by brogues and wading-stockings, to plunge about a stony river bed is rather a strenuous job, and after Andrew entangled the gut trace in a branch he thought he had had enough.

Sitting down in the shade, he smoked and mused. Perhaps Margaret’s annoyance was logical and his luck was certainly not good, because unless he admitted he was on board the poachers’ boat, Margaret would speculate

about his grounds for staying at the hotel. In fact, Andrew thought she did speculate. It was awkward, but after all Margaret knew him, and when she weighed things coolly she would see she was not just.

After a time he pulled out his watch, and leaving his rod and waders at a cottage, crossed the fields to a road. The road was narrow and quiet. Oaks and ash trees dotted the hedgerows, and at the bottom of a hill Rowans burn pierced a larch wood and sparkled in the stones. On one side, a foot bridge crossed the water splash, and when Andrew saw a girl go up the steps he stopped. He was not keen about meeting Minnie Douglas, but it looked as if she waited for him and he went down the hill.

“I was at the Rig,” she said, and Andrew knew her relation’s farm. “All the same, I’m glad I met you, Mr. Grier.”

Andrew gave her a keen glance, and began to doubt if his society had the charm her remark suggested. Minnie was disturbed, but somehow resolute.

“Ah,” he said, “I expect Morton has bothered you again?”

“He was at the hotel two days since, and I think he begins to doubt if you did stay with us.”

“I suppose you and Rutherford stuck to your tale?”

“*You* must stick to the tale,” said Minnie. “Uncle must not risk his license. The *Murrendale*’s a good house, but, you know, if the police——”

Andrew nodded. To antagonize the police was dangerous, and Morton had obviously tried to bully Rutherford.

“To begin with, you haven’t stated all you told the sergeant, and if I’m to back you up, I ought to know. But you have gone some distance. Won’t you sit down?”

He indicated the foot-bridge steps and leaned against the rail. Behind the spot, the larch branches tossed and threw trembling shadows on the burn. In front, the shallow water sparkled, and its gentle splash harmonized with the wind in the trees. After the hot sun, the shade was soothing and Andrew was willing to stop and talk. Moreover, Minnie was bothered, and since she and Rutherford had run some risk for him, his business was to comfort her.

“The sergeant asked if we could fix the time you left the house,” she said with some embarrassment. “Uncle said he did not see you go, and I could not mind when you got breakfast.”

“Now I think about it, I did not get breakfast,” said Andrew, smiling. “Was Morton satisfied?”

“He wanted to know the room you used. Uncle told him Number eight. When the house was not full you kept your sea clothes and boots in the big cupboard, so, if you were for fishing at night, you could steal down the back stair and not disturb other folk.”

Andrew’s eyes twinkled. When a Scot would sooner not enlighten one, to force him is hard. Morton, however, was not a fool, and if he did not see the weak point in the landlord’s statement it was strange.

“But you wanted to persuade the sergeant I was not fishing.”

“I doubt if he was persuaded,” Minnie replied, and stopping for a moment, resumed with a blush: “Anyway, he asked: If you were not for the fishing, why did you not go home?”

“Ah!” said Andrew, “I expected something like that! Well?”

Minnie hesitated and gave him an apologetic glance. “You see, Rowans is not far, and Morton’s obstinate. We allowed you were, perhaps, not very sober.”

The corners of Andrew’s mouth went up, and Minnie, studying him, smiled as if the strain were gone.

“Oh, well! your object was good, and the argument was plausible.”

“I don’t know if Morton agreed. He began to talk about somebody’s finding your cap; and then he hinted—— You see, Mr. Grier, we cannot always stop folks betting, and sometimes when the nights are cold and the boats are going out—— Anyway, uncle’s afraid.”

Andrew sat down and lighted a cigarette. He thought Minnie was not keen to go, and he wanted to weigh the sergeant’s plan. To some extent the plan was obvious. If Morton imagined Rutherford cheated him, he would threaten to punish the fellow and force Andrew to put the police on the poachers’ track. It was awkward, but so long as Andrew refused to admit he was not at the hotel Morton was not dangerous. Andrew let it go and looked about.

Not far from the water splash, the road curved and some hazels on a grassy bank cut the view. A big sycamore stretched its branches across the hedge and the shadows of its shaking leaves trembled on the road. All was quiet and the spot was lonely. In fact, Andrew reflected with a touch of humor, it was the sort of spot at which surreptitious lovers might fix to meet.

“Your uncle mustn’t bother,” Andrew remarked. “He’s a useful friend, and you’re a sport. We are going to baffle Morton and I mean to see you out. The Borderers dinna’ forget.”

Minnie gave him a smile; and then turned her head. Andrew heard a car throb and knitted his brows. Tourists did not use the narrow road, and he imagined he would know the people in the car. Moreover, they would know Minnie. For all that, he was not going to get up; he had suggested Minnie’s stopping and her pride must not be hurt. After a few moments the car rolled round the curve and he saw Jim and Margaret were in front.

“Mistress Grier and your friends!” Minnie gasped.

“What about it? You’re my friend,” said Andrew in a quiet voice, and Minnie blushed. Andrew remarked that her face was very red.

The car rolled on, but Jim concentrated on the water splash and Margaret looked the other way. Andrew’s clothes were fishing clothes, and in the shade Minnie’s were not conspicuous. He admitted he would sooner his relations did not know that he was about. Water leaped about the wheels and the car took the burn, but when it was on firm ground Jim looked up and stopped.

“Hello, Andrew!” he shouted. “Aren’t you going to join us?”

Andrew wondered whether Jim had seen Minnie, but Margaret turned and gave him a level glance. Although her calm was marked, Andrew thought her scornful.

“No, thanks,” he said. “I won’t bother you.”

Jim’s glance rested on Minnie, as if he had not noticed her before, and he smiled. Andrew hated him for his humor.

“Very well. When I stopped, I thought you alone!”

Andrew’s face got red. He was young and the Borderers’ blood is hot. All the same, to let himself go would be to play up to Jim.

“Go ahead; I expect dinner’s waiting,” he rejoined.

The car started and Minnie got up.

“You’re leal, Mr. Grier, but I must not keep you. Perhaps I kept you over long.”

“Now I think about it, I want some trout flies and I’m going to the town.”

Minnie colored, but she faced Andrew and her look was firm. “The shops will be shut before you get there. Anyway, I go by my lone.”

She went off and when her steps died away the mark between Andrew’s brows was ominously distinct.

“My luck’s not good,” he said, and started up the hill.

CHAPTER X

MARGARET'S FRANKNESS

For most of the day after the flower-show Margaret brooded, and in the evening she went to the flagged walk in front of the house, and unhappily reviewed her excursion. Since Andrew was not about, the flower-show was dull, and when she started from Dumfries she had resolved to make allowances for his boyish extravagance. She began to think she ought not to have allowed Mrs. Grier to work upon her jealousy. Andrew could, no doubt, account for his staying at the hotel, and if he were keen to be restored to her favor, and promised to go soberly, she might not refuse.

Then the car stopped at the water splash and she got a jolt about which she hated to think. It looked as if Mrs. Grier knew her nephew, and Margaret did not. Moreover, Andrew's rather strange willingness to indulge her when she declared she was not going to the show was explained. He did not go to Dumfries because he would rather meet Minnie Douglas at the water splash.

In the meantime, Margaret's father smoked his pipe by a long window and sometimes addressed his wife in an easy-chair opposite. Johnston was a shipowner, and directors of competing lines knew him for a keen business man. The green funnel cargo boats paid, and the head clerk at the Glasgow office declared the chief knew by instinct where freight could be got.

Yet Johnston sprang from good stock and his type was the Border type. He was strongly built, his hair was frankly red, and his eyes were very blue. Perhaps it was characteristic that when he built his first ship he pawned all he had; and at the beginning his office was up three stairs in a shabby Glasgow block. Now, ornamented by granite, polished copper and stained glass, it occupied a large frontage on an important street. Determined creditors no longer haunted Johnston's door; mahogany-paneled elevators carried merchants and shipbuilders to his waiting-room.

Johnston admitted he had prospered, but sometimes he wondered whether he had followed his real bent. In fact, he felt rather vaguely, he had perhaps not got all he might have got. He had beaten keen rivals and faced financial storms, but he had not stopped a burst tube in a steam-filled stokehold, and he had not steered a ship across the long Atlantic combers. Perhaps he was ridiculous, but he would have liked to hold the wheel and see the spray-clouds leap at the plunging bows. He began to think stern

concentration had cost him something, for now that he was getting old, he was conscious of a romantic vein.

The long window at the Garth commanded the flagged walk, and by and by Johnston noted that Margaret leaned against the low wall. Her figure cut the sky and he remarked her stillness. Johnston had no son, but his daughter was altogether his. He knew her like him, although perhaps she did not use the control he had used for long. Sometimes she let herself go. She was romantic and stubbornly independent. All the same, Margaret was good stuff.

“The lassie’s quiet,” he remarked.

“I thought her quiet since the flower-show,” Mrs. Johnston agreed.

Johnston imagined his wife was willing to give him her confidence, and he asked: “D’ye think Andrew Grier could account for it?”

“Andrew was not at the show.”

“Just that!” said Johnston meaningly. “It doesna’ look as if Meg thought his cousin a good substitute.”

Sometimes, when he was at home, Johnston used Border Scotch. Mrs. Johnston used Edinburgh English. She was a calm, sincere woman, and she gave her husband a thoughtful look.

“Do you like Jim?”

“I doubt if I like his mother, and Jim’s no’ her son for nothing. Yet the lad has talents and I reckon he’ll go some distance, but not all the way. His caution and balance are his handicap. The man who gets where he wants is sometimes generous and rash. He knows where to trust his friends and his luck.”

Mrs. Johnston agreed, but she argued that caution was useful, and Johnston smiled.

“I mind, when folks thought me broken, ye gave me five thousand pounds and fought your doubting trustees. That, and five thousand I got from a friend, floated me off the rocks, and when the tide turned I carried along the man who took the risk. Now he owns a large block o’ Green Funnel shares.”

“Andrew Grier trusts his luck, but some balance is useful, and his is not marked.”

Johnston knitted his brows. He approved Andrew. Somehow he felt he was his sort; but Andrew was rash and one heard awkward tales——

“The lad’s flesh and blood,” he said in a thoughtful voice. “His father was provost, and a very sober gentleman, but Andrew’s another stamp. He’s a Black Grier, and his road to fortune is the sea.”

“But Andrew’s poor. Ships are expensive and, now the big companies combine, I expect all he has would not carry him far.”

“At Glasgow, they’d agree your argument was sound; but I doubt—— Want o’ money never stopped the born adventurer, and the sea’s for all. Sometimes I think if I were young, I could start a trade at which the combines could not beat me. Coöperation has some drawbacks and has not yet knocked out the keen small man. But I’m no’ young, and we talked about Margaret——”

“You talked about Andrew Grier,” said Mrs. Johnston meaningly.

Johnston smiled. “Maybe I ought not. I’m thinking Meg will gang her ain gate and we’ll approve.”

“I wonder——” said Mrs. Johnston, and began to muse.

Perhaps it was strange, but since Alan was satisfied with his chairman’s post and did not go much to Glasgow, he, so to speak, was another man. His stern preoccupation had vanished; he was humorous and sometimes his humor was rude. He was a keen and clever fisherman, and so long as he carried a gun, he was willing to walk from a winter’s daybreak until dark across wet marshes and bleak moors. It looked as if inherited tendencies had recaptured him, and he had not only gone back to his native soil. Yet Alan’s ancestors were famous. So far as the Border chiefs were aristocratic, the Johnstons were aristocrats, but Mrs. Johnston’s father kept a shop. It was, however, not important, and she speculated about Margaret.

Her speculations were disturbed, for a servant showed in Andrew. The light was going, but Mrs. Johnston saw he looked about the room. For a few minutes he engaged his hosts in talk, and then he said: “I wanted to see Margaret. Do you think she is engaged?”

“I would not say her engagement’s strenuous,” Johnston replied and indicated the window.

Andrew crossed the floor. In the distance, the yellow sunset shone behind cold-blue hills. The trees about the house were shadowy, but

Margaret's figure was distinct in the fading light. She did not move and Andrew turned to Mrs. Johnston.

"May I go to the terrace?"

Mrs. Johnston let him go and wondered whether she was foolish. Andrew jumped down from the window and Margaret turned her head. When he advanced she got up calmly and motioned to him to go along the walk. Margaret's calm was rather forced, but she knew the window commanded the flags for some yards. At the other end she stopped.

"Well?" she said.

Her voice was scornful, but Andrew had not thought to find her friendly. Now that he feared she had done with him, her beauty called as it had not called before. Her firm pose was graceful, and he noted the flowing lines. Behind her were blue shadows and melting green; her hair, touched by the faint reflections, was coppery red. Her face was turned from the sunset, and in the gloom her skin was alabaster white. For all that, to study Margaret would not help, and Andrew braced up.

"When Jim stopped the car at the water splash, you did not acknowledge me," he said. "It looked as if you did not know I was about."

"Your pluck is rather good," Margaret rejoined. "I did not want to know your companion. Some time ago I tried to indicate that your friends would not mix. I think you saw the implication?"

"The implication was pretty obvious. All the same, Miss Douglas and Rutherford are useful friends. But for them, I expect Morton would have sent me to the sheriff's court for poaching."

"I imagined something like that! Morton is keen, but since Miss Douglas was able to persuade him you were not on the sands, perhaps she's keener. Where were you, Andrew?"

The corners of Andrew's mouth went up. "If I admitted I was poaching, would it be some satisfaction?"

His twinkle annoyed Margaret. So far as she could see, the situation was not humorous.

"Not at all," she said. "I should think you a fool! But were you on the sands?"

"I was obviously at one of two spots. There's the trouble; because to admit I was at either really wouldn't help. If I declared I was at the hotel,

people would speculate about my object.”

Margaret’s face got red. She knew Andrew’s pluck, but he ventured much.

“I wonder—” she said. “I rather think your aunt and Jim would not speculate.”

“Perhaps that is so. Jim stopped the car,” Andrew remarked in a thoughtful voice.

Margaret said nothing. As a rule, Jim’s tact was conspicuous, but when he stopped the car he did not use much.

“Anyhow, Jim’s not important,” Andrew resumed. “If I were forced to account for my staying at the *Murrendale*, it would not be hard to do so. Suppose I admitted I could not get home?”

“I don’t know if you joke, but I hate jokes like that.”

Andrew shrugged. He felt he did not make much progress, but his habit was to take knocks humorously.

“Very well, let’s be sober! I am something of a fool, but my friends at the town and the water-foot must not pay for my folly. If I were frank, they might get hurt.”

“Then, if your thought’s for them, why do you bother me?”

“Ah,” said Andrew, “I hoped I might persuade you to trust me, although you did not know all. You’re generous, Margaret, and you have known me long. Then I thought I might perhaps satisfy you, although I allowed the others to doubt; but it’s awkward. Unless you agreed to say nothing, I don’t see a plan.”

Margaret was moved. She wanted to trust Andrew, but the others must know she was justified and he was not the man they thought.

“Very well, but I expect you see you ought to give your relations your confidence.”

“I don’t see. You want something like a public confession?”

“If you have nothing to hide, all who are disturbed about you ought to know they had not much grounds——”

Andrew frowned. To refuse might cost him much, but he began to doubt Mrs. Grier, and since the evening at the water splash he doubted Jim. Besides, he had boasted to Minnie that a Borderer does not forget.

“I’m sorry, but your plan won’t go,” he said in a quiet voice. “If my relations are interested, they must find out where I was.”

Margaret’s temper was hot, and jealous anger carried her away. Andrew’s refusal to enlighten people indicated that he dared not.

“We will let it go. Perhaps I was interested, but I see my interest was ridiculous, and I certainly will not bother you again. In fact, I should prefer you left us alone.”

“Do you imply you don’t want to see me at the Garth?”

“My mother rules the house, but if you come over another time, I shall be engaged.”

Andrew got a nasty knock, but he tried to brace up.

“After all, I don’t know why you need refuse to see me.”

“Then you are very dull,” Margaret rejoined. “Your rules are obviously not our rules. You gave up your occupation, and allow Mackellar to carry out your duties. Your friends are poachers and fishermen, and it looks as if their habits were yours. You’re content to loaf and haunt the second-class bar at the hotel. Not long ago you stayed at the *Murrendale* because you could not get home. Well, if your water-foot friends are satisfied, we will not dispute their claim. You are not our sort and we are resigned to let you go.”

Andrew gave her a steady glance. Her hands were not still and he thought she trembled, as if angry emotion shook her. All the same, he knew her resolute, and he went off moodily.

Margaret went to the house and to note that the lamps were not yet lighted was some relief. When she pushed back the window Johnston looked up.

“Where is Andrew?”

“He’s gone. I doubt if he will come back,” Margaret replied in a level voice.

She crossed the floor, the door shut, and Johnston turned to his wife.

“Maybe all’s for the best, but I don’t know—I liked the lad.”

Mrs. Johnston said nothing. She knew her husband was disturbed, and sometimes when Alan was disturbed he was rash. On the whole, Mrs. Johnston was willing for Andrew to go.

At the gate Andrew stopped and pulled out his watch. When the sea trout pushed up-stream, Callender, of the Carlisle sawmills, visited at Rowans. John was a first-class fisherman and a good sort. Besides, he knew much about timber. A train for Carlisle started soon, and Andrew set off down the valley.

Since Margaret had done with him, he would start for Quebec. Perhaps, to some extent, her resolve was justified. He was a fool and had got entangled, but Morton could not bother him in the Canadian woods. Then, at all events, Margaret must acknowledge he was not a loafer.

CHAPTER XI

ANDREW GETS TO WORK

Callender's office, on the bluff outside Carlisle, throbbed and the door rattled. In the yard saws screamed on a high crescendo note, and dropping an octave, went up the scale again. The big mill engine's measured beat carried across the sheds, and in the neighboring sidings locomotives snorted. A Scotch express rolled by the old red city wall and smoke tossed about the castle. In the distance one saw the trees by the deanery, and the square cathedral tower.

Andrew, at an open window, smelt warm oil, freshly sawed oak, and resinous pine. He liked Callender's office, and he rather liked the noise. At Rowans one heard the burn fret its stony banks and the surf beat the sands. At Carlisle one heard locomotives, but Andrew felt, rather vaguely, that the note they struck was not altogether new. It was dynamic and stood for effort; the stern Border keep and serene cathedral stood for much that was not yet gone, and would not go.

An engine indicator, a big microscope and a telephone occupied the table, but a picture of an old wooden brig hung above the fireplace, and on the mantelpiece was a black timber, dug from a bog, that Callender thought a frame of a Viking's ship. Callender was young and his tools and rather fashionable clothes indicated that he was modern. Yet on the bleak moors, and by Murren Water when the stars were out and one used the white moth, Andrew sometimes got a hint of another vein. Anyhow, he knew John for a sport.

When Andrew stopped talking Callender gave him a cigarette.

"On the surface, it looks as if your experiment was twenty years too late, and since I'm a sober business man——"

"I've known you not very sober, when liquor had nothing to do with it," Andrew remarked.

Callender smiled. "On the moors and by the waterside one lets oneself go. Now, however, I'm at the office, and if I argued like a merchant, I'd recommend you to leave the thing alone. All the same, I frankly don't know ——"

"Then, suppose you argue like John Callender?"

“Very well. Since Russia’s knocked out and shipments from the Baltic are short, wood is dear. Canada is not sending much and Atlantic freights are high. Your plan is rather obviously out of date, but after all we use modern steamships because steam transport’s cheap.”

“Railway transport is not cheap,” Andrew remarked. “I expect your foreign timber arrives at Glasgow, Liverpool, and Newcastle. Carriage costs you something; but when the tides are high I’d engage to steer a three-hundred-ton vessel across Solway sands. Then one could unload the cargo, so to speak, at your door.”

Callender looked up and his glance was interested. “Well, I suppose it’s possible. You have some talent for business!”

“I know the sands; perhaps that’s all. The *Anne Musgrave’s* pierced for timber ports, but she’s old. How long ought a Cumberland oak ship to last?”

“If she was built at Grier’s yard, I expect she’ll last until you burn her or run her on the rocks.”

“Then I’ll make the plunge,” said Andrew. “If I carry a load of sound timber from Quebec to Murren, will you buy?”

“I’ll buy stuff up to Quebec standard, and if the price is suitable, I’ll take all I can get.”

“Will you fix the price? Before I start, I’d like to know.”

“I’m a timber merchant, Andrew. My business is to buy as cheap as possible.”

“You’re John Callender, and I’m not a merchant.”

John smiled. “You’re laird o’ Rowans! It looks as if you were something of an aristocrat.”

“My grandfather was a shipbuilder and my father was a modest and rather parsimonious country gentleman,” said Andrew thoughtfully. “I don’t know much about my other ancestors; but perhaps they didn’t traffic. I expect they stole. Anyhow, it’s not important. Let’s try to fix a deal.”

They made an agreement, and then Andrew said: “I’ll risk it, but there’s another thing. The *Anne Musgrave* is not a fast boat, and I may stop for a time at the mills. In fact, I may not start until the St. Lawrence begins to freeze. Suppose the price goes down?”

“I reckon the price will go up,” Callender replied dryly. “Well, I doubt if my competitors would have backed you, but somehow I’m persuaded your

speculation is sounder than it looks. Now let's go and get some lunch."

They got lunch and Andrew went to the station. An hour afterwards he was shown into Mackellar's office at the Dumfries bank. Mackellar put up a bundle of documents and indicated a chair.

"I want some money," Andrew remarked.

Mackellar pondered. Andrew was not extravagant. Perhaps the lad had got entangled.

"Is that all?" he inquired ironically. "I imagined the police had something to do with your looking me up!"

Andrew smiled. "For a week or two Morton has left me alone; but on the whole I think for me to vanish is a pretty good plan. Anyhow, I'm going, and I want a check for a thousand pounds."

"You're modest. You will not get a thousand pounds, but if I approved your object, I might risk a small sum."

"I don't expect you will approve. I'm going to Quebec on board the *Anne Musgrave* for a load of timber."

"Then ye're surely *fond*. For one thing, the *Anne* was built fifty years ago. She'll not face an Atlantic gale."

"She's oak," said Andrew quietly. "I believe my grandfather himself picked her frames. Then Callender did not think me *fond*. He's going to buy my load."

"Ye have agreed with Callender?" Mackellar inquired with surprise.

"That is so," said Andrew, and Mackellar knit his brows.

He thought Andrew's experiment frankly ridiculous, but it looked as if Callender did not, and John knew his job. Then Andrew's talking to John about it indicated that he was not altogether a fool. There was another thing: to find Andrew an occupation away from Scotland perhaps justified some expense. Mackellar knew about his haunting the *Murrendale*. Besides, Morton had not yet found the poachers and the sergeant was obstinate.

"If ye'll give me some particulars—" he said.

Andrew did so, and Mackellar noted that he had weighed things and reckoned on obstacles. In fact, it began to look as if the speculation was not altogether extravagant.

“Very well. I expect your other trustee will make me accountable, but up to five hundred pounds I’ll meet your check. It’s all ye will get. Will ye stop to drink tea with Mistress Mackellar?”

Andrew refused politely. A train for Carlisle started soon and he wanted to be at Workington in the evening, because he had a telegram stating that the *Anne Musgrave* had recently docked. After a few minutes he got up and gave Mackellar his hand.

“I imagine you have so far not had an easy job, but you haven’t grumbled, and if all goes as I calculate, I won’t bother you again.”

“I wish ye luck,” said Mackellar. “If ye feel ye are useful in Quebec, send back the *Anne* and stay for a time. Ye can trust old Turnbull, and if he thought the investment justified, we might risk a small sum for new machinery.”

He let Andrew go and for a few moments afterwards left the documents on his desk alone.

“I doubt I was rash, but the lad has qualities his father had not,” he said. “After all, to let him try his powers is worth five hundred pounds.”

At the station Andrew bought the *Glasgow Herald* and when the train started studied the shipping and business news. Atlantic freights were high, and a fresh advance was possible. English colliers had for some time grumbled about their pay, but at an important meeting men and masters had come near to agreement, and it looked as if a dispute might be avoided. For all that, speculators were buying coal and stocks were not large.

Andrew smiled. For him to study the commercial news was something fresh, but the *Anne Musgrave* carried coal to Ireland, and since a miners’ strike was possible, he wondered whether the charterer had begun to put her load on board. To wait until she returned would be awkward.

A whistle pierced the throb of wheels and the express rolled across a bridge. Andrew saw white houses, goods trucks, and a long platform. Black sails dotted the channels in Solway sands, and when he turned his head dark trees up the dale marked Rowans glen. Andrew knit his brows. Before he returned to Rowans some time would go and he imagined Jim and Mrs. Grier would be resigned. Hannah was stanch, and he must write a letter asking her to send his clothes. No doubt she would tell Margaret he had started for Quebec.

Then broken ground shut in the dale and the wide sands vanished. In front were Gretna’s chimney stacks, long flat fields, and in the distance the

smoke of Carlisle. When Andrew got down at Carlisle the train for the coast was gone and the next did not start for three or four hours. A car would not reach Workington before the shipbroker's office shut, and since he doubted if the fellow would let the *Anne Musgrave* go, to wait for the morning was hard. As a rule, Andrew was humorously philosophical, but now he had got to work he was impatient and highly strung. Except perhaps when he sailed a boat, he did not think he had felt as keen before.

In the morning he went to the bridge by Workington Station and looked about. Gray smoke from the ironworks rolled across the slag banks; in the harbor little angry waves splashed. The Scottish hills were sharply distinct and a fresh east wind blew down the Firth. If he could start before the wind changed, the *Anne* would reach the Irish coast in about twelve hours. An engine whistled and a long train rolled under the bridge. The big trucks carried Durham coke for the blast furnaces, and Andrew saw another coke train on the curve by the river. On his journey along the coast he had noticed that rows of coal wagons occupied the sidings. West Cumberland ships large quantities of fuel, and Andrew imagined the merchants provided for a colliers' strike. Well, he must see the shipbroker and he inquired for the office.

Going up some steps behind a shop, he opened a door. A boy showed him into a small, shabby room, and a gentleman at a desk looked up.

"Good morning, Mr. Grier. For some time I have carried on all negotiations with your trustee, but I'm glad to meet you, and if you want to know about our recent transactions——"

"I want the *Anne Musgrave*," said Andrew, smiling.

"The vessel is yours, but, so long as I paid the charter fees, I had come to reckon her mine to use. It's awkward, Mr. Grier."

"The charter ran out two or three weeks ago, and was not renewed."

"Perhaps I was careless, but I was much occupied, and we did not always renew the charter immediately the time fixed expired. Mackellar knew I wanted the ship."

"All the same, you urged my trustee to cut the rate, because you thought about engaging a small steamer."

"I did think about it. The *Anne's* recent voyages have not paid."

"Then you ought to be willing to let her go."

The shipbroker smiled. "Your argument's logical; but it's awkward. The vessel went under the Maryport coal tips yesterday, and her cargo is on board."

Andrew frowned. The east wind would carry him to the Atlantic and he wanted to get off. He was resolved he would not wait until the schooner returned from Ireland.

"The charter was not renewed, but I don't want to be unjust," he said. "Are you bound by an agreement to deliver the coal?"

The shipbroker admitted he was not bound. His customers were good and they reckoned on his keeping them supplied. Andrew calculated and saw the plan he weighed was risky, but something must be risked.

"Very well. If you do not ask too much, I'll buy the cargo."

"I expect you know a colliers' strike is probable?" said the broker.

"I don't know. Yesterday the newspapers stated the chance of the dispute's being settled was pretty good. So far as I can see, the dock lines are blocked by coal trucks, and if the mine owners and men agree, I expect merchants will find they bought too much. But your business is to ship coal. What do you really think?"

The other's reply was cautious. He would not admit a strike was unlikely, but Andrew imagined he doubted if the miners would fight. Well, the newspapers indicated something like that; the economical arguments were against a strike. Andrew, however, was not persuaded. He did not know much about colliers, but he knew fishermen, and men whose work was laborious and dangerous did not bother about economy.

"If I do sell, I expect to get an extra price," the other resumed. "All the coal the collieries will let go is now at the docks, and until the dispute is over fresh supplies will not arrive."

Andrew could not move the fellow, and he resolved to take the plunge. When one had little to go upon, to speculate was rash, but he was willing to bet the colliers would strike. In fact, he was willing to bet on man's primitive stubbornness.

"My offer's a shilling a ton less than you ask," he said, and after a few minutes the broker agreed.

"Very well. I had meant to send the *Anne* to Larne, and I expect Milligan will take the coal. You ought to get a price that will pay for carriage, but you must be firm. If you like, I'll give you a letter."

Andrew thanked him and soon afterwards got a train for Maryport, a few miles along the coast.

CHAPTER XII

THE *ANNE MUSGRAVE* GOES TO SEA

A big spring tide went up the Firth; the fresh east wind blew against the current, and the sandy water rolled in white-topped waves. Smoke and coal dust tossed about the noisy tips, the dock gates were open, and a steamer's whistle echoed in the houses on the hill. Andrew, looking about for a few moments, saw a church steeple, a high clay bank, and a short, steep street.

The *Anne Musgrave* lay against the wall, and her look was out of date. Her bows were round, her stern was wide and flat, and she carried an old-fashioned, raised quarter-deck, but under the bulging quarters her lines were fine. Small coal and black dust lay about the deck, rigging and rail were gritty, and the water that lapped her scuppers carried away a stain.

Alongside were two or three modern screw coasters, and Andrew, noting their glass pilot houses and steam steering, smiled. A motor collier circled at the pierhead, and he felt, by contrast, his adventure was Elizabethan. Two men, sprawling across the *Anne's* foreyards, loosed the topsails; two or three more on the cumbered deck hauled grimy ropes. Blocks rattled, chain sheets clanged, and loose canvas flapped.

A steam collier moved out of dock, and a man on her forecastle signaled with his hand. A wire rope splashed and was pulled on board, the screw beat, and the boat forged ahead. The captain crossed the bridge, caught Andrew's rather envious glance, and laughed. That was all, but when Andrew again looked up, a smoke trail blowing across the wall indicated that the boat was gone. Andrew shrugged philosophically. One must use the tools one has, and his were a load of coal, for which he had not yet paid, and a sailing ship his grandfather built. His skin was black, his clothes were stained, and somebody had dropped an iron windlass bar on his foot.

A ketch and a fore-and-aft schooner, their sails half hoisted, made fast astern, a little tug whistled, and men on the pierhead carried along a rope. Then a boy plunged down some steps and threw a newspaper on board. Andrew threw a coin and pushed the newspaper into his pocket. The tug went ahead, ropes strained and splashed, and the *Anne Musgrave* moved slowly round the end of the wall.

Her bows began to swing; the tide, beating through the wooden pier, carried her obliquely up the Firth. Yards creaked and the topsails' savage

flapping stopped. The curves of sooty canvas got hard, the boom foresail went up, and the schooner began to list. Andrew jumped for the main halyards, men about him gasped and shouted, and the big sail swelled like a slack balloon. Then the tug whistled, the others ran forward, and a rope trailed alongside. A white sea struck the bow and the spray beat Andrew's face. The tug had let them go, the *Anne Musgrave* steered across the Firth, and his adventure had begun.

Leaning against the rail, Andrew got his breath and indulged a bracing thrill. He was a healthy, athletic young fellow, and to some extent his qualities and instincts were primitive. His habit was not to philosophize, but he rather thought he had, so far, not altogether known what he wanted. Now he did know. To begin with, he must convince Margaret he was not a loafing wastrel; and then, if possible, he must mend his diminished fortunes. Afterwards—— But Andrew stopped. One could not see far in front, and if his experiment were justified, he would ponder again.

In the meantime, much depended on his getting a proper price for his cargo, and he pulled out the newspaper. The miners' representatives had met the colliery owners, and although when the meeting broke up they had not agreed, progress was made and all were hopeful a plan to satisfy both parties would be found in the morning. Andrew pulled out his watch. The conference was now going on, and perhaps the parties were agreed.

Andrew smiled, a crooked smile. Business had not attracted him and he had thought rather scornfully about greedy merchants who speculated on industrial strife. Now he did something like that, and he admitted the speculation carried a thrill. Yet, if the newspaper forecast were accurate, his experiment might cost him much.

The captain came along the deck and stopped. Wilson was a big, rather hard-faced Dumfries Scot. His skin was very brown, his glance was level. He did not use brass buttons; his hat was a battered oilskin and his clothes were like a collier's clothes.

“What's the news?” he inquired.

“In a sense, the news is not very good; it looks as if the miners will not come out,” Andrew replied. “If they stop at work, I expect nobody will be keen to buy our coal. A large quantity has gone across from Cumberland.”

Wilson nodded. “Milligan will no' pay a proper price unless he's forced, but my job's to sail your ship——” He stopped and lighting his pipe,

resumed: “To Quebec’s a lang road, and I’m glad ye ordered yon big new pump.”

Andrew thought his satisfaction ominous, but he asked: “What about the men?”

“I wouldna’ say they’re keen, and I’ll maybe put two ashore at Larne. If we can keep the ithers sober, they’ll gang.”

Andrew studied the men. They were Solway Scots, and he thought one or two frankly drunk. Then he studied the masts and rigging. When the *Anne Musgrave* was launched she was a brigantine, but seamen who can handle square sails are now not numerous, and some time since her rig was altered to a topsail schooner’s. For the rig, she was a large vessel and her yards were long; most of the canvas, however, was fore-and-aft, and was hoisted from the deck.

Short white seas leaped about her and not far off a frothing turmoil indicated a tide race across a shoal. The front of the seas was sandy yellow and luminous green, but when the schooner rolled the trickle from her scuppers trailed back in a sooty stain. Sparkling showers blew across the rail, water and coal dust washed about the deck. The old ship was loaded as deep as the Board of Trade allowed, and creaking and lurching, rather like a heavy wagon, she plunged across the Firth.

“Maybe she’ll bear the squaresail; I’d like to berth at Larne next tide,” Wilson remarked. “Onyway, we’ll try ’t, and if she ships a bit water, it will help clean her up.”

He gave an order and the men pushed out a short, thick boom, and hoisted a large roll of canvas, tied by stops, to the foreyard. Blocks rattled, the stops were broken, and the big sail swelled in flowing curves. The schooner’s bows lifted, and Andrew saw the white seas smash and the slack jibs bore through leaping spray. She steadied, for pressed by her canvas she could no longer roll. Shining water topped her rail and her white wake trailed far astern.

At noon Andrew dined on baked potatoes and greasy mutton broth. The cabin in the quarter-deck was seven feet long, and about four feet wide between the lockers under the shut-up berths, but food and room were not important and Andrew was a Scot. Moreover, he was young and he knew the thrill youth gets from going somewhere.

When he went on deck the Manx hills cut the horizon and steadily got distinct. Snaefell’s outline sharpened, and the ethereal blue melted into ochre

and green. The schooner bore her squaresail, the tide helped nobly, and before the ebb was done one saw cornfields and pastures and the long flats behind the Point of Ayr. She went round the point with the slackening stream; yellow sands and clay bluffs melted, and the dark crags of Galloway dominated the sparkling sea.

The sun got low and Mourne mountains loomed against orange light. To starboard the high Mull of Galloway reflected the paling glow. The narrow sea was dull, cold green, streaked by tossing white. The tide had turned, and since the flood ran to windward, the combers were steep. The *Anne* plunged savagely and at dusk Wilson hauled down the squaresail and furled the topgallant. Booms groaned and the wire shrouds throbbled like harp strings in the wind, but the stream was against the vessel and Andrew doubted if she went four miles an hour.

A Belfast liner steamed up from the east and went by like an express train. Her lofty side was pierced by rows of lights; her white deckhouses shone. One hardly saw her dark plates and solid fabric, and Andrew thought her somehow unsubstantial. She glittered rather like a fairy palace than a ship. Then her triple whistle screamed on a harmonious chord, the long bright lines foreshortened, and she was gone. On board the *Anne* all was dark and dreary, but for the faint reflections from the navigation lights. Wilson indicated the vanishing liner.

“If I was laird o’ Rowans, yon’s the way I’d go to sea!”

“I wonder—” said Andrew. “If you were laird o’ Rowans, my inheritance would be yours, and I rather think all I got was not two or three barren farms. In the meantime, I’m a coal merchant and I doubt if I can sell my goods, but since there’s no use in bothering, I’ll go to bed.”

“When ye’re in the bunk, sneck the door, or she’ll maybe pitch ye oot,” the captain remarked.

Andrew did not fasten the door. Although the skylight was open, the little cabin smelt horribly of mildew, food, and stale tobacco. For a few minutes he heard the seas beat the vessel’s quarters and the wind scream in the rigging; and then all got indistinct and he was asleep.

Not long after daybreak he went on deck. To starboard, under the rising sun, dim blue crags and misty hills marked the Scottish shore; to port Ireland shone in yellow light. The sea was dark green, touched by foam where the combers broke; the morning was fresh and the keen east wind sang in the

shrouds. The schooner, plunging along with her squaresail set, nobly stemmed the tide.

All was bracing and the old boat had made a good run. Biting spray, humming wind, and swirling water fired Andrew's blood. He got a sense of progress; to watch the round bows heave and smash the seas stirred him. He was going somewhere and his object was worth while. All the same, he pondered.

He had not yet paid for the coal he carried, but he had bought a quantity of expensive supplies. His five hundred pounds was melting, and unless he sold his cargo for a good price, it looked as if his voyage must end at Larne. Irish merchants, speculating on the miners' stopping, had bought much coal, and, if the miners did not stop, might find their stocks too large. Then, unless he cut the price, they would not take his load. Andrew knew Mackellar would not give him a fresh sum.

Yet to go back to Rowans and admit himself beaten at the start was unthinkable. Margaret imagined him a wastrel, and when she got news of his last folly she would know herself justified. She would get news; Andrew thought his aunt and Jim would soon enlighten her. Margaret, however, was a Scot and the others would not know she was interested. Andrew pictured her quiet pose and level glance, but when Margaret looked like that her calm was ominous.

Well, Margaret had indicated that she had done with him, and he knew her firm. All the same, he had hoped she would by and by admit he had some useful qualities. The trouble was, in order to persuade her, he must, to begin with, sell a load of coal. In a sense, the thing was ridiculous. Besides, he doubted if he could sell the coal. There was, however, no use in his bothering, because he was not going back to Rowans. If his venture broke him, he would buy a third-class ticket for Canada and stay for good.

The cook called him to breakfast and, balancing in front of the slanted table, he consumed salty bacon, fresh bread, and black, long-brewed tea. On board the *Anne Musgrave* one used a basin for a cup and went without sugar and milk. Andrew was not fastidious and his crew were independent, democratic Scots. To indicate that his standard was not their standard might have drawbacks.

"In two-three hours we'll make the lough," the captain remarked. "When she's moored I'm ready to unload."

“I must first see the merchant,” Andrew replied. “As soon as you can land me I’ll go to his office.”

Wilson smiled. “Maybe ye had better stop on board and let Milligan look ye up. Ye dinna’ want the fella’ to think ye keen. Then sometimes Powel takes a quantity.”

“Your notion’s good,” said Andrew. “I will stop on board.”

At noon Larne was close ahead and the schooner bore up on the tide running for the lough. The squaresail was gone and two men on the topsail yards fought with fluttering canvas. Andrew saw masts and white houses; and then a tossing plume of steam and a tall funnel. The Stranraer mail boat had arrived in the morning and he would soon know his luck. Half an hour afterwards he went on board the mail boat and found a steward by the gangway.

“Have you got a Glasgow newspaper?” he asked.

“I’ve got this morning’s *Herald*. The boat train picks up a bundle.”

Andrew seized the newspaper and his heart beat, for he saw a bold headline:

*Colliery Conference Breaks Down.
Miners Will Come Out.*

Andrew leaned against a stanchion and in a few moments knew all he wanted to know. When agreement was almost reached, somebody struck a fresh jarring note; strained tempers broke control, and the conference resolved that the notices to stop work must be carried out. Andrew pushed the newspaper into his pocket and saw the steward’s sympathetic grin.

“Have you backed a winner, sir?”

“Something like that,” said Andrew, and pulled out some money. “Suppose you get yourself a drink.”

He went off and when, not long afterwards, he lighted his pipe in the *Anne*’s cabin, the coal merchant came down the ladder.

“Ye made a grand run, and I expect you’re wanting to get back for another load. If the captain will lift the hatches, I’ll send the boys and trucks. Yeese have the invoice and my bills of lading?”

“The bills of lading are *to order*, and I haven’t written the invoice,” Andrew replied. “You see, we have not agreed about the price.”

“Forsyth charges Whitehaven market price; I pay carriage and brokerage.”

“The coal is not Forsyth’s, and I expect Whitehaven merchants have put up the price. Perhaps you have not seen the morning’s newspaper?”

Milligan’s eyes twinkled. “I got a telegram last night, but ye cannot squeeze an Irishman, and if my customers think I use the screw, they’ll go without. The boys are that contrairy they’ll start to dig peat. Now let you and me consither——”

Wilson lifted the skylight and signed Andrew.

“Mr. Powel and anither’s on the quay,” he said in a meaning voice. “Will I bring them on board?”

“Not for a few minutes,” Andrew replied, and gave Milligan a smile. “I don’t want to be unjust, but when I bought the coal I ran some risk——”

For three or four minutes they disputed humorously, and then Milligan shrugged.

“Faith! ye have me beat, and I know when I must pay! If ye’ll come to my office, I’ll write the check.”

CHAPTER XIII

THE OPEN ATLANTIC

The moon was on the water and the light wind blew from the land. Gentle ripples splashed at the bows and the *Anne's* topmasts swung slowly across the stars. Her dark sails slanted, for the coal was gone and Andrew had not loaded much stone ballast. Some must be carried to steady the schooner when she fronted the Atlantic gales. The Antrim hills, streaked by mist, rolled by, the twinkling lights at Glenarm got bright and melted, and a fresher breeze drove noisy ripples across Red Bay.

Andrew, balancing by the wheel, was tranquilly satisfied. He had money to pay his crew and buy supplies, and he had sent a sum to a Glasgow bank. The *Anne* made good progress down the North Channel, and in a few hours she would reach the Atlantic. So far his luck was good, but the mist rolled ominously across the hills and the stars' keen sparkle threatened wind. Well, when they rounded Fair Head he would know the weather, and in the meantime he would go to bed.

At daybreak he went on deck. In front Fair Head's lofty cliff was bleak and dark, and the ebb tide, breaking angrily, swept through Rathlin Sound. The island was a gray smear, outlined by foam, and the humming northwest wind was cold. The schooner carried all her sail, but Wilson studied the sky.

"I'm thinking she'll fetch along the coast on the starboard tack, but when we're through the sound we'll get some sea," he said. "Maybe I ought to shorten sail, but I would like to carry the ebb to Lough Foyle."

They went about by the island and the savage current urged the *Anne* through the sound. Dark eddies revolved along her track and troubled water leaped at her bows. The bows rose and dipped, for although the island was to windward, she felt the Atlantic's measured heave.

Then a bright beam pierced the mist and all ahead was sparkling white and shining green. One heard the sea-tops crash and a noise in the distance like the roar of a waterfall. Wilson said the sun called the wind, but so long as it was possible they must let her go.

It was not for long. Lurching from the sound, she opened the Atlantic and a big sea rolled up. A shaking jib pierced the comber's front, and then the bows went under. Andrew felt the shock and saw a cataract of foam, but

for a few moments that was all. The deck vanished and he felt the flood break against his knees. The stinging spray was in his eyes and he seized a rope and held on blindly.

When she lurched out of the turmoil slack sails thrashed and somebody climbed the fore-rigging. Andrew jumped for the shrouds and went up; the topgallant obviously must be furled. He had not yet balanced on a yard, and when he lay across the slanted spar and braced his legs against the foot-rope he doubted if he helped. Yet when one was young, to use one's strength and match one's stubbornness against the stubborn canvas that beat one's head and bruised one's hands, was worth some risk.

Jumping back on deck, he saw his nails were broken, but it was not important and the topgallant was furled. Wilson was at the wheel, and the others were occupied. They had hauled two jibs to windward and the *Anne* lurched obliquely across the white seas. Her sails were slack and the mainsail peak was down. Sweating men, bent over the reef-tackle, hauled the canvas down to the boom. All that was loose on deck rolled and slid about. Ropes tossed, blocks banged and rattled, and water flowed across the inclined planks. For the little group of gasping men to put all straight looked impossible, but they were wooden ship sailors, and Wilson knew his job.

The sail was shortened and ropes were coiled away. They sheeted the jibs over, Wilson turned his wheel, and the *Anne* forged ahead. Now she was not pressed, she went buoyantly. The channel was behind her and the Argyll hills got indistinct. She was in the Atlantic, and with yards braced sharp to the roaring wind she started for the West.

Andrew felt her lurch and swing. He saw grimy wood and patched, dingy sails, but the background was reflected light, blue sky, and dazzling foam. The track he followed crossed the horizon, and after he made the St. Lawrence he did not know where it led. He felt he, so to speak, plunged into the blue. All the same, the plunge was bracing and the distance called. Had Margaret but wished him luck, he would have been gloriously content.

Yet he felt Margaret would approve his adventure. Margaret's hair was red, her eyes were Viking blue, and although sometimes her calm was baffling, sometimes the blood came to her skin. Her temper was the old moss troopers' temper. Well, she declared she had done with him, but Andrew doubted. After all, he was Margaret's sort, and perhaps if he made good in Canada——

He did not see why he should not make good. When he talked about going to Quebec for timber, his trustee thought him *fond*, but he had started

and Callender had agreed to take his load. Then, if the standard was that an adventure to be justified must pay, his, so far, had paid. He was richer than when he sailed, and although perhaps his luck was good, he had beaten a Cumberland broker and an Irish merchant. On the whole, he thought it something of an exploit.

When Wilson called him to dinner the rack was on the table, but the potatoes slipped off the slanted plates. Some splashed on Andrew's clothes, and he thought the tea had brewed since breakfast, but one did not bother about things like that. When the meal was over Wilson lighted his pipe.

"If we stand across for Islay, the next tack would carry her round Malin Head and we'd be clear o' land the morn; but she's no' a big vessel and the sea gets up. If we haud on, on the starboard tack, the ebb will carry us to Lough Foyle, and one could bring up in smooth water by Greencastle."

Andrew knew a sailing coaster waits for a *slant* and does not go to sea unless the wind is favorable. The big sober captain was not the man to be daunted by a breeze, but he had not Andrew's object for speed, and when the Atlantic combers roll, a quiet anchorage calls. All the same, to wait was not Andrew's plan.

"Thank you, captain," he said quietly. "To begin with, I ouchtn't to meddle, and I'm not a deep-water sailor——"

"I've shipped worse," Wilson remarked with a twinkle. "When we sight Newfoundland I reckon ye'll be a useful man."

Andrew was flattered, but he let it go. "The Canadian summer's short, and if it's possible to push ahead, I don't want to stop."

"Aweel, I'll stand across for Islay and the Western Ocean," said Wilson with a humorous shrug. "Your pluck's good, Mr. Grier, but if ye're keen to front a head sea, ye'll get a' ye want."

He went up the ladder, and Andrew, getting into his bunk, occupied himself with a pencil and a writing pad. His adventure moved him and he thought Margaret would be interested to know all he felt and thought. Margaret, of course, would not know, but to imagine it possible and picture for her the ship and his companions would occupy him pleasantly. He lighted his pipe and got to work.

Afterwards, at Rowans, Andrew studied the letters he wrote like a diary, and although he admitted the style was not cultivated, he thought the rudely-drawn pictures life-like. The strange thing was, when he was on board, he was mainly conscious of muscular fatigue. All, so to speak, was indistinct,

and the few vivid incidents hardly checkered the background of monotonous labor.

But the diary he wrote for Margaret helped, and he recaptured something of his thrill when the open Atlantic was ahead and a melting beam from Tory Island flashed him good-by. He saw Wilson, stern and quiet, balance at the wheel when the heavy gaff and boom were down, and the *Anne*, hove to under topsail, jib and trysail, climbed the long, curling seas. Another page narrated his four hours' labor at the pump and Wilson's struggle to mend the broken hatch. Andrew stated naïvely that he was tired and his hands bled; one could not properly picture the horrible strain and the exhausted men's dull satisfaction when they got the water down.

He saw himself astride the bowsprit, lashing fast a jib that threatened to hurl him from the spar; his legs in the water, until the bows went up and swung him above the leaping foam. Another time he was on the mainboom, knotting a swollen reef-point, and the mainsheet broke. The boom lurched across the rail, the schooner rolled, and although Andrew held on, he plunged into the sea. He did not know how he got back along the jolting spar. One did not afterwards know how one did things like that.

Yet the voyage was not all marked by strain and risky labor. Sometimes Andrew lay on the warm deck in the sun and smoked. Sometimes he leaned against the rail when the moon was on the sea and the wrinkled water gently lapped the bows. If the men Wilson shipped at Larne were in the watch, Andrew liked to talk. Denis, the dark-skinned Cork fisherman, talked about bells that tolled on the Irish coast where no bells were, and lights that shone from an abbey, sacked and broken four hundred years since. McCroom, the Ulster Presbyterian, admitted such things were possible, but when he himself feared the dark a hunted stag, one black night, climbed on board his herring boat.

Andrew thought McCroom's agreement typical. He knew the Ulster Protestants, but charity rules at sea. To study his men interested him. They were modern sailors and on shore they wore good clothes and bowler hats. The Scots' songs, at the best, were Lauder's songs, and if one sang Burns' his lyrics were burlesqued. Yet at sea their modernness, so to speak, was shallow, and one sensed the deep primitive vein. On board ship, where steam does not help, man is primitive; he keeps his life and the lives of others by rude human valor and muscular strength. Andrew felt something like this, but when he wrote his diary he was puzzled to find proper words and let it go.

In the meantime, the schooner pushed west. Wilson was a navigator and held a master's certificate, but when the wind was fair Andrew thought he trusted his compass and the taffrail-log. The log measured the distance run, and sometimes its record and the captain's calculations did not agree.

One morning Andrew thought Wilson disturbed. For three or four days they had run, in rain and mist, before a fresh east wind, and the pin in the chart indicated that the Newfoundland coast was not very far ahead. Since they had not seen sun or stars, and the Gulf-stream flowed obliquely across their track, Andrew doubted if the pin's position was altogether accurate, and when he went on deck he studied the taffrail-log. The dial recorded the vessel's speed through the water, but since she stemmed the current, her actual progress was another thing. Andrew made a rough calculation and looked about.

Under the foreyard the big squaresail strained. A steep, gray swell rolled out of the east and the schooner's masts swung like a pendulum. The swell did not break, but the long slopes were wrinkled by the wind. The horizon, perhaps a mile off, was blurred and dim. Andrew hated the fog, for the *Anne* was near the liners' track.

For a few minutes heavy rain beat the deck and Wilson came up from his chart. Sometimes heavy rain foreruns a shift of wind, but the breeze did not veer. All that happened was, a bright beam pierced the gloom and the fog rolled back. The sea shone and, round a four or five mile circle, was dotted by tossing masts.

Andrew had not reckoned on a shift of scene like this. The dreary fog and loneliness were gone; gray sky and lead-colored sea vanished as a film picture vanishes. One felt the swift transition from dark to light was theatrical. Then, although he knew the fishing fleet was large, he had not thought to see a hundred vessels. He imagined there were a hundred, of all rigs and types; splendid American schooners, small French and Portuguese ketches; brigantines, topsail schooners, and a few brigs and barks. Some, carrying easy sail, slowly lurched across the shining swell; some, at anchor, swung their naked masts. Boats pulled about, the oars going jerkily like water insects' legs. Boats, with lines down, hove up for a few moments and vanished in the wrinkled sea.

Wilson signed the helmsman and the *Anne* bore up for a fore-and-aft schooner. The American's mainboom was stowed; she carried a high main-trysail and a jib. Sky and sea were blue and her cotton canvas shone like snow. When she lurched, her forefoot leaped from the water, and Andrew,

remarking the finely tapered wedge, got a sense of speed. She luffed, and Wilson jumped on the *Anne's* rail.

“Can you give me Cape Race’s bearing?” he shouted.

“I might. Anyhow, I can give you the latitude,” a man on board the schooner replied. “But don’t you want Sable Island?”

“So long’s I get a bearing,” Wilson shouted. “Have ye had good luck at the fishing?”

“Pretty good; I’ve got all my boats,” said the American rather dryly, and gave Wilson the latitude and a compass bearing. Then he indicated the dim horizon. “Going to be thick and quite a lot of us are around. You want to take the squaresail off her and blow your horn.”

The schooner forged ahead and Wilson smiled.

“Yon fella’s polite. I alloo we’re no’ altogether where I thought. I’ll away and shift the pin.”

A few minutes afterwards the sunshine faded and the sea got gray. The fishing vessels melted and a cold wind pierced the advancing haze. The mate hauled down the squaresail, gaff-topsail and outer jib, but the *Anne's* speed was good and a disturbed sea began to roll behind her.

Water dripped from spars and canvas and all on deck was wet. Bells rang in the fog, and sometimes the lookout shouted and the schooner’s horn wailed drearily. Then, at measured intervals, a deep note rolled across the sea and got louder. Bells chimed, horns blew, and Andrew heard the rhythmic beat of triple screws and a roar like the roar of a flood. He knew a great ship hurled back the water, and by and by a long white wave surged out of the fog. The *Anne* plunged, the wave rolled by, and the whistles and horns got faint. For a time one need not bother much; the liner was gone.

Soon afterwards, the lookout shouted and the helmsman turned the wheel. The schooner swerved and by the bows a small dark object was hove up on the top of a sea. Andrew jumped for the shrouds and looked down into a boat. He saw a big coiled rope, tangled lines, and shining fish. Two dark-skinned fellows labored at the oars, and the wave from the *Anne's* bow splashed on board. The men did not look up; one seized a baling scoop, and the boat vanished behind the schooner’s stern.

By and by a horn blew and, twenty yards off, a small ketch, carrying jib and mizzen, stole out of the fog. Andrew thought her captain looked for his

boat, and he signed along the *Anne's* eddying track. A man on board the ketch waved an acknowledgment and then the fog closed about her.

Afterwards Andrew saw nothing. Although the wind got fresh, they did not shorten sail. The fishing fleet was all about and in order to steer handily the *Anne* must keep her speed. Until midnight Wilson blindly let her go, and then the wind shifted and blew away the fog. The stars came out and, hauling sheets and braces, they put the schooner on the starboard tack. In the morning the sea was lonely and a savage northwester whipped the spray from the combers' tops.

CHAPTER XIV

TURNBULL BRACES UP

All was quiet at the shiplap house by Rideau Cove. The evening was hot and Turnbull, on his couch by a window, dully looked about. A small wooden steamer was moored to the wharf, but her noisy winches had stopped, and the saws in the sheds by the river would not resume their shrill scream until morning. A gentle wind blew up the St. Lawrence and shining ripples lapped the stony beach. Behind the tall sawdust dumps, the sunset was green and red.

The quiet bothered Turnbull. The steamer waited for her load, and had not a driving-belt broken, the saws would have run until dark. Orders that paid were not numerous, and when the mills stopped one's bank roll melted. Turnbull liked to hear his engines throb and the shock of falling boards, but now the mills were going, he could not get about. He was old and his leg hurt. Since he fell between the logs when a raft-chain broke, sciatica bothered him, and for two or three weeks he had not crossed the yard to his office.

The Quebec doctor stated he must cut out liquor and let his business go, but Turnbull rebelled. Liquor, so to speak, was all he had now, and when prices for lumber went up the Rideau mills could run. Besides, he did not see himself loafing about at Montreal and studying the newspapers in a hotel rotunda. For long he had used paddle and snowshoe; he knew the woods and rivers, and until he hurt his leg, he could hold a log to the screaming saws. The cities were not for him. Then he was not rich; for the most part, the old mills did not pay, and he had made himself accountable for his grandchildren.

Turnbull had no son, and since his daughter died her children's home was the house at Rideau Cove. Lucille, like her mother, was dark and calm and stanch, and although Antoine was rather his father's type, the lad had qualities. In fact, but for him, Turnbull admitted he could not carry on the business. In a way, there was the trouble, because Turnbull rather doubted Antoine. He knew himself old and slack, but sometimes he thought his slackness not altogether physical. Had he had a son to take the mills, ambition might have braced him and helped him conquer his infirmity. But he had not a son, and he was ill and frankly tired.

He heard a step and looked up. A girl crossed the old dark boards, for the floor of the big room at the mill house was polished like a floor in France. Lucille's dress was white, her eyes and hair were black, and Turnbull thought she carried herself nobly. Well, her father was something of a gentleman and, although he was a rogue, he claimed descent from the old Quebec *seigneurs*. Sometimes Turnbull thought Jessie was not altogether cheated when she married Antoine Latour; Jessie could face a risk and make a plunge. Well, she had paid, and she and Antoine were long since dead.

"Are you lonely?" Jessie's daughter asked. "Shall I read the news?"

"I think not," said Turnbull, and motioned her to a chair. "The Ottawa grafters' disputes have nothing to do with us, and I don't know if I am lonely. When one is old one looks back and thinks about the friends one had. Mine are gone, but perhaps they did not go for good. When you smile I see your mother; and sometimes I see another smoke his pipe by the stove——"

Lucille's habit was sympathetic and as a rule she indulged the old man.

"The Scottish shipbuilder, who helped you start the mills?"

"My friend, Andrew Grier. He's dead long since, but when I must lie on my back and brood I think about him much. Andrew was all a man and he had something of your father's charm. Not a parsimonious Scot: a gentleman of the old Scottish school. When I was young one met his type. But I'm *havering* and my leg hurts. Where's your brother?"

"Antoine is at the office. When it's possible, he wants to go to Montreal. He is keen to get the bridge-lumber contract."

"If I can get up soon, he shall go," Turnbull replied with a twinkle. "The lad is young, and young blood is red—— Well, I knew the cabarets by Notre Dame, but now the boys are ambitious and use the *Windsor*."

Lucille mused. Antoine recently was much at the office, but she wondered whether business transactions altogether accounted for his journeys to Montreal. Lucille was not a fool and she knew her father was a wild-rake. It looked as if Antoine had inherited his extravagance and sometimes she was anxious.

Turnbull faced the window, and by and by, behind the rocks and pines on the point, a topsail shone in the sunset. The sail was low, and since its lowness implied that the vessel was not large, Turnbull was puzzled. As a rule, North American schooners do not carry topsails and Rideau Cove was some distance from the main channel. Turnbull did not expect a ship, but it looked as if the captain steered for the cove.

The vessel crept round the point and Turnbull's glance got fixed. The jib-boom pointed high, the bows were round, and the quarters bulged. Canadian shipbuilders did not use the old-fashioned model; but Turnbull had known a boat like that, only she was a brigantine. Yet, if one had given her a boom-foresail and lifted the foreyard—— All the same, the thing was impossible. Since the brigantine he knew moored in Rideau Cove forty years had gone.

“Get the glasses,” he said to Lucille, and she thought his voice strange. “Does the schooner carry lumber ports?”

“I see a port,” Lucille replied, and smiled. “The flag is red, but she is certainly not Canadian; her bows and quarter-deck are very much out of date. Only in old pictures——”

“Is her name on the bow?”

Lucille turned the screw and tried to pick out the small white letters.

“*Anne*,” she said. “It looks like *Mus*—— Now I get it: *Anne Musgrave*! But, grandfather, you must not——”

Turnbull awkwardly pulled himself up against the end of the couch. The effort hurt horribly, but he was not going to bother about his leg. He had thought the *Anne Musgrave* long since broken up. Yet there she was in front of his window, and he was sober and very much awake.

She came round head to wind, and her topgallant sank. The mainsail peak went down, the anchor splashed, and the clang of running chain echoed in the rocks. Small figures ran about the deck; a boat was hoisted out and pulled for the wharf. Turnbull had seen it all before; but he felt the picture was not real. If he turned his head, it would melt.

“Have they landed?” he asked and waited in suspense.

“The boat is at the wharf,” Lucille replied. “A man climbs the ladder. He talks to the boys from the mill. Now he takes the path.”

The path went behind the sheds, and Lucille put down the glasses and gave Turnbull a puzzled glance. His look was highly strung, and his pose was stiff.

“Are you ill?” she asked. “When you moved did you hurt your leg?”

Turnbull smiled. “If my leg did not hurt, I would think myself young again. All I think is ridiculous, but you do not dream. Bring wine and fruit. Bring all you have.”

Five minutes afterwards a French-Canadian servant opened the door.

“One comes,” she said, and Andrew advanced a yard or two and stopped.

The light was going, but he saw an old man on a couch and a girl rise from an easy-chair. They turned their heads, and the girl’s look was curious, as if he interested her; the old man’s was keen and fixed. He gazed at Andrew, as if he doubted and must persuade himself he was not cheated.

The beam from the window touched Andrew, and Lucille saw his face was rather thin and his skin was very brown. His hair was black, but his eyes were blue. He was tall, his carriage was a sailor’s carriage, and by contrast with the French *habitants*, she thought him a good example of the blond Northern type. Lucille felt his hair ought to be yellow.

Then she turned. For two or three weeks Turnbull had not got off his couch unless somebody helped. Now he got up and went across the slippery polished boards.

“Andrew Grier?”

“I am Andrew Grier.”

“It’s obvious; one could not doubt,” said Turnbull, and gave him his hand. “But I must present you to my granddaughter, Lucille Latour.”

Lucille gave Andrew a friendly smile, and he turned to his host.

“Perhaps you ought not to have got up, sir. Let me help you back.”

Turnbull was willing, for the effort had cost him much.

“One gets old,” he said. “When the *Anne Musgrave* arrived before, I met Andrew at the wharf. Now I’m fast to my couch, I almost thought my partner had come back to see me out. But why did you not write us a letter?”

“When I sailed from Cumberland, I doubted if I’d get farther than an Irish port,” Andrew replied, and told Turnbull about the coal. “Perhaps my luck was good, but I sold the cargo and I have arrived. If I can help, I’d like to help.”

Turnbull chuckled. “When one is not daunted, one’s luck is good. Your methods are the other Andrew’s methods, but I doubt if they are yet very much out of date. Well, you are my partner. I expect you wanted to see your Canadian inheritance?”

“Not altogether, sir. I wanted to load a cargo of boards, and I wanted a job. I’m not fastidious, so long as the job is a man’s job.”

Lucille gave him wine, and when Turnbull urged he narrated his adventures. Lucille remarked that he was modest and sometimes humorous, but she felt his wanting a man’s job was justified. Moreover, she saw Turnbull approved Andrew, and her grandfather knew men. The strange thing was, Turnbull talked with almost youthful keenness. For some time, he had resigned himself to his advancing infirmities and had not bothered much about the mill. Now he was alert and interested. It looked as if he had found a support he knew he could trust.

Lucille pondered. Antoine was Turnbull’s proper support, and when the old man could not get about he used control. Lucille was her brother’s champion, but she admitted the mill was Turnbull’s, and Andrew was his partner. By and by she heard quiet steps in the passage. The door was not shut and Lucille had not yet got a light. The red sunset was nearly gone, but its fading reflections touched the walls.

The quiet steps stopped, the door was pushed back, and Antoine Latour looked into the room. Lucille saw the others had not noticed his arrival and she thought he studied Andrew. Andrew’s tall figure cut the glimmering window; his profile was like an old daugerreotype, and one got a sense of stubborn firmness. When he talked he was not like that; his frank twinkle was rather boyish. But Antoine’s look intrigued Lucille. His mouth was tight and he frowned, as if something jarred. After a moment or two he moved back noiselessly and vanished.

Lucille knitted her brows. She thought Antoine’s stealing off ominous, but she rather sympathized. To help his grandfather was Antoine’s business and he had reckoned on his inheriting the mill. Lucille herself had reckoned on something like that. For long, Turnbull’s Scottish partners were satisfied to take a small sum when trade was good, but Andrew had arrived and would, no doubt, dispute Antoine’s claim. Moreover, the partner’s claim would stand. In the meantime, Lucille resolved to let it go. Turnbull and Andrew talked and she was interested.

“North Quebec is a bleak tableland,” Turnbull remarked. “The settlements follow the St. Lawrence, and, for the most part, the timber is not large. Much has been cut and one must search for good milling logs.”

“When you built the mill, why did you not locate on the south bank, where the big woods go back to Maine?” Andrew inquired.

Lucille saw he knew lower Canada, but Turnbull smiled.

“We had not much money and on the south bank one must fight for a proper spot. Canada built soft wood ships, and in the small towns the houses and churches were lumber and tin. On the north bank, however, one could get timber rights and ground for a wharf where ships could load. When we started the mill, good trees grew by the river, and to drive the logs to the saws was not expensive.

“Well, we were not rich. We had not much but youth and confidence, but our hopes were high. I was fresh from the university; Andrew built the mill, and he was a man to trust. When all was dark, he laughed, and when I thought we must stop for money, he went fishing to the Grand Banks. The *Anne Musgrave* lost her topmast and two boats, but the fishing was good and when Andrew used all his salt he carried his load to Spain. Two thousand miles was not an obstacle, so long as he got a good price. When he got back the river was freezing, but he loaded battens for Scotland and towed the brigantine through the shore ice to the channel. One could not stop Andrew Grier.”

“The good logs are gone?” said Andrew quietly.

“One must push back some distance,” Turnbull agreed. “Our rivers are angry and pierce the rocks; to drive logs far is expensive. When lumber is cheap we must stop, and we cannot supply the wide battens for which British merchants give a good price. Our stuff makes narrow boards.”

“Did you not think about selling the mill to the big combines?”

“I am not a company’s servant and the mergers have not much use for a small, old-fashioned mill,” said Turnbull dryly. “To buy up a competitor who cannot cut prices and do much business is not worth while, and until recently the big men left me alone.”

“Then, somebody is now willing to negotiate?”

“It looks like that,” said Turnbull, in a thoughtful voice. “My leases go some distance back, and where the river cuts the height-of-land some useful timber grows in a basin round a lake. Still the river is small and the channel is blocked by rocks. One would be forced to build a skid-road to easy water. The road would cost much and I doubt if it would pay. All the same, when a railroad goes to Labrador the track will follow the river across the height-of-land, and at Ottawa politicians begin to talk——” Turnbull stopped and resumed with a smile: “I am old and do not expect to see the railroad built,

but if we mean to get good logs we must get them from the basin by the lake. You want a man's job. Suppose you go and study the ground?"

Andrew was willing, but he saw an obstacle; he did not know his job. Then if Turnbull were really interested, his not sending his grandson was strange.

"I'd like to go," he said, "but what about the lumber I want for Scotland?"

"We cannot yet cut the stuff; I have sold all we can handle for three or four weeks, and I must not put off my customers."

Andrew nodded. After all, seamen's wages were not large, and if he were not back when the *Anne* was loaded, Wilson need not wait. Besides, he had meant to stay in Canada until he knew something about the business Turnbull carried on.

A few minutes afterwards, Antoine Latour came in and Turnbull said: "As soon as I can take control, Mr. Grier and you will start for the lake."

"I reckon I ought to start for Montreal, and you cannot get to the office," Latour replied.

"In the morning I'm going to try, but perhaps I'll want you about for a week or two."

"Very well. When you feel you don't need me, we'll talk about it again," Latour agreed, but his smile indicated that he wanted to indulge the old man.

Andrew knitted his brows. Now he came to think about it, when his exploits jarred his relations, Jim smiled like that. He glanced at Turnbull, but his look was inscrutable. Andrew got up and said he must go back to the schooner.

Turnbull refused to let him go. He declared that so long as Andrew was at Rideau Cove a room at the house was his, and Andrew agreed to stay. He liked the old man and he liked Lucille, but, so far, he did not know about Antoine.

CHAPTER XV

THE PORTRAIT

Andrew was three weeks at the mill house. Although Turnbull got to the office, his leg bothered him and to resume control was harder than he thought. Then Andrew imagined Latour was not keen to start for the lake. Andrew, however, was willing to wait. After crossing the Atlantic on board the *Anne Musgrave*, he felt he was perhaps entitled to loaf, but he did not loaf much. He began to know something about lumber and the business transacted at the Rideau mills. Turnbull acknowledged him partner and frankly satisfied his curiosity.

In the mornings and evenings Andrew and Lucille went fishing. The river trout were large, and Andrew admitted Lucille was a first-class sport and a charming companion. His narrating their excursions in the diary he wrote for Margaret was perhaps significant, for although Andrew's modesty was not exaggerated, he did not know he attracted women.

At length, however, the start for the lake was fixed, and on the evening before they set off, Lucille carried some clothes to Andrew's room. Lucille knew the woods and she meant to see he had all he would need. Andrew and Turnbull were at the office, and Lucille, putting the clothes on a bureau, selected articles to pack. When she pushed some away she knocked down a writing-case and a number of papers and a photograph fell upon the floor.

Lucille was annoyed. The scattered sheets looked like letters and carried dates; she wondered why Andrew had written letters he did not mail. At all events, the dates would help her to put back the sheets in the proper order, and when she picked up one she saw her own name.

Lucille had not meant to study the letters, but she was human. All was quiet at the house and she thought nobody was about. She read a few lines and then pushed the sheets together and went to the window-seat. The room was on the ground floor and the window opened to the veranda.

Andrew had written the letters for a girl in Scotland. He narrated his going fishing and, so to speak, drew Turnbull's and Lucille's portraits. Lucille admitted hers was rather good; at all events, the portrait was attractive, but she frowned. She saw all his frankly writing about her to the other implied.

Then she picked up the photograph and saw *For Andrew, from Margaret* across the top. The blood came to Lucille's skin and she did not hesitate to study the picture. Margaret was not beautiful; anyhow, her type of beauty was not the French-Canadian type, but perhaps she had charm. Then Lucille acknowledged her look was thoroughbred. Her pose indicated dignity and her glance was calmly proud. Since Andrew had written about Lucille to a girl like that, he obviously did not know women.

For a few minutes Lucille was very quiet. She had had no grounds to think Andrew her lover, but perhaps if she had some grounds, she would not be annoyed. She liked his humorous frankness and she liked his pluck. Somehow he was romantic. But that was all. He was Margaret's lover, and Lucille did not dispute Margaret's claim. Yet her mouth was tight and, absorbed by moody thought, she looked straight in front.

A shadow crossed the boards and Lucille turned her head. Although she had not heard Antoine's advance, he leaned against the open window and took the portrait. His grasp was firm; Lucille was surprised and let go.

"Certainly the girl is handsome. Our romance is done with!" he remarked.

"There was no romance," Lucille declared and her eyes sparkled.

Latour shrugged. "Oh, well, I expect you saw the old man's plan? It didn't look as if you disapproved."

"I am not ridiculous. Andrew did not see the plan."

"It is possible," Latour agreed. "The fellow is dull. He is a Scot and all he thinks about is the money he may get. Well, we are not rich."

"You are jealous and you are spiteful," said Lucille in a quiet voice.

"But certainly I am jealous. Rideau Cove is dreary, and for six months, when one is not freezing in the woods one must sit by the stove. I might have got a post at Montreal, but I stayed here because I am the old man's grandson. He needs help and I reckoned I might get the mill. If one used proper machinery, one might get rich. Now a fellow arrives from nowhere and I expect Turnbull will give him my reward. Well, I own I'm riled."

"Was it because you were riled you put off starting for the woods?"

"Not at all. The old man gets slack, the saws are running, and somebody must superintend. Then I wanted to go to Montreal. If I do not go, we will not get an important contract. My pay is only a clerk's pay, and I do not like

the Scot; but so long as I thought you might marry him, I meant to keep the business going.”

“I am not going to marry the Scot,” said Lucille quietly.

“Then I do not bother about the mills,” Latour replied. “I play up to my grandfather, and in the morning we pull out. It is possible there are good trees in the woods, but one cannot get the logs to the river. The Scot will try. He is obstinate and it will cost him much.”

He went off and Lucille mused. Antoine’s annoyance was logical, and for him to know he would not get the mill was hard. Yet somehow she thought it did not account for all, and she was vaguely disturbed. In the meantime, she put up Andrew’s diary and the portrait and went off.

In the morning Andrew gave Turnbull a long envelope.

“If I do not come back with the others, I want you to send the packet to Mackellar.”

“Of course,” said Turnbull, and looked at Andrew with some surprise. “But you don’t doubt you will come back?”

Andrew smiled. “I imagine one runs worse risks on a schooner’s jib-boom than in the woods; but perhaps there are some risks and I’m a tenderfoot. Anyhow, although I expect to ask for it again, I’ll give you the envelope.”

Turnbull took the envelope, and after breakfast the party started for the river. Two loaded canoes rocked in the slack by the bank, and Denis, the Irish sailor, and a man from the mills were on board. Denis was not a woodsman, but all the saws were running and Andrew refused to take another man from the mill gang. Besides, when one faced an awkward job he knew one could trust a sailor. Turnbull gave him his hand, Lucille wished him luck, and he got on board and pushed off.

For a time the single paddle bothered him, and the sawmill hand used the pole, but by and by he found out the feathering stroke that holds a canoe straight, and when they went up a quiet reach he began to look about. The mills and wharf had vanished, and one saw nothing but rippling water and scattered trees. The morning was hot and the smell of the small spruces floated across the river. One could not see far back for the rocks that bordered the valley, but Andrew saw that the large trees were gone. Willows, a few maples, and small spruce and pine grew along the bank. The winter lumber camps were some distance back, and nothing indicated man’s activity.

It looked as if Canada were a land of contrasts. Luxurious trains sped across trackless wilds, and from landings where big river steamers touched one plunged into tangled forest. At the mill house Lucille used mechanical inventions one did not have in Scotland, but in winter savage timber wolves haunted the valley. Andrew felt his excursion, in a sense, was typical. Now he had started, money and civilization could not help; until he got back he must use his muscles and trust his luck. His business was to follow the river to the watershed, across which the streams pierced the Labrador wilds. Only the timber on the south side could be floated to the St. Lawrence, and he thought Latour doubted if much could be got.

At noon they reached the bottom of a rapid and pulled up the canoes. Food and tents and camp supplies were lifted out, and the men, carrying awkward loads, began the portage. A track went up the bank, but the ground was broken and small trees spread their branches across the path. Andrew was satisfied to carry fifty pounds; he did not know much about packing, and to balance on big stones and jump across holes was hard. Then the afternoon was hot and in the shade flies hovered round his head. Some bit him savagely, and since he must use his hands to support his load, he could not beat off the bloodthirsty swarms. Roots entangled his feet, and young willows hampered his advance, but although he gasped and sweated he reached the top and went back for the canoe.

As a rule, a *voyageur* carries a canoe, turned bottom up, on his bent arms and head, but where the willows were thick and the holes deep, two men were forced to balance the awkward load, and although the ground was broken they must use an even step. When the canoes were at the top Andrew and the sailor had frankly had enough, but so far as one could see Latour and the sawmill hand were fresh. The fellow began to light a fire, and brewed some tea.

After the meal was over Andrew did not want to move. Unaccustomed effort had tired him, the pool above the rapid shone dazzlingly, and he thought the heat insupportable. Resinous smells floated about, as if the gum in the small trees melted, but the shade was cool. The splash of water was soothing, and although the flies found Andrew out, he wanted to rest and smoke. For all that, he wondered why Latour did not push on.

“The first day’s a hard day and we have hit a pretty good spot to camp,” Latour presently remarked. “We’ll stop, and at sundown we’ll try to catch a trout. When you have fixed things, you can lie off, Steve.”

Andrew thought the river-jack's look indicated surprise; he himself felt they ought to start, but if Latour imagined they had gone far enough, he need not grumble. He went to sleep, and when the sun got low they caught a few gray trout and cooked supper.

After the meal they sat in the smudge fire's smoke, for the mosquitoes and sandflies were savage and numerous. The green and red sunset glimmered behind the trees and the river reflected the melting colors. Andrew had not seen before skies luminously green like the calm skies that at sunset brooded over the Canadian wilds.

The strong colors faded, trunks and branches got black, and in the gloom the fire was brighter. Denis and Steve went off to their tent, but Latour and Andrew stopped and smoked. One heard trout splash and the current break against the rocks. The evening got cool, but the cold was bracing, and Andrew felt he and Latour ought to talk.

"I wasn't very keen to launch and shove on, but I don't imagine you were tired and we haven't gone very far," he said.

"Oh, well, I have not much use for hustling," Latour replied. "Until we have cut the lumber we contracted for before you arrived, we cannot load your ship. Our customers are not very numerous and we must not risk disappointing them."

"All the same, the divide is some distance off, and perhaps you ought not to be away very long. I thought you did not want to leave the mill!"

Latour smiled. "My grandfather reckoned we ought to go, and one humors an old man. Well, we have started, we have tents and supplies, and in summer one does not grumble about a picnic in the woods."

For a few moments Andrew was quiet. He did not like the other's smile, and although Turnbull was old, Andrew thought him shrewd.

"Then you don't expect to find useful timber?" he said.

"The trees by the height-of-land are good," Latour replied. "The trouble is to get the logs to the water. To cut a long road will not pay. The snow helps hauling, but one must clear the ground, roll off big stones, and so forth. Then, if we work after the snow goes, we must have a down grade and lay lines of skids."

"But I understand you have used the good timber near the mill."

Latour shrugged. "That is so. Well, you are a partner in the house and I must put you wise. My grandfather is an old-fashioned optimist. I cannot

persuade him that unless we spend a large sum the mills soon must stop. To get a large sum is another thing.”

“Then you have tried to persuade him?” said Andrew rather dryly.

“Oh well, one uses some caution. When the old man is baffled, his temper is not good. Besides, you see, I am not a partner.”

Andrew wondered whether Latour implied that he might dispute with Turnbull where the other dared not. He said nothing, and after a few minutes Antoine resumed: “Had Turnbull not been obstinate, he might have sold the mills some time ago. But he is obstinate. Recently he turned down a good offer.”

“But if the mills do not pay, why does somebody want to buy?”

“Money removes obstacles: one can cut roads and dynamite rocks that block the channels. The mergers are rich, and if a railroad goes to Labrador, the contractors must buy bridge lumber and ties. Perhaps a railroad will be built. The big-business men and politicians begin to talk——”

“But then Turnbull’s holding on would be justified!”

“Certainly,” Latour agreed. “All the same, nothing is yet doing, and Turnbull will not see the road. In fact, unless you are rich, I expect the mills will stop some time before the surveyors get to work.”

“I am not rich,” said Andrew in a moody voice.

He wondered whether Latour exaggerated, but Turnbull admitted the house was not prosperous. On the surface, Latour was friendly, but Andrew thought he sensed a puzzling antagonism. Since Andrew was a partner, the fellow could not expect to inherit the mill; moreover, he declared the mill did not pay.

“We have started and I am going to the divide,” he said. “We may find a plan for getting the logs to the water that will not cost as much as you think.”

“We will certainly go on,” Latour agreed, and laughed. “In summer I like it in the woods, and the fishing is good. Now I think we’ll go to bed.”

CHAPTER XVI

THE WOODS

Andrew was soon a good river man. The current did not run much faster than the Solway tide, and for a small-boat sailor to learn the proper use of paddle and pole and tracking-line was not hard. In the quiet, deep reaches, they paddled easily; in the savage streams they poled, and sometimes they laboriously tracked the canoes. One, with the line round his shoulders, took the bank; another, stumbling across the stones in the broken water, steered the craft. Now and then in the hot afternoons, thunderstorms rolled across the woods, but the storms were short and by and by all was calm again.

For the most part, Andrew was happy in the wilds. He liked to use his muscles and he rather liked the strain and risk. To know he went somewhere and meant to do something braced him. On the Solway, he had felt his exploits were futile and perhaps ridiculous. To rebuild the lumber business his grandfather had started was another thing.

All the same, he admitted some drawbacks. The flies were a torment, and when the evenings were hot and one sat in the smudge fire's smoke, the mosquitoes were frankly daunting. The beat of tiny wings throbbed about the camp, and Andrew imagined unless one had a fire one could not face the savage swarms. Then Latour jarred. He was pessimistic about the lumber trade, and talked as if their undertaking were a joke. In fact, he candidly owned he had agreed to go because he must carry out Turnbull's orders.

Andrew was not subtle, but he was not a fool, and he felt Latour kept something back. Yet when he weighed the fellow's arguments, so far as he could see, most of them were sound. He wondered whether Latour tried to daunt him and did not want him at the Rideau mill. Anyhow, he was not going to be daunted; he must be satisfied the trees at the height-of-land could not be moved to the water.

In the meantime, they pushed ahead and he was content to labor in the scorching sun. The rather dreary landscape was typical of the Laurentian wilds. The rocks were smooth and pierced the broken ground like the backs of giant whales. In the hollows were wet muskegs, covered by small, half-rotten spruce. No trees Andrew saw were large, and the dusky green of the tangled and stunted conifers got monotonous.

For all that, Andrew got a sense of primitive calm and primitive ruggedness. He liked to feel he went where others had seldom gone. Then he liked the sparkling creeks and the lonely lakes hidden in the rocks; and the river was rather a companion than an antagonist. In fact, if he could find a line for a lumber road, the stream might be a useful friend.

At night, the current's splash harmonized with the wind in the trees. At daybreak, mists like silver lace trailed about the dark spruce on the bank; and in the sun dazzling reflections and trembling shade checkered the quiet pools. Quiet pools, however, were not numerous. For the most part, one must fight the stream and use line and pole.

When labor was monotonous Andrew indulged his imagination and the Laurentian wilderness got indistinct. He pictured Criffel's cloudy top and the yellow Solway sands; the cornfields in the dale and Minnie by the water splash. The picture had some charm, and Minnie was a good sort. She had run some risk to put the police off his track; but Andrew did not want to dwell on things like that.

He pictured Margaret on the flagged walk in the evening, and the background of smooth grass, dim flower borders and dark woods. Her carriage was proud and her look was scornful, but her beauty moved him and he liked her pride. She declared she had done with him, but Andrew doubted. Although Margaret was firm, she was generous, and his part was to persuade her he was not the wastrel she thought. Since he had not much talent for argument, he must use his exploits, and, to begin with, to find a line for the logging road would help. Although he did not know much about logging, he meant to find a line.

At length, the party camped on a hill by the height-of-land, and when the others pitched the tents Andrew looked about. The bleak watershed curved round a basin, and a lake shone in the woods. By the waterside the woods were thin; one saw the small red trunks dot the stony ground, but farther back trunks and branches melted in a belt of somber color, and although Andrew was not a lumberman he knew the trees were good. The wide basin was watered by noisy creeks and faced south; the gales from frozen Labrador hardly touched its sheltered depths. Although Antoine declared the timber was but a pocket, Andrew thought the pocket rich.

The problem was to get the trees to the mill. To drive logs for a long distance is expensive, and where the channel is obstructed the trunks jam, and sometimes pile up, locked and entangled, in a mass one cannot break. At the lake foot the river had cut a deep ravine and for some miles plunged

across ledges and broke against the rocks. Andrew saw the spray from hidden rapids blow across the trees, and the turmoil throbbing in the hills was like the roar of a heavy train.

The river flowing from the lake, however, was not accountable for all the noise. Some distance off, another stream pierced the slopes, and where the woods were thin, leaping water sparkled. If one channel were blocked, Andrew resolved to study the other. The trouble was, he knew nothing about log-driving, and Latour knew much; moreover he thought Steve, the river-jack, in a sense, was Latour's man.

After supper they smoked by the smudge fire, and for a time did not talk. Latour and Andrew occupied a small ridge-pole tent, and in the evenings they were rather studiously polite. When they pushed the canoes up-stream, Denis was Andrew's mate, and the river-jack was Latour's. Although none acknowledged the break, the party was divided and antagonistic.

"I suppose we'll get to work in the morning?" Andrew remarked.

Latour shrugged. "We have food to stop for a week. The old man pays and we must indulge him."

"You're not enthusiastic. To start persuaded you won't get there is a handicap."

"I know the woods. You do not."

"That is so," Andrew agreed. "All the same, Turnbull knows the woods, and since he sent us off, I expect he thought the experiment worth while."

"He gets old," said Latour with a meaning smile.

Andrew knitted his brows. He did not want to dispute but politeness was hard. It looked as if Antoine would sooner they were beaten.

"I am not a lumberman, but if I hit a useful line to the water, I expect I'd know. For example, you don't want to haul uphill, and the ground must not be very broken, because we cannot spend much for chopping and leveling the track. In fact, if possible, the logs ought to run down on skids."

"The useful road is the cheap road," Latour agreed. "Where it pays to haul lumber, one uses teams, but I doubt if our bringing up horses would pay. Then a line to the water is not all. When you get there, the channel must carry the logs. If the stuff piles up at an awkward spot, you may lose the winter's cut. And so forth. The obstacles you don't know are pretty numerous. I think you ought to loaf about and fish."

Andrew thought the fellow sneered and his control went. Nature's obstacles did not daunt him and on board ship when things were awkward he was cool; but when he faced human dishonesty he got annoyed. He hated crooked argument; he would sooner fight.

"Let's be frank," he said. "Do you want to find a road for the logs?"

"I certainly don't want to risk a good sum on an extravagant speculation, but I have stated something like this before."

"The money is not yours and I imagine you have not stated all."

Latour shrugged, as if Andrew's obstinacy bored him. "Oh, well! Some frankness may help. I am my grandfather's heir and for a time I have run the mills. I know my job, and since the company's poor we must use caution and economy. You are keen and you carry the old man away. To stay at Rideau Cove has cost me something, and I'm not willing for you to wreck the business I try to save. If I can put all straight, the old man will give me some reward. Now perhaps you are satisfied?"

"I want nothing that is not mine," Andrew rejoined. "I'm willing for Turnbull to be just."

Latour was quiet for a minute or two. He was extravagant and ambitious, but it did not altogether account for his hating Andrew. At the beginning he had not hated him, and to some extent he approved Turnbull's plans for Lucille. If Andrew were going to meddle, Antoine would sooner he was Lucille's husband.

Antoine did not know if Lucille approved, but he rather thought she did. Andrew was a handsome fellow and had qualities that attracted women. Latour's father was a French-Canadian, and although the young man's control was good his blood was hot. In a sense, the dull Scot had refused Lucille; he had humiliated Antoine's sister.

"For a week we must stop by the lake and there is not much use in our quarreling," he said. "What are your plans?"

"I'll take Denis and a canoe and push up the river's east fork. So far as I know, you mean to prospect about the lake. If I find a good line to the water, I'll bring you to the spot."

"Very well," said Latour with an ironical smile. "We have pretty good ground to think the logs cannot be hauled out at the basin's east end; but you can go and see. I'll give you half the food, and if you're not back in eight days, I'll start for the mill."

Andrew agreed and went off to the tent.

In the morning he and Denis launched their canoe and paddled downstream. Andrew was not a woodsman and he admitted his plunging into the wilds was rash, but adventure moved him and adventure others planned was tame. Now control was his, he was willing to run some risk and he reckoned on the Irishman's support. Nothing daunted Denis; he was a cheerful optimist.

"It's queer, but ye like the road yees haven't gone," the sailor remarked with a careless laugh. "Maybe ours leads to trouble, but, faith, we'll know when it arrives."

Andrew nodded. His habit was not to look far ahead, and in the meantime he approved the road they took. The morning was fresh and the river sparkled in the sun. The swift current made musical noises; gurgling under the spruce roots where the bank was soft and splashing across the stones in the shallows. In the shade of the dark branches small trout leaped, and the throb of a rapid rolled across the valley. Then to know he had, for a week, done with Latour was some relief. In the woods, if one does not trust one's companion, one exaggerates his drawbacks; but Andrew doubted if he much exaggerated Latour's. Anyhow, he was content to lounge at the canoe's stern and use the steering paddle.

To pole up the east fork, however, was another thing. The current revolved angrily about hidden rocks and tossed in white turmoil behind massive stones. For all that, they made progress and at sunset had gone some distance up-stream. To find a proper spot for the camp, to pitch the tent, cut branches for beds, and light a fire was harder than Andrew had thought. Then Denis did not cook like Latour's man. The bannock was doughy, the bacon soft, and the tea was black. Andrew, however, was not fastidious, and soon after they cleaned the tin plates he was asleep.

CHAPTER XVII

THE CLOUDBURST

Six days after he started from Latour's camp, Andrew one evening smoked his pipe in front of his small tent. The evening was hot and the sky was dark. Andrew had pulled off his jacket and his shirt was thin, but he sat by the fire and pulled hard at his pipe because mosquitoes do not like smoke. For all that, his neck and arms were speckled by their bites.

In the north, but some distance back, the watershed sloped steeply to the basin, and its long, bleak top cut the threatening sky. The slopes got indistinct, but where the woods were thin, dark, broken lines indicated gullies torn by melted snow. The channels fed the river and Andrew thought them numerous. The river ran in a ravine a hundred feet below the camp, but he and Denis had carried up the tent because the bank was haunted by sandflies.

Light mist rolled about the basin, and in some places the tops of tall spruce and pines pierced the vapor. Andrew thought the trees were good, and he was tranquilly satisfied. Although a savage thunderstorm had raged about the watershed for the greater part of the afternoon, he believed he had found a line from the woods to the river. The channel was awkward, but he thought a good lumber gang could run down the logs. Anyhow, Latour would know, and he had marked the line for the road. At daybreak he must push across the basin for the other camp.

All that now bothered him was supplies. Latour had stated that he gave him half the food, and if he had done so, Denis was obviously extravagant, because it did not look as if the quantity they had not used would carry them to the mill. Most of it was on board the canoe, and Andrew wondered whether they ought not to bring up the stuff, but the canoe was some yards from the water and he was tired.

When he thought about rejoining Latour he frowned. Since he had used the food he took, Antoine, no doubt, would feel he was forced to offer part of his. Andrew resolved he would not borrow from the other's stock; he would sooner go without, and although it implied his companion's going without, he thought Denis would agree. The sailor was his man.

“'Tis a great country for thunder,” Denis remarked. “Listen to that——”

A long peal rolled across the tableland. The storm that raged in the afternoon was moving back but had not stopped, and when Andrew turned his head a blue flash touched the slopes behind the trees. For a moment he saw rocks and watercourses as if he searched the ground with a telescope. On the summit, a few broken pines, black as ink, cut the lead-colored clouds. Then, by contrast, all was dark, and a fresh peal echoed in the woods.

“The rain was not heavy and if it has drowned some flies, I won’t bother about getting wet.”

“The rain was yonder, where the waters spring,” said Denis, and indicated the black top of the divide. “By daybreak ye’ll hear the freshets rolling down, the gullies——”

He stopped as if he listened, and Andrew thought the river struck a sharper note. He frowned and knocking out his pipe got on his feet.

“Perhaps we ought to pull the canoe farther up the bank. If you’ll chop some wood for morning, I’ll go.”

He went, rather awkwardly, down the hill. The ground was steep and overgrown by small brush, but when he got near the bottom he began to run. Although they had left the canoe some yards from the water, the stream had crept up the bank and the current was angry and thick. All the same, in two or three minutes he could drag the canoe to a safe spot——

He turned his head and his heart beat. The trees were quiet, but a rumbling noise like thunder drowned the river’s throb. The noise got loud and Andrew plunged down the ravine. His supplies were on board the canoe and the water touched her stern. The river rose fast, but it would soon rise faster and he must get to work before the flood arrived. If he could not pull up the canoe, he could carry out the food.

When he was three or four yards off, a white wave rolled down the channel. Broken trunks and branches tossed on the muddy crest. The brush by the water vanished and stones plunged from the undermined bank. Andrew thought a thunder cloud had burst and filled the ravines on the watershed. His business, however, was not to account for the flood; he must reach the canoe before the wave.

Stopping at the bow, he seized a cotton flour-bag. Straps were fastened to the bag for use when one carried a load across a portage. All the food was not in the bag, but Andrew pushed his arms through the straps. Anyhow, he had saved part of their supplies, and perhaps he could get the other bag in

the stern. Speed was important, but a few steps would carry him up the steep bank, and he was not going to borrow from Latour.

When he reached the stern the water was round his boots, and paddles and pole and tracking-line were on top of the bag. Gasping and sweating, he pulled the things about, but the pole jammed under a beam. Then water splashed against his back and the canoe floated.

Andrew saw he could not reach higher ground and he seized the canoe. The wave rolled over him and when he got his head above water he was a yard or two behind the crest. The canoe was bottom up, but he had mechanically held on and she carried him along. Broken trunks tossed about, and he tried to climb on to the canoe. She rolled over and he dropped back into the flood, but now she was right side up, he rested his arm on the gunwale and got some support.

So far, he was not hurt, and the ravine got wider a short distance ahead. When the flood reached the wide spot, perhaps the wave would sink and he might swim to the bank; there was no use in his trying to climb on board the swamped canoe. The bag was an awkward embarrassment, but he must, if possible, stick to his load, and he doubted if he could pull his arms through the straps.

By and by a branch struck his back and he felt himself dragged from the canoe. It looked as if a broken crook were entangled in the straps, but he could not get his hand back far enough to reach the spot. After a few moments he was forced to let the canoe go, and the branch, revolving, pulled him under water. When he came up a big trunk struck the branch and forged ahead through the breaking twigs. Andrew struggled to free himself, but could not; he got a stunning knock and all was dark.

When he opened his eyes he saw foaming water and a few pale stars. He thought he drifted with the flood, and then he dully remarked that although his legs were in the river, his body was on a ledge of rock. The long branch lay across the ledge, and the flood was going down. Andrew was horribly cold; his arm and his head were sore, but he thought he was not much hurt, and it looked as if the straps had supported him after he got the knock. The bag, at all events, was under his back.

He began to look about. The canoe was gone, and across the stream he saw dark rocks and trees. The flood had washed him up on the other side from the camp and he did not know how far he had been carried along. In the meantime he was very cold and must get up. To do so did not bother him much, but his head hurt and he thought the bag remarkably heavy. All the

same, the night was not dark and he must push along the bank and let Denis know he was not drowned. In the morning, when the water fell, he might get across.

He started, and by and by began to get warm, but soon afterwards something pricked his neck. Then he felt a fresh prick on his forehead, and rubbing the spot, found his hand was stained by blood. The trunk had cut his head, but the cut was not important; the important thing was, the mosquitoes had found him out. Since his matches were wet, he could not light a fire; his coat was at the camp, and his shirt was thin. Well, he must get opposite the camp as soon as possible and risk a swim.

Although he used some effort, he did not make much progress. Tangled brush covered the bank and in places the flood had carried away the soil. Sometimes Andrew stopped at the edge of a dark gap, and sometimes he stumbled across awkward stones. The slope to the water was steep, he was sore, as if he had been beaten, and he admitted he was rather faint.

For all that, he dared not stop. Tiny wings throbbed in the dark and he hated the ominous hum. All his skin that was not covered itched, and when he brushed away the mosquitoes he felt his hands were wet, but the blood on his fingers was not from the cut. By and by the river curved and Andrew resolved to cross the loop. He began to get exhausted, and to go farther than he need was unthinkable. Turning from the water, he plunged into a willow belt and on the other side reached boggy soil. Small pines and spruce dotted the muskeg, but when he advanced the trees got thicker and soon he was surrounded by the shadowy trunks. He did not know where he went; all he knew was, he must keep going.

The muskeg was very dark and the insatiable insects swarmed in the gloom. Andrew's face began to swell and the flesh beneath his eyes was hot and hard. Although he used his hands savagely, the mosquitoes crawled into his ears and hair. Well, he must try to push across the loop and when he reached the bank he might find refuge in the water. He was in torment, and he must push on.

At length, the ground got firmer and he thought the timber thin. One could see between the trunks, and he began to tread on stones. He knew he could not go much farther; his heart beat and his legs shook. Then he struck his foot against a stone and plunged into the withered needles.

The fall shook him; he doubted if he could get up, and he awkwardly tied his handkerchief round his head. Now his face was covered, he might perhaps keep the mosquitoes from his hands and neck, and for a time he beat

and rubbed his skin. Then his efforts got slack and he felt very cold. He was battered and exhausted and his clothes were not dry.

Andrew had thought it impossible to sleep in the mosquitoes' haunts, and perhaps he did not sleep. Perhaps he was unconscious and when his skin got cold the mosquitoes for the most part left him alone. At all events, he did not feel the tormenting bites, and when he awkwardly got up day had broken and he heard the river not far ahead. A cold wind searched the hollow and the ominous hum had stopped. Andrew shivered, picked up his load, and steered for the bank.

A bright beam touched the water, and he sat down in the stones and put a block of sulphur matches in the sun. He could not face another mosquito-haunted night, but so long as he had matches he could light a fire and sleep in the smoke. Then, although he was not hungry, he was faint and perhaps he ought to eat, but he could not yet brace himself for the effort to cook food.

By and by he pulled his shirt back from his arms and chest and saw his skin was dotted by hard red spots. The spots itched horribly, but the mosquitoes were gone and the sun got warm. To lie in the gravel was soothing, and after a time rocks and river melted.

CHAPTER XVIII

LATOUR TAKES THE BACK TRAIL

When the wave broke over Andrew, Denis was half-way to the bottom of the hill. He had agreed to chop wood, but the roar of the advancing flood was ominous, and when a struggle was indicated he had not much use for a domestic job. Although Denis really knew he could not help, he did not stop until the water was at his waist. Andrew had vanished and the wave was gone, but a noisy flood swept the ravine and the woods got dark.

Denis swore, and when the advancing water drove him back, moodily climbed the hill. At the top he threw green wood on the fire and lighted his pipe. He had got something of a shock, but there was no use in letting the mosquitoes eat him and he must think. Although Denis was a hot-blooded Celt, he rather indulged his emotions that allowed them to carry him away. At all events, when he faced a crisis he was cool and his reasoning was logical.

To begin with, he saw he must not plunge recklessly into the woods. If Andrew were not drowned, the flood would carry him some distance before he could land. The ground was broken and one must push through the trees and scramble across driftwood and rocks; in the dark, a mile an hour would be pretty good speed. Then Andrew might not try to land. He might stick to the canoe and be carried beyond the spot where the river forked. Perhaps the proper plan was to steer for Latour's camp and get help to search the woods; but Denis doubted. In fact, he doubted Latour.

Denis had a talent for intrigue and he had sensed, and thought he could account for, Latour's hostility. Turnbull was very old, and until Andrew arrived, Latour had reckoned to get the mill; but this was not all. Andrew was a handsome fellow and had a way with women, and Miss Latour was a pretty girl. Suppose Turnbull had planned for Andrew to get the girl and the mill?

Denis thought it went something like that. Miss Latour was a French-Canadian, and the French-Canadians allowed their relations to arrange their marriages. All on board the *Anne Musgrave*, however, knew Andrew wrote long letters, and the letters were obviously for a girl in Scotland. Then, suppose Andrew were forced to indicate that he did not want Lucille? Would not Latour feel that the fellow had robbed, and then put shame on, him?

Jealousy and humiliation were dangerous passions, and if Andrew were lost in the wilds, Denis imagined Latour would be philosophical. He did not think he exaggerated; he had studied the fellow, and, to some extent, the other's temperament was his temperament. Andrew, however, was a cold Saxon and did not know the passions he had roused. Anyhow, suppose, for example, Denis had refused the fellow's sister and taken his inheritance? Would he trust Latour? Faith, he would not! Denis, by instinct, was a keen partisan. He liked Andrew and felt his business was to see him out. All the same, he must wait for daybreak.

In the morning, Steve and Latour broke camp. Latour had grounds for wanting to get back to the mill and he imagined he would find Andrew between the river's forks. When he reached the camp, the tent flapped in the wind, the blankets and food were gone, and the ashes between the fire-logs were cold. A cloudburst had obviously flooded the ravine, and disturbed stones and trampled brush indicated that somebody had gone down the hill. Latour and Steve knew the woods, and when they had studied the ground they pictured fairly accurately the sudden flood and Andrew's effort to save the canoe. The canoe, however, was gone, and Latour, sending Steve to search the waterside, pushed across the basin.

On a rocky slope he found a post supported by stones. Some distance back, he saw another, and then a young spruce from which a slab of bark was cut. It looked as if Andrew had found a line for a lumber road, and Latour thought the line would go. For all that, he pulled down the posts and scattered the stones. The white blaze on the spruce was not very conspicuous and would soon get indistinct.

When he got back to camp in the evening, Steve cooked supper and stated that he had found the broken canoe, but that was all. For the most part, the river bank was stony and stones do not carry tracks. Anyhow, he imagined the tenderfoots were drowned.

Latour said nothing. He got his supper and pondered. At the beginning, Andrew's arrival was awkward; but his remaining was dangerous. Turnbull was not much at the office, he got slack and one could cheat the old man; to cheat the obstinate, inquisitive Scot was another thing. Moreover, it looked as if he had found a useful line for a road, and Latour did not want Turnbull to know. He had not reckoned on Andrew's getting drowned, but if he were drowned, Latour would be resigned.

For all that, in order to satisfy Turnbull, the river must be searched. Steve was Latour's man, but Antoine did not trust people where he was not

forced. The search, however, must not be long. Food was getting short and Latour did not mean to run much risk for his antagonist. Besides, he had pretty good grounds to think Andrew dead.

He started at sunrise and for two days searched the fork and the neighboring ravines. He did not cross the river, because the flood had not yet subsided and he doubted if one could pole a log to the other bank. To swim across was a risk he was not willing to run. The second afternoon was very hot and Antoine sat down in the shade. Steve had gone back some distance up a creek, and Latour lighted a cigarette and languidly looked about.

Although he had crossed two or three boggy spots, the soft ground carried no marks, and in the belts of swale the willows were not disturbed. Andrew was not on that side of the fork, and had he landed on the other, Latour imagined he would have tried to get across. In fact, Latour was persuaded Andrew had not landed; his body, broken by the rapids, was, no doubt, at the bottom of a pool. Antoine would sooner have found the body, but, if he waited, his supplies would not carry him to the mill.

In front of the spot he occupied was a deep, revolving pool. The current, broken by angry eddies, went round the basin in the rocks and at the tail swelled in a glassy wave and leaped down a white rapid. On the other side, a drooping branch touched the water. The branch swung and beads of foam trailed from its end.

The branch interested Latour. Its measured jerk and splash indicated the current's speed, and he wondered whether a bold swimmer could cross the pool. On the whole, he thought not; and then he noted an unevenness in the bank of stones behind the branch. It looked as if something had disturbed the gravel, and Latour imagined the willows at the top were bent, but the bushes were in the shadow and the flood had swept the bank. Besides, Latour had not marked a spot at which one could get across.

He turned his head. But for the river's turmoil, all was quiet. Steve was not yet coming, and Latour's heart beat. If Andrew and the sailor were not drowned, they had, no doubt, lost their food and they did not know the woods. Perhaps Latour's duty was to risk the crossing and examine the bent willows; but he doubted if one could cross and Andrew was drowned. All the same, he would sooner Steve did not see the stones behind the trailing branch. For a few moments he hesitated, and then he got up and started along the bank. An hour afterwards, Steve rejoined him and reported that he had seen no footmarks.

“I reckon the tenderfoots have gone for keeps,” he said. “If they beat the flood, they’d certainly have shoved across the bench for our camp. I ran a line to cut their track and hit one or two muskegs, but nobody had gone through the sloughs and I didn’t see a broken branch.”

“It looks as if they were gone,” Latour agreed. “I think we’ll steer for the other fork and hit the back trail.”

Steve nodded and they climbed the hill. The afternoon was hot, but Latour went fast, and the heat did not altogether account for the sweat that wet his skin.

In the meantime, Denis searched the rocks for some distance below the camp and found the broken canoe. Since the gravel and brush were not disturbed, he boldly plunged into the angry river. Perhaps his luck was good, but he got across and some time afterwards saw Andrew in the stones under a shady spruce. Andrew’s face was swollen and spotted by mosquito bites, his head was cut, and his clothes were torn, but when Denis advanced his eyes sparkled.

“You’re a sport, but I reckoned you would hit my track,” he said. “The Old Country doesn’t let one down.”

“Yours or mine?” Denis inquired with a grin.

“Oh, well,” said Andrew, smiling, “when you’re at sea and in the wilds, I rather think they’re one.”

Denis hung his wet blanket in the wind, and opened a nearly empty flour bag. Although he was sometimes romantic, he was shrewdly practical.

“That’s my whack, and our road’s rocky and long.”

“There’s my lot,” said Andrew and indicated his bag. “We can carry on for a time, and we ought to join up with Latour soon.”

“Then, yees reckon to join Latour?”

“Perhaps it’s the proper plan,” Andrew replied in a thoughtful voice. “You see, if we were forced, we could borrow from his supplies, although I’d sooner not. In fact, if we had a larger stock, I’d steer for the mill.”

“There’s the proper plan for ye,” said Denis dryly.

Andrew looked at him rather hard. “My risk is your risk, Denis, and I admit I don’t altogether see our line. Well, you can talk——”

“I’m a sailor and a stranger in the woods. Mr. Latour’s a woodsman, but I found ye and he did not.”

“That is so. You’re stanch; I don’t know about Latour, but you were near the spot. Anyhow, go ahead——”

“I know where to stop,” Denis remarked. “If I were the old man’s favorite, I wouldn’t expect the other fella’ to be bothering about me. That’s all!”

Andrew lighted his pipe. Denis’s plan chimed with his inclination. He did not much trust Latour, and now he had a reliable companion, adventure called. To reach the mill on foot was something of an exploit. Yet he must not be rash.

“If we’re frugal, our supplies may carry us half-way,” he remarked.

“The river’s thick wid trout.”

“We haven’t a fishing-rod,” said Andrew, and knitted his brows. Then he put up his pipe and smiled. “I don’t know if you poach in Ireland, but when I was a boy I *guddled* trout. Let’s try.”

He pulled off his boots and they crossed the shallows to a pool behind a rock. In the pool two trout, their heads up-stream and their tails gently fanning, hovered above the gravel. When the sailor’s shadow touched the surface a cloud of sand stained the water and the trout vanished, but Andrew marked where they went. Pulling off his torn shirt, he lay down on a shelf and quietly lowered his head and arms into the water. For a few moments he felt along a crack and then he jerked up his head and threw a shining trout on the stones.

“Half a pound!” he said. “I expect you have solved the puzzle. But I marked two fish. Let’s try for the other.”

He got the other, and when they reached the bank Denis lighted a fire. For cooking utensils he had a small pannikin and a Chicago meat can, but a sailor is not fastidious and makes shift with rude tools. Denis broiled the trout on a pointed stick, baked a hard bannock, and brewed some rather greasy tea, and for Andrew the frugal meal was something of a feast. The terror of the wilds was gone. They had two blocks of dry matches, and when one can light a fire one can fight the mosquitoes. Moreover, he had a comrade he could trust.

When the sky was green and the trees got black they sat in the scented smoke, and Andrew, pulling out his tobacco, weighed the flat plug.

“One mustn’t be extravagant. I think a pipe a day is all we can risk,” he said.

Denis smiled and gave him a thick, cigar-shaped plug, indented on the surface by spun-yarn, and smelling of tar and rum. The tobacco was manufactured in a ship’s forecastle, but Andrew knew it was good.

“Two pipes, annyway,” said Denis, and after a moment or two resumed: “Then, yees are for the mill?”

Andrew nodded. “I think we’ll try it.”

“We’ll get there,” said Denis, and laughed. “I’m pitching Mr. Latour’s satisfaction when he knows ye are not drowned.”

“I wonder—” said Andrew, and his look got stern.

CHAPTER XIX

TURNBULL GOES TO HELP

Lucille carried her sewing one evening to a window at the mill house. The evening was hot and she was languid, and when the light began to go she put down the colored material and looked about.

On the point commanding the cove, a few ragged pines cut the green sky; behind the point small trees rolled back across the rocks and muskegs to the distant watershed. Lucille thought the landscape dreary, and sometimes she was lonely at the mill. Two hundred yards from shore, the *Anne Musgrave* rode across the sunset's track. Her sails were furled and the reflections of her masts trembled on the shining water. Somebody on board played an accordion. The mills had begun to cut her cargo, and when she was loaded she would sail.

Lucille pictured her dropping down-stream; she saw the dark hull sink below the horizon and the topsails slowly melt. The picture jarred. Andrew was not her lover, but the cove would be dreary when he was gone. Andrew, however, was not back from the watershed, although the party ought to have arrived some time since, and Lucille was vaguely disturbed. She admitted she perhaps had not much grounds; storms and awkward rapids might account for the delay, but Antoine knew the woods and she thought Andrew was not the man to stop for obstacles.

Then Turnbull was rather stern and preoccupied. Since Antoine went he was much at the office, and Lucille had found him absorbed by the ledgers and dusty files. Antoine was bookkeeper, and until Andrew arrived, Turnbull had not bothered much about the accounts. Lucille had thought he felt his advancing age, and was resigned to let things go, but Andrew's arrival braced him up. In fact, it looked as if he were moved by fresh hope to renewed activity. Now, however, Turnbull brooded, and Lucille speculated

Antoine was her brother, and, as a rule, he was kind, but she knew he was not scrupulous. Then her father was frankly a wastrel, and perhaps one inherited much. Lucille herself had fought against strange impulses, but she did not see Antoine doing so. Moreover, he was not Andrew's friend, and he had not wanted to start for the height-of-land. In fact, he had not gone until

he was forced; it looked as if he did not want to leave the mill for long. Lucille was puzzled and she thought Turnbull's sternness ominous.

By and by somebody came along the passage. Lucille knew the step and she jumped up, but when Latour came in her heart beat. Antoine's face was pinched, and he carried himself slackly, as if he were tired; his clothes were torn and his long boots were broken. His glance was moody and somehow apologetic.

"Where is the old man?" he inquired.

"Grandfather's at the office," Lucille replied. "When you crossed the yard, did you not stop?"

"I dared not stop. When you're used up and hungry, your nerve's not good, and before I met the old man I thought I'd get supper. Anyhow, I felt I wanted a drink."

For a few moments Lucille said nothing. She waited until Latour went to a cupboard and drained a glass. Then she asked: "Where's Andrew?"

Latour sat down and looked straight in front. "Perhaps you'll get a shock. I reckon Andrew's dead!"

Lucille did get a shock; but she knew when Antoine came in she expected something like that. She braced up and gave him a keen glance.

"You reckon——? Don't you *know*?"

"In a way, I do know," Latour replied in a dull voice, and Lucille remarked that he did not turn his head. She wondered whether he dared not face her; but he resumed: "A cloudburst flooded the ravine and we found the broken canoe—— A big washout! Banks cut and trees smashed; the flood came down like a waterfall. I expect Andrew and the sailor had not a chance. Anyhow, we couldn't find them and our supplies were nearly gone——"

Lucille's heart beat and her breath was hard to get. If Andrew had somehow escaped the flood, he was in the woods. He had no canoe and his food would soon be exhausted. To doubt her brother was horrible, but Lucille did doubt.

"Then, you must load up fresh supplies and go back," she said. "Grandfather could not stand the journey; I will go with you."

Latour forced a smile. "Now you're ridiculous! You couldn't help, and anyhow, Andrew's dead——"

He stopped, for Turnbull came in. His step was firm and he frowned.

“The boys told me you and Steve had got back. Where are the others?”

“Andrew and the sailor were carried away by a washout,” Latour replied. “Two or three days afterwards we found the canoe.”

Turnbull gave him a strange, fixed look. “Well, I want some particulars. Suppose you put me wise.”

“I’ll try,” said Antoine, and narrated, for the most part accurately, his search for Andrew, although he did not talk about the bent willows across the river.

“Our separating was Andrew’s plan, and when the cloud burst we were camped by the other fork, some distance off,” he resumed.

“You reckon yourself a bushman, but you own you don’t know if your partner is alive! If he is alive, you left him to fight hunger and flies; I expect his matches were spoiled. Did you think about his camping among the mosquitoes, without a fire?”

“Andrew had food; he had half of ours. There was the trouble, because if we’d carried a larger stock, we might have made a thorough search. For nearly two weeks we haven’t eaten a square meal.”

Turnbull signed Lucille. “Give him supper. I doubt if he starves, but his nerve is gone.”

Lucille had ordered food, and to see the servant carry in the plates was some relief. Turnbull’s scornful hardness daunted her and she knew Antoine was afraid. Latour ate mechanically. He saw Turnbull studied him, and anxiety blunted his appetite, but he dared not admit it was gone. At length, he pushed away his plate.

“I think you know all, sir; but if there is something else——”

“I know all I want to know,” Turnbull rejoined. “When I was young, I was a woodsman, and your imagination has obviously borne some strain. You make a poor job. Steve’s your man, and if you had framed up a proper tale, he’d have supported you.”

“There was no use in framing up a tale. Andrew’s drowned,” said Latour, in a sullen voice.

“Then, we are going back to find his body. The moon is good, and we start in two or three hours. I’ll fix things. You can get to bed.”

Latour frankly shrank from the grim excursion. He thought they would find Andrew's body, but perhaps not in the river. Yet he must brace up and try to find out how much Turnbull knew about another thing.

"I'm used up. Suppose I refuse?"

"Then you'd be a fool! But you will not refuse," Turnbull replied, meaningly.

"You mustn't risk the hard journey, grandfather," said Lucille. "I'll go with Antoine, but we'll start in the morning. He's exhausted——"

Turnbull gave her a smile. "Your pluck's pretty good, but I expect your brother would cheat you, and he will not cheat me. If I cannot use the paddle, I can sit at the bottom of a canoe. Anyhow, Antoine and I are going ——" He turned to Latour. "I imagine you didn't find a useful line for a logging road."

"I did not, sir."

"Oh, well," said Turnbull. "If Andrew's gone, the road's not important; the mills must stop. When all's ready I'll call you. Get to bed!"

Latour went, and Turnbull, sitting down, rested his arms on the table. Although he had stood for some time, his body was upright, and his pose was firm. Lucille, however, was anxious for him. The old man used a stick to cross the floor, and effort hurt his leg. Not long before, he had for a month kept his couch by the window.

"You must not be rash," she said. "In the woods you may be forced to sleep in wet clothes, and you must climb across the rocks at the portages."

"All I risk is another year or two of pain," Turnbull replied. "If Andrew's dead, I cannot carry on the mills, and Antoine shall not. Besides, I think he has other plans. Then, after all, Andrew may not be dead, and if he escaped the flood, he's starving. The boy is not a stranger; I feel he's the Andrew Grier I knew when I was young."

"Ah," said Lucille, "you are very stanch; but I'm puzzled—— Why are you resolved Antoine shall not carry on the mills?"

"The mills are not his, or mine," Turnbull answered. "I had hoped he might be Andrew's partner, but that was not enough——" He got up, and gently touched Lucille's arm. "You have pluck, my dear. I hate to hurt you, but I think you really know Antoine."

He went off, and Lucille remarked that his step was firm, almost like a young man's step. Her grandfather had heard the call for help, and was ready to go. To know he was wanted, in a sense, had renewed his youth. Lucille thought there was the clue, for it was rather his long-vanished partner than the modern Andrew Grier who called. But she must get busy, and put up the party's supplies.

Three hours afterwards, Antoine, dull with sleep and fatigue, came downstairs and joined Turnbull in the big room. He blinked, for the lamp hurt his eyes, and his face was haggard. Ambition and extravagance had carried him along and he had plunged into entanglements he could not break. Now he was frankly daunted; he shrank from finding Andrew's body, but he dared not face him alive.

"I'm all in, sir, and I'll keep you back," he said. "Steve will take you to the forks. In fact, I mean to stay here."

Turnbull gave him a scornful glance.

"I think not! Anyhow, unless you are on board the canoe in five minutes, the sail-boat starts for St. François with a letter for Quebec. The letter's written. It might interest you——"

He pulled out an envelope and when Antoine opened the sheet his legs shook and he leaned against the table. The address was an accountant's office, and Turnbull asked for a good auditor.

"The trouble is, Andrew is my partner, and you are the mill clerk," he resumed.

Antoine saw the implication. A partner is entitled to use the house's money, but a clerk is not. Antoine glanced at Turnbull and knew he could not be moved.

"Suppose I agree to go, sir?"

Turnbull smiled, a grim smile. "Nothing's doing! When I have heard Andrew's story, I'll know the line to take."

"Andrew's dead," said Latour sullenly.

"If that is so, your luck is bad, because you'll go to jail—for another job. Your plan's to help me find him before he dies, but, if we do find him, I don't promise to let you off. Well, are you going?"

Latour said nothing, but he picked up the load Turnbull indicated and crossed the yard to the river bank.

A few minutes afterwards, Lucille went to see the party start, and when the others got on board Turnbull gave her two envelopes. One was long and thick, the other was small.

“You will see they go by the first mail. I promised if Andrew did not come back I’d send the packet to his trustee.”

Lucille thought the long envelope covered the letters that fell about the floor when she knocked down the writing-case. Somebody in Scotland would be hurt, and she was sorry for the girl she did not know.

“But you may find Andrew, and if we mail the letter, it will alarm his friends,” she said in a quiet voice.

“It’s possible,” Turnbull agreed. “All the same, Andrew’s stipulation was I must send the packet. The small envelope carries a letter of mine. I’ve stated I doubt if Andrew is dead and we start to make a proper search.”

He gave Lucille his hand and got on board. Paddles splashed and shone in the moon. The men swung with the measured stroke, water sparkled at the bows, and the canoes forged ahead. Behind them, revolving eddies broke the surface and little waves touched the bank. The canoes went up the moon’s track and got indistinct, but the rhythmic beat of paddles floated back like the noise of drums. Then somebody began to sing the *Rolling Ball*, and the dark hulls melted in the gloom of the trees. Turnbull was gone up-river, and Lucille sincerely wished him luck.

CHAPTER XX

LATOUR GETS AFRAID

Turnbull reached the height-of-land, and when he landed at Latour's old camp on the west fork he was stronger than when he left the mill. Perhaps resolution braced his infirm body, but the party was large and carried all one needed in the wilds. So long as a good woodsman can get supplies, his camp is comfortable. Turnbull had picked the men carefully, and did not hesitate to break up the sawmill gangs. Unless he brought back Andrew, he would not bother if the saws did not run again.

When he started he had put two bottles of fine whisky in his pack, but the bottles were not yet opened, and he reflected with dry humor that to leave them alone had not cost him much. The doctor warned him about tanking, and sometimes his indulgence disturbed Lucille, but Turnbull indulged because liquor was all he had. Since hope returned and effort was worth while, he was willing to go without.

All the same, soberness, perhaps, reacted on his body and brain. At the mill, when his leg did not hurt, he was slack, and satisfied to rest. Now he was highly strung and alert. When he was not planning lines of search for the packers, he smoked and pondered, and his stern concentration daunted Latour. Moreover, Latour, when he needed support, got none. Steve was his man and knew the woods and rivers, but Turnbull had barred Steve's joining the party.

For the most part, Turnbull left Latour alone. In the morning he gave the men orders and sent them off; in the evening he weighed their reports. Following Latour's line across the rocks, he pitched camp by the ravine, and taking an old river-jack, himself began to search the neighborhood. Antoine and two more were sent another way. Antoine did not want to go; he would sooner see where Turnbull went, but he dared not refuse.

When Turnbull got back his look was inscrutable and the lumberman did not talk. Antoine, however, was relieved to note that the cloudburst's track was yet obvious. Now, at all events, the old fellow could not doubt his narrative, for broken trees and fallen banks marked the height and fury of the flood.

Starting down-stream, they stopped at the smashed canoe. Speed was indicated, but Turnbull went carefully, and the packers he sent out searched

the rocks and watercourses up which one might climb. Latour thought the old fellow could so far draw an accurate map of his and Andrew's line. He wondered whether Turnbull knew he had moved the posts Andrew put up, but Turnbull said nothing.

His reserve was daunting and Latour began to be afraid. He had for some time thought he cheated the old fellow, but it looked as if Turnbull had found out his dishonesty at the mill, and if he imagined Antoine had not used much effort to help Andrew, Antoine dared not speculate about the consequences. Since Latour stopped opposite the branch that splashed in the revolving pool his nerve was not good, and the strain he bore had recently got worse.

When they found the canoe, Turnbull sent a man to follow the bank down-stream, and Latour to a ravine some distance off. Turnbull and the others crossed the river. The water was low, and in the stony shallows the current was slack.

Soon after Latour started, heavy rain swept the tableland, and when he got back in the evening his wet clothes stuck to his skin. The others had camped, for when willows and brush tossed in the wind and water ran along the ground there was not much use in looking for Andrew's trail. Latour rather thought the storm had washed out all marks, but he did not know, and the pool where the branch touched the current was not far down-stream. He was disturbed and tired, and noting that the cook had got his fire lighted, he thought he would like a hot drink. Besides, he resolved to make an experiment.

At the mill, when Turnbull's leg hurt he dosed himself with whisky. Antoine had not known him altogether bemused by liquor, but sometimes for a day or two he was dull and languid. If the old man lost something of his awkward keenness before they reached the pool, it would help. Antoine got spices and sugar from the cook, and putting on dry clothes, carried a pannikin of hot water to the tent he and Turnbull occupied. Turnbull watched him brew the drink and said nothing.

"I was wet and cold, sir," Antoine remarked. "I thought I might use a little liquor and you might join me. In fact, I've brewed an extra lot. It smells pretty good."

The smell of liquor and spices floated about the tent, but so far as Antoine saw, Turnbull was not attracted. In fact, Antoine got a hint of ironical humor.

“Take your drink, and if you have too much, give some to the cook. I reckon the fellow deserves a drink for getting his fire to burn.”

“You’d really sooner I did so? The evening’s cold and the tent is damp. Don’t you think a small dose might buck you up? Then sometimes you thought it helped your leg.”

Turnbull smiled, but his smile bothered Antoine.

“My leg does not hurt, and when I use liquor I don’t take a small dose. For me to start tanking now has some obvious drawbacks.”

Antoine let it go, and carried the pannikin to the cook. He began to think his experiment was rash.

At daybreak the rain was gone, and they broke camp. Turnbull sent a man across the river, but he and the others followed the side on which they had camped, and after a time stopped by the pool Latour knew. Turnbull sat down and ordered a man to examine a spot where the flood had cut the bank. When he was not forced, he did not use effort; Latour thought he carefully husbanded his strength, and he hated the old fellow’s stern control. By and by the man Turnbull sent came back.

“Somebody tried to get across soon after the bank caved in,” he said. “He pushed down some stones and maybe he got scared he was going into the pool, because he turned and went up. I reckon he shoved through the swale at the top.”

They found somebody had pushed through the willows, and Turnbull gave Latour a careless glance.

“When you looked for Andrew, you were on the other side?”

Latour agreed, and Turnbull signed the packers.

“We’ll get going. Try to follow the track.”

The track went to a muskeg, across a loop the river made, and back to the water. When the party reached the spot the light was going, but they found ashes and marks in the gravel and sand. Turnbull sat down and waited; the others studied the ground.

“Two men camped by the fire,” said one. “They cooked a trout; the scales are on a log where somebody used a knife. The minks or the fish-hawks have got the heads.”

“You’re satisfied there were two men?” Turnbull inquired.

“I’m satisfied all right, and the fellows were not bushmen. Looks like Mr. Grier and the sailor.”

“We’ll get on their trail in the morning. You can fix the tents, boys.”

Latour remarked Turnbull’s calm. Had he been the other, he would have cut a pine-knot torch and tried to follow the trail in the dark. In fact, Antoine was afraid of the old fellow’s control. All he did was done with fastidious thoroughness, and where, embarrassed by his infirmity, he was forced to use others, he missed nothing. Latour thought he knew where Andrew went and where he stopped, up to the time he cooked the trout. By and by, Turnbull called Latour.

“When you went down-stream soon after the flood, I expect you did not see the stones Andrew pushed down by the pool?”

“I did not. I was on the other side.”

“Now I think about it, you stated something like that before,” Turnbull remarked and pulled out a burned match and the end of a cigarette. “It looks as if you stopped for a smoke: Steve uses plug tobacco.”

Latour got something of a knock, for since he had obviously stopped by the pool, Turnbull might think his not noting the disturbed stones strange. The old fellow, however, sent him off.

For a day or two the party followed Andrew’s track down-river, and although Turnbull said nothing, Latour thought he knew he had not done all he might have done. In fact, since he brewed the hot drink, he sometimes imagined Turnbull studied him with grim amusement. For all that, his part was to hide his growing uneasiness, pretend to help, and ponder how he might escape his punishment.

The trail stopped a short distance below the river forks and the packers owned that they were puzzled. They declared Andrew had not gone farther along the bank, and since he had no canoe, he had not taken the river. Turnbull divided the party, and sending some back for the canoes, and some to search the other bank, pushed on. One evening a man on the other side shouted, and Turnbull, crossing a shallow, joined the group on the stones by the mouth of a creek. Two logs, burned on one side, lay close together on a rocky ledge, and somebody had thrown an empty can and a cotton flour-bag into the brush. A packer indicated a long shallow mark in the gravel.

“Mr. Grier went by canoe; you can see where they pulled her up, and the fellow who cut the fire-logs had a pretty good ax. The grease in the meat

can's sour, but the label's not soaked off the tin. I allow it's not long since the boys fixed camp."

"How many used the camp?" Turnbull inquired.

"I reckon three; there were more than two. When they pulled out they poled up the creek."

Turnbull, sitting in the stones, examined the can and a crumpled yeast-powder box. The sour grease indicated that the can was opened before he passed the spot on his way up-stream, but it had not been open very long. Then the men had obviously pitched their camp on the low bank since the flood. One could pole a canoe up the creek, and crossing some awkward portages, reach a lake, from which a trail went to a French-Canadian settlement on the St. Lawrence. All the same, Turnbull meant to run no risk.

"We'll stop, boys," he said. "At daybreak the smartest river-jack will shove up the creek and look for the gang's next camp. You can fix who's to go."

In the morning two men started, and returned in the dark. Latour and Turnbull sat by the fire and the old man was first to hear branches crack. He turned his head, but Latour noticed that he was very quiet.

"Well?" he said, when the others arrived.

The loggers stated they had found the camp and three men had walked about the spot. Moreover, one, who chopped a spruce, was a tenderfoot and could not properly use the ax.

"The news is worth five dollars, boys," said Turnbull. "You can lie off in the morning, and the cook need not hustle to get breakfast. When the canoes come along we'll start for the cove."

"But what about Andrew?" Latour inquired.

Turnbull smiled. "If you are anxious for Andrew, to know you'll find him at the mill when we get there ought to be some relief."

"It's possible," Latour agreed, although his relief was not marked. "I suppose he met up with a prospector; but nobody has yet found useful minerals by the lake."

"That is so," said Turnbull with some dryness. "I expect the fellow prospected for timber. Perhaps you know who sent him up? But we'll talk about it another time."

CHAPTER XXI

TURNBULL'S WATCHFULNESS

Latour lifted his head, pushed back his blanket, and rested his arm on his spruce-branch couch. Although he used some caution, the branches cracked, and for a few moments he waited and looked about. He calculated it was midnight and he ought to get off, but Turnbull slept lightly and he must not make a noise.

The moon was good, and although the tent door was laced in order to keep out the mosquitoes, some light pierced the damp canvas. The smudge fire had burned up the green wood, and Latour saw its red reflections. Then he distinguished Turnbull, lying with his head to the door. Latour imagined Turnbull had fixed on the spot for his branch bed because it commanded the entrance. The tent was a narrow, ridge-pole tent, and the end opposite the door was pegged to the ground. So long as the lines and pegs were fast, if one wanted to get out, one must crawl by Turnbull. Antoine, however, had slackened a line before Turnbull went to bed.

Latour's nerve was gone, and although he did not know Turnbull's plans, he dared not face the reckoning he thought awaited him at the mill. He was afraid, and since the party would in a few days reach the cove, he had resolved to steal off. Turnbull, anxious to satisfy himself Andrew had arrived, might not bother to follow his trail; anyhow, Latour would be some distance off when the others knew he was gone. Pushing across the wilds, he ought to reach the St. Lawrence and get on board a Quebec tourist boat before Turnbull could meddle. Latour had carefully planned his line and was ready to start.

The night was calm, and all was quiet at the camp. The river splashed and Latour heard Turnbull's even breathing. The old fellow slept and now was the time to go. Latour's heart beat, but he crawled from his bed and gently pushed back the end of the tent. The canvas was tighter than he had thought, and when he shook the material the ridge-pole cracked. Latour stopped, and felt for the line he had loosed. The line was tight and he could not reach the peg. If he tried to force his body under the canvas he might pull down the tent. It looked as if he could not get out and his skin was wet by sweat. Then somebody seized his leg and he heard Turnbull's laugh.

"Come back! Get a light," said the old man, and let go.

Latour hesitated. The packers were asleep and Turnbull was infirm. One need not use much effort to stop his calling out, and a jump would carry Latour across the tent. He wanted to jump, but the old fellow's grim calm daunted him.

"Get a light," Turnbull ordered, and Latour did so, but he broke the block of sulphur matches, and came near to breaking the lamp. Fear and savage passion moved him, and perhaps for a few moments Turnbull ran some risk.

Turnbull's look was unmoved. In the woods, one does not take off one's clothes when one goes to bed, and his hand was in his pocket.

"Sit there," he said, and indicated Latour's heap of branches.

Latour sat down and measured the distance across the tent. If Turnbull took his hand from his pocket, he thought he would risk a jump. Turnbull gave him an ironical glance.

"Nothing's doing!" he remarked. "The line you loosed is fast, and two of the boys are not asleep; anyhow, they agreed to earn a few dollars by keeping awake. Besides, if you knocked me out and made the woods, your food cache is gone."

"Then, you knew I cached the food?" said Latour dully.

"Why, of course! For a crook, you're not very bright. When you bribe a man to go back on a good boss, you ought to know your man and bribe high. Anyhow, five or six days to the steamboat landing is a pretty good hike, and since I robbed your cache, it looks as if you had to stay with us."

"I don't see why you force me to stay," said Latour in a sullen voice.

Turnbull took his hand from his pocket and pulled out a black pipe. Then he moved the branches, and making a support for his back, began to cut tobacco.

"If you don't see, your trying to steal off is strange. Well, for one thing, you are the Turnbull & Grier Company's servant, and you used the house's money. I don't yet know the sum you took, and I want to find out. Then when Andrew hit a useful line for a logging road, you pulled down the posts. You made a careless job; I saw the blazed mark on the spruce two hundred yards off. Your father would not have botched a job like that. You have not his light touch."

Latour began to think he was, to some extent, to be punished for another's offense, but he said nothing.

“You must account to Andrew,” Turnbull resumed. “One hates to own one’s relation a crook, and had you been satisfied to rob the Company, I might have tried to make good the sum. In fact, when we started up-river you got your chance to earn your freedom. Had you been keen to help me find Andrew, I might have let you go; but you were not. You thought, like a boy, to tempt me with liquor. Were you not a fool, you would know liquor has not yet conquered me. At the mill, I use whisky, because when you’re old and crippled, to dull the brain your slack body imprisons is some relief — But it’s not at all important.”

“When I mixed the drink, I was cold and wet, sir.”

“Exactly! You carried the can to my tent and beat up the smelling stuff; but we won’t dispute about your object—— You tried to hustle us past the spot where the bank was cut. It looked as if you were not anxious for us to see the stones, and when the packer I sent across got back, your knowing the stones were disturbed was obvious. A day or two after Andrew was lost, you stopped for a smoke by the pool, six or seven yards from the broken branch. Well, have you had enough?”

“Since I don’t expect you’d weigh my statements, there’s no use in arguing,” said Latour sullenly.

“Andrew will weigh your statements at the mill. If you can satisfy him, I’ll let you go,” Turnbull rejoined. “I think that’s all.”

He put up the tobacco he had not used, and Latour said nothing. There was nothing to be said. Turnbull, lifting himself awkwardly, put out the light, and his branch bed cracked. His scornful carelessness jarred, for it implied that he did not bother about Antoine across the narrow tent. Antoine knew himself beaten; he would sooner face a muscular packer than the infirm old man. He thought Turnbull slept, but he himself did not.

When the canoes arrived, the party broke camp. Nothing indicated that Antoine was a prisoner, and he thought Turnbull did not know in which canoe he went, but sometimes when he joined the others at meals Turnbull smiled. All the food Antoine could get he got when the packers ate, and unless one were properly supplied one would starve in the wilds.

In the meantime, the party pushed on down-stream and one day the canoes, swinging round a point, opened up the mill-house reach. The paddles beat faster, the crews began to sing, and although the screaming saws did not altogether stop, men ran from the sheds. On the wharf Lucille and Andrew waved their welcome. Latour’s face was pinched and he trailed

the paddle he could not use. He knew the reckoning had come, and his hands shook.

Some time after they arrived, Turnbull called Andrew and Latour to the big room. On the table were two or three books from the office and a paper covered by calculations. Turnbull gave Andrew the document.

“You are my partner and my grandson is the Company’s clerk,” he said. “He kept the books, and to some extent I trusted him. When I could not get about, I was forced to do so. Well, I do not like my job, but you are entitled to know he has robbed us.”

Andrew studied the calculations and one of the books. He was embarrassed and he knitted his brows.

“It looks like that,” he agreed. “The sum, however, is not very large.”

“I don’t yet know all, but when an accountant has audited the books I rather think you’ll get a knock. In the meantime, we’ll let it go. I want a few particulars about the fellow you joined at the creek.”

Latour looked up sharply, as if he were disturbed, and Andrew replied: “Gordon was a cultivated young fellow; McGill University man, I think. All the same, he was a first-class woodsman, and could use the pole and ax _____”

“Did he talk about his business?”

“When he knew mine, he was not remarkably frank; but I imagined he had a post at a big lumber house,” said Andrew thoughtfully. “When he arrived we had used our last can of meat, and had two or three pounds of flour. Gordon had supplies and a factory-built canoe. He’d engaged a half-breed *voyageur*, but I understand the fellow tried to bluff him for higher pay. Anyhow, they disputed, and Gordon sent him off. He came down-river alone, but in the creek the current was against him and he agreed to grub-stake us if we would help him portage across to a lake. We did so and stopped for a time at a winter logging camp. Gordon carried out some rough surveying, and then we started for the St. Lawrence. At the beginning, when he thought me a tourist, he talked about his adventures in the rapids at the height-of-land, where he’d gone to examine some timber.”

“I expect he examined our timber,” Turnbull remarked. “If Antoine were willing, he might put us wise——”

Andrew turned to Latour, but his look was sullenly obstinate. Andrew's got stern.

"I don't altogether see——"

"So far, I haven't got all the light I want," Turnbull admitted. "I have, however, some grounds to think my grandson negotiated with a merger I recently refused to join. As a rule, a merger's plan is to break a competitor it cannot buy. My notion is, Antoine meant to help them put the job across."

Andrew's face got red. His habit was to trust people, and when he knew himself cheated his anger was hot. He had not trusted Latour, but he had resolved Lucille and Turnbull must not know. Now he was carried away.

"You treacherous swine! Denis crossed the river to look for me, but although you arrived afterwards, when the flood was sinking, you did not. I wonder whether you were willing for me to starve?"

Latour gave him a malevolent look, but said nothing. Turnbull for a moment turned his head. Then he faced Andrew:

"I think the fellow was willing."

All were very quiet until Andrew crossed the floor. He stopped by Antoine and said, "Well?"

"There is no use in my arguing; I could not persuade you. What are you going to do about it?"

"If Andrew agrees, we'll hold you prisoner until a Quebec accountant arrives," Turnbull replied. "When he has examined the books, you must stand your trial for embezzlement."

"I see no grounds for meddling," said Andrew in a stern voice.

Latour got up. His legs and his hands shook, but his face was dark red, and now hope was gone, he indulged his jealous rage.

"Blast you! I admit I'm sorry you did not drown. Had you stayed in Scotland, I'd have bluffed the old man and joined up with the merger. His plans are out of date, and you're a fool. When the merger put up proper machinery, I'd have made the business go; but you cannot carry on. The big men will break you and you'll be lucky to get a thousand dollars for all they leave you. You robbed me, and you're going to let down the mills; but that's not all. You're a dull, cold-blooded Scot, and you refused——"

"We have had enough!" said Turnbull and signed to Andrew. "If he does not stop, knock him out!"

Latour saw Andrew's puzzled look and he conquered his passion. Lucille was his sister, and his fury had carried him farther than he had thought.

"I suppose I must pay for my father. You hated him," he said to Turnbull.

"To some extent, perhaps that is so," Turnbull agreed in a quiet voice. "Your father broke my daughter's heart, but I hoped you were rather her son than his. Had you gone straight, I'd have made you Andrew's partner and you would have got my share in the mills. But you could not go straight. You inherited another's crookedness, and since you will not pay for your worst offense, your luck is pretty good. Until I get the accountant's report, you will keep your room."

He followed Latour to the room and fastened the door. Then he rejoined Andrew and said moodily, "In the meantime, it's done with, and if you bring the schooner to the wharf, we will load her up. Then I expect you'll sail for Scotland."

"If you think we can run down the logs from the height-of-land and keep the business going, I'll come back."

"It's possible. Ten thousand pounds would help. Anyhow, we could force the merger to give a good price, but I would hate to sell. If I were young and could get the money I want, I'd undertake to carry on."

"I am young, but I doubt if I can get ten thousand pounds," said Andrew in a thoughtful voice. "In order to find out, I must go to Scotland. We'll talk about it again. Did you send the packet I gave you to Mackellar?"

Turnbull said he mailed the packet and a letter stating that he imagined Andrew had escaped the flood.

"Then, I must send a cablegram. How can I get it on the wire?"

"Write your message, and the sail-boat will start along the coast. The wind blows up-river, and messages go by 'phone from the post office at St. François."

Andrew wrote the message and when Turnbull went off he pondered. The old fellow's sending the packet was awkward, because when it arrived Margaret would get the letters. After all, to think her banished lover drowned would hurt, but Andrew speculated about her emotions when she knew he was at the cove. The thing looked rather like a theatrical trick, and he was annoyed.

CHAPTER XXII

THE LOCKED DOOR

Sunset was fading, a cool breeze from the north banished the mosquitoes, and Andrew on the mill-house veranda tranquilly smoked his pipe. Since breakfast he had been occupied at the wharf, for the schooner was loading and in a day or two she would sail. Although Andrew meant to come back, he was keen to start, and since the *Anne* would carry him across, he did not mean to buy a ticket for a liner. Sometimes Andrew was generous, but he was not extravagant. The chances were, the wind would blow from the northwest, and when the wind was on her quarter the old boat sailed fast. Wilson would hoist the squaresail and shove her along.

The trees on the point got black, the cove was leaden gray, and little waves gently lapped the beach. For some time the saws had stopped, but a light burned in the mill office, and Andrew knew Turnbull and the accountant were at work. Latour had obviously robbed the house of a large sum, which Turnbull imagined he had squandered at Montreal. The mill gang was at the bunkhouse, but somebody on board the *Anne* played a concertina.

Andrew heard rag-time and tunes from Glasgow music halls, and he wondered when the fellow would stop. Not long since the Scots knew nobler music. The sailor did stop, but by and by he began again and Andrew listened. The air was not like the others; it went with a swing that fired the blood. One heard the clang of windlass levers echo back from the spacious days when the anchor was hove by human muscle before steam ruled at sea. Voices helped the rolling melody, and although some were not tuneful, Andrew was moved. The brave old chanties were not gone. He knew the *Rio Grande*.

Then he began to think about Latour. The fellow deserved to go to jail, but a remark of his had bothered Andrew. He declared Andrew's robbing him was not all. Andrew was a cold-blooded Scot and he had refused—Then Turnbull stopped the fellow, and the hiatus was baffling, but Turnbull's anger indicated that it had something to do with Lucille. Andrew would not admit the supposition accurate. Yet, since he returned to the cove, Lucille's friendliness was marked by some reserve.

Andrew tried to banish his disturbing thoughts. Although Lucille's charm was marked and she was kind, he was persuaded she did not want him for a lover. He was Margaret's lover, but Margaret had done with him. There was the tangle and he must let it go. His business was to start for Scotland and get ten thousand pounds. He doubted if he could do so, but he meant to try.

He went along the veranda. At the other end a man from the sawmill watched Latour's window. The fellow would stop until another arrived, and the door in the passage was locked. Soon after Andrew went back to the bench he heard a step. Lucille advanced, and although the light was going he thought her highly strung.

"Grandfather is at the office and I think he will not be back for some time; the accountant must go in the morning," she said. "Do you know where the key of Antoine's room is?"

Andrew did know, but he had thought Turnbull did not altogether trust Lucille.

"If you want to see Antoine, I think you ought to tell your grandfather," he replied.

"Grandfather is engaged and I mustn't disturb him. Besides, I doubt if he would give me the key."

"If that is so, I ought not——"

"Then you have the key? I must talk to Antoine. In a few days, perhaps, grandfather will send him to Quebec, and I shall not see him afterwards."

Andrew thought it possible and he sympathized with Lucille. For her to know her brother's punishment was just, was not much comfort.

"I'm sorry, but unless Mr. Turnbull agrees, I cannot let you go alone. However, if you are willing for me to stay in the passage, I might risk opening the door."

"Ah," said Lucille, "perhaps your hating Antoine is not strange! Still, I did not think you were revengeful——"

"I doubt if I do hate your brother," Andrew rejoined in a quiet voice. "It's possible he really thought me drowned. If that were all, I might let him go. The trouble is, he robbed us and squandered money we need to carry on the business. Unless I can get a good sum in Scotland, the mills must stop. Then I'm the junior partner; Mr. Turnbull is head of the house, and he's resolved not to let Antoine off——"

He stopped. To hurt Lucille was cruel, but Turnbull did not trust her with the key. Latour must take his punishment and Andrew felt he must be firm. Yet when Lucille sighed and turned her head, firmness was hard. After a few moments she gave Andrew a moving look.

“Antoine is my brother. I cannot use much argument, but perhaps there is something to be said—— Antoine is not to be punished altogether because he himself did wrong. Turnbull is kind, but he is just, and sometimes rather pitiless. I think you know about my father—— He was not a good man, and perhaps Turnbull had some grounds to hate him. The important thing is, it accounts for his hating my brother.”

“You mustn’t exaggerate. Mr. Turnbull declares Antoine got his chance and might have got his share in the mill.”

“Oh!” said Lucille. “I think from the beginning he had not a chance. Perhaps grandfather’s antagonism was half-conscious, but Antoine knew. When people doubt you, you do know. Then our mother died long since and Antoine had inherited his father’s faults. He felt he was hated for another’s sake, and it hurt. I’m not clever, Andrew. I cannot plead for my brother as I’d like to plead; but you see—you must see—he was handicapped. Although he was weak, he was forced to carry an awkward load——”

She stopped, and her distress pleaded for her. Andrew frowned, for he knew his resolution melted.

“Let’s be frank. For me to open the door is not all you want?”

Lucille put her hand on his arm and he saw her look get hopeful.

“I want you to let Antoine go. To know he was in jail would be horrible. I could not bear it, Andrew. I cannot think you want to hurt me, but when my brother’s hurt, I am hurt.”

Andrew was conquered. Scottish justice is stern, but sometimes a Scot is moved by romantic generosity. From Rowans one sees in the distance a bleak hill, and between the brae and the river stands a cross. Long since, a band of Border spears overtook their enemy at the spot. The other, faint from wounds, could not fight. The spearmen carried him home and left his pele tower alone. Perhaps Andrew had inherited something from the old moss-troopers. He smiled and gave Lucille the key of Latour’s room.

“For a few minutes you can talk to Antoine, but you must not be long. Steve’s his man, and I expect he’ll help me pull the sail-boat to the beach.”

He went off along the veranda and called the mill hand.

“You can go and talk to the boys at the bunkhouse; I’ll watch out. Tell Steve I want him.”

Twenty minutes afterwards he came from the beach and joined Lucille and Antoine on the veranda.

“Have you food and money?” he inquired.

Lucille said she had put up food but thirty dollars was all they could get. The corners of Andrew’s mouth went up humorously, for he noted the light yet burned across the yard. Had Antoine been able to reach the office, Andrew thought he would have got a larger sum.

“Thirty dollars won’t carry you far,” he said, and took some bills from his wallet. “The boat’s ready and you had better push off.”

Latour and Lucille went to the beach. Andrew stopped and after a few minutes heard blocks rattle, a dark sail stole across the cove and Lucille came back alone. She went slowly, but when she saw Andrew at the steps she advanced and began to talk in a shaky voice. Andrew stopped her and indicated the office. The windows were dark.

“Let’s go in and get a light. I expect Turnbull’s crossing the yard, and he mustn’t know Antoine’s gone. If he inquires about him, you have got to support me.”

“But I must thank you, and Antoine sent a message——”

“Another time!” said Andrew firmly, and pushed some matches into her hand. “Come on. Your grandfather will arrive in a minute. We must get a light.”

When Turnbull came in Lucille was sewing and Andrew studied the *Montreal Star*. Turnbull did not inquire about Antoine, and by and by they went to bed.

After breakfast in the morning the accountant started for the office. Turnbull went along the passage, and Lucille turned to Andrew.

“Oh!” she said. “Grandfather’s going to Antoine’s room!”

“Then, don’t you think you ought to get busy somewhere else?”

Lucille colored. “I’m not very frightened, Andrew. At all events, I’m not shabby, and I mean to stay.”

“You’re very obstinate,” Andrew rejoined. “Anyhow, you’re not, like me, Turnbull’s partner; I’m entitled to meddle. If you don’t go, I rather think

I'll push you out——”

“Then, you'd meet grandfather in the passage,” said Lucille, with a hesitating smile.

Andrew heard Turnbull's step, and thought it ominously firm. A few moments afterwards the old man pushed back the door. He breathed rather hard, as if he had gone fast, and leaned on his stick, but his look was grim.

“I expect you know Antoine is gone,” he said.

“That is so, sir. He went some time since,” Andrew admitted, with emotions he had not felt since he faced his angry house-master at an Edinburgh school. The strange thing was, he thought Lucille now was calm.

“Oh, well,” said Turnbull dryly, “I suppose your accomplice persuaded you?”

Lucille looked up and her eyes sparkled. “You mustn't bully Andrew; I let my brother go.”

“I had the key,” said Andrew. “Latour could not get out unless I were willing.”

“Something like that is obvious,” Turnbull agreed. “I imagine I can account for your willingness, but you and Lucille can dispute about it again. When did Antoine start?”

“He went on board the sail-boat shortly before you left the office in the evening.”

Turnbull frowned. “Then, he has been gone nine or ten hours, and I reckon he's gone for good. Well, I suppose Lucille gave him food. Did you give him money?”

“I gave him thirty dollars,” said Lucille. “It was all I had—and he had none.”

“That is so. I used some precaution, because I know the boys at the mill. For five dollars one might have tried to steal the key. But I inquired if Andrew gave your brother money.”

“I did give him a few small bills, sir.”

“Then, when Antoine arrives in Maine I expect he'll have a useful wad. He got away with yours and Lucille's, and a boat worth two or three hundred dollars.”

“But he wouldn’t go to Maine. The wind would carry him along the coast, and he’d leave the boat at the spot where he boarded a Quebec steamer.”

Turnbull smiled. “It looks as if you don’t yet know my grandson. Antoine would not risk stopping in Canada. The north wind is a fair wind across the St. Lawrence, and the American boundary is not far off the other side. When Antoine lands, his first job will be to sell the boat, and since I expect he’ll baffle the immigration officers, the United States will get an undesirable citizen.”

“You are very bitter,” Lucille remarked and blushed when she added: “Still, I’m sorry I did not think about the boat.”

“I imagined I was philosophically resigned. However, since Andrew is my partner, I suppose he was entitled to risk the boat. All the same, one feels his generosity was freakish——”

“On the Border, we’re rather a freakish lot,” said Andrew, with a laugh. “But won’t you let it go, sir? I want to see the boys put the *Anne’s* cargo on board.”

At noon the last batten was wedged fast on the schooner’s deck, and the men began to pull chains across the load, rig life-lines, and fill the water tanks. At sunset all was ready, and the *Anne* hauled out to the buoy; but stowing lumber is an arduous job, and Andrew sent the tired crew to their bunks. Breakfast at the mill was a melancholy function, and for Andrew to get up was some relief. Lucille and Turnbull went on board with him and stopped until the topsails were sheeted.

“All’s ready for us to let go, Mr. Grier,” said Wilson, and Andrew gave Turnbull his hand.

“I’ll try to get the sum we want, but anyhow, I’ll come back.”

Lucille gave Andrew a smile and a touch of color came to her skin.

“You helped Antoine,” she said. “I owe you much—and I sincerely wish you luck!”

She went down the ladder, but somehow Andrew knew her remark had nothing to do with the money he hoped to get for the mill.

The mooring chain splashed. Two jibs flapped in the light wind, and the *Anne’s* bows began to swing.

“Sheets to windward,” said Wilson, and signed the helmsman. “Let draw, boys. Let go weather braces; trim the yards. Now up with the mainsail peak.”

Blocks rattled, the slack top of the big mainsail got straight and the schooner forged ahead. The gaff-topsail went up and somebody began to sing the *Rio Grande*. She went faster, and Andrew, balancing on the deck-load, waved his cap.

Turnbull ordered the boatmen to row, and Lucille turned her head. Andrew was gone, and although he had engaged to come back, he would not again be the man she had known. He was going to the girl in Scotland, and Lucille had studied Margaret’s portrait and thought her not a fool. If she herself had a lover like Andrew, she would not let him go. When she looked up, the *Anne* had vanished behind the point.

CHAPTER XXIII

THE PACKET

After Andrew sailed for the St. Lawrence, Jim was much at Rowans. He declared a week-end by the Solway braced him up and to transact his growing business was rather a strenuous job. Mrs. Grier approved and talked about the strain her son's progress implied. Hannah wondered, and Mackellar frankly doubted. He had some grounds to think Jim's clients were not as numerous and important as the young man hinted.

On Saturday evenings and sometimes on Sundays Jim went to the Garth, and for the most part his hosts enjoyed his society. Johnston was not much at Glasgow; Jim knew the merchants and manufacturers, and his talk interested the shipowner. Johnston admitted Grier had talent and for a young man his judgment was sound; but he felt Jim was not altogether his and Margaret's sort. The strange thing was, he knew Andrew was their sort.

On the whole, Mrs. Johnston was satisfied. She saw Jim cleverly courted her, and she saw his object, but he had a number of qualities she approved, and she was not as unconsciously fastidious as her husband. If Margaret married Jim, the marriage, perhaps, would not be good, but Johnston could help the ambitious young lawyer along. At all events, she would rather Margaret married Jim than Andrew. Yet, sometimes Andrew moved her to a curious motherly gentleness, and Jim did not.

Margaret brooded. Since Andrew sailed for Quebec, Murrendale was dreary, and Jim attracted her. He was cultivated, cleverly humorous, and rather a handsome fellow. She knew he was calculating, and sometimes she got a hint of shabbiness, but all had some drawbacks, and Jim's were not marked. When she thought about him, she wondered whether her weighing his drawbacks and advantages was not ominous. She had not weighed Andrew's.

All the same, Margaret's humiliated pride tipped the beam. She had frankly trusted Andrew, but he was not the man she thought. Since he was content to loaf about the hotel and philander with the waitress, to imagine he loved her was ridiculous. Then Mrs. Grier hinted that philander was not the proper word; she implied something like intrigue and it looked as if she did not exaggerate.

Yet to indicate that she had done with Andrew had cost Margaret much, and his resignation hurt. For a time, she wondered whether he would write; Margaret did not expect his letter, but Andrew knew if he wrote to Hannah, Hannah would give her the news. Andrew, however, was satisfied to send his sister a short note from Larne, and two or three weeks afterwards Hannah joined some friends in Norway.

At the beginning, Margaret approved Andrew's starting for Quebec, since it indicated that he was not altogether a wastrel. Then Mrs. Grier began to imply that he went in order to break an awkward entanglement, and one day, when Margaret was at Rowans, Mackellar declared that Andrew took a very proper line. Well, it was done with, and although Margaret brooded, she was polite to Jim. Jim knew he was on awkward ground, and went cautiously, for he imagined his progress was rather helped by another's faults than his own merit.

Mackellar one afternoon stopped his car at Rowans and joined Mrs. Grier and Jim at the tea table on the lawn.

"I wondered whether Hannah had got home, because I want her to undertake an errand for me," he said.

Mrs. Grier said Hannah had not returned and she did not expect her for some time. Mackellar's look got thoughtful, and he pulled out an envelope.

"I have disturbing news from Quebec. Andrew and two or three more went off to examine some timber in the wilds. When the others got back they stated that Andrew and a sailor left the party, and since they found his canoe, broken by a flood, they thought him drowned. Turnbull admits it's possible, but when he wrote he was starting with a fresh party to search the neighborhood. I brought his letter——"

Jim studied the letter and gave it to Mrs. Grier, who presently looked up.

"It is very dreadful! Can we not send a cablegram and shorten the suspense?"

Perhaps it was strange, but Mackellar saw she had got something of a shock, and he gave Jim a glance. Jim's brows were knit, as if he pondered, but he indicated the post-mark on the envelope.

"There is not much use in our cabling. Turnbull started two weeks ago, and when he gets back he will let us know. What do you think about the chance of Andrew's escaping the flood, sir?"

“I have not met Turnbull, but we have transacted business, and I reckon him a man o’ cool, sound judgment. Ye have his letter—it’s all I ken.”

“He states he’ll use all possible effort to find Andrew, and doubts if he was drowned,” Jim remarked. “We must wait for his message.”

Mackellar nodded. He was disturbed, but he did not reckon on Jim’s sympathy, and the people whom he allowed to know when he was moved were not numerous.

“One hates to give up hope, and Mr. Turnbull does not,” said Mrs. Grier. “In the meantime, perhaps, we ought to say nothing—— But he mentions a packet for Margaret Johnston.”

“Now you perhaps see why I wanted Hannah,” said Mackellar, and pulled out a bulky envelope. “For one thing, Turnbull may find the lad; and then all I know is, Andrew was Miss Johnston’s friend. I am his trustee, and if I carried the packet to the Garth, it might imply——”

Mrs. Grier agreed, and he resumed: “For Hannah to deliver the packet would be another thing. Only that I must not refuse to carry out the lad’s orders, I would sooner wait until we got Turnbull’s cablegram.”

“I will give Margaret the packet,” said Mrs. Grier. “For me to do so will imply nothing. Then it allows Margaret to decide if she ought to inform her relations.”

For a moment or two Mackellar hesitated. Somehow he would sooner Hannah carried the packet, but since she would not return for some time, Mrs. Grier’s plan was good. He gave her the envelope, and soon afterwards went off.

When the throb of the car died away Mrs. Grier sighed. “It is very dreadful, Jim, and the suspense is hard. Turnbull’s letter indicates that the search may be long. Well, we must hope his efforts are rewarded.”

Jim gave her a sympathetic glance. He knew his mother, to some extent, was sincere. All the same, she was not Andrew’s friend, and he imagined she was willing to plot against him. People were like that. He himself was conscious of his shabbiness, but if Andrew really were gone, he was sorry.

“We may get better news than we think. But when will you give Margaret the letters?”

“Not yet,” said Mrs. Grier, and resumed in a thoughtful voice: “If Andrew is dead, Hannah gets Rowans.”

“That is so,” said Jim, with some surprise. “But I don’t see——”

“You must, if possible, marry Margaret.”

“I don’t know if it is possible,” Jim rejoined moodily. “Sometimes I begin to hope I can persuade Margaret; but, as a rule, she’s baffling and I think she liked my cousin better than we knew. Then my poverty’s rather an obstacle; it looks as if I were keen because Margaret is rich——” He stopped and a little color touched his face when he resumed: “I do need money, but it does not account for my wanting Margaret. Anyhow, we talked about Andrew’s letters.”

“I stated I would not yet give Margaret the letters,” said Mrs. Grier in a meaning voice. “Before we get a cablegram some weeks may go. I have studied Margaret and she is kinder than she was.”

“But after all, if she thought Andrew dead?”

“You do not argue like a woman. Margaret is very proud, and Andrew humiliated her. I expect she feels he deserves some punishment, and if she thought it would hurt him, she might marry you. But if she knew him dead, she would forget his offense; she would think she was perhaps unjust, and only see the romantic lover she had lost. Andrew has qualities women like, and Margaret is stanch.”

Jim saw a light, but he was jarred. He admitted his mother puzzled him. Her abilities were not marked, and in some respects he knew her dull and, so to speak, commonplace. Yet she was stubbornly tenacious, and, for the most part, all she wanted she got.

“I don’t know that I’m keen to marry Margaret in order that she may punish Andrew,” he remarked, and Mrs. Grier gave him a reproving look.

“Your joke is not good, and I feel you are not just to me. Although I think for you, I think for Margaret. She is cultivated and fastidious; Andrew is obviously not the man for her. Perhaps one ought not now to talk about his drawbacks, but you know your cousin, and I see no happiness in their marriage. You, however, are Margaret’s type; she likes your intelligence and your refinement. She’s ambitious and you have social talents. If you do not hesitate, I’m persuaded you can carry her away.”

Jim did hesitate, and the blood came to his skin. When his mother was frankly selfish he liked her better. Yet he knew she was not altogether consciously hypocritical. As a rule, she really believed the plan she approved was good for others. Perhaps there was her power.

“After all, I love Margaret,” he said moodily.

“But of course,” said Mrs. Grier, as if she did not see where he led. “Then, since to think Andrew dead would hurt, you will agree that she ought not to get his letters until we know. Mackellar did not state when I must give her the packet.”

“In the meantime, I suppose you will write to Hannah?”

“I think not,” Mrs. Grier replied. “When the party left Bergen she did not know where they would stop. Then, since we may get better news, I feel we ought not to spoil her holiday. For Hannah to bear two or three weeks’ suspense, and then find out Andrew had not run much risk, would be cruel.”

She got up, and Jim meditated. He saw her object for not writing to Hannah, because she thought when Hannah knew about Andrew, Margaret would know. To some extent, Jim had allowed his mother to entangle him, and now he supposed he must see her out. The trouble was, although it looked as if she did not know her shabbiness, Jim did know his.

CHAPTER XXIV

JIM'S DENIAL

A week after Mackellar's visit to Rowans, Margaret and Jim went slowly along the flagged walk in front of Johnston's house. At the end of the walk Margaret stopped, and resting her arms on the top of the low wall, leaned against the stones. The light was going, and she looked straight in front, across the shadowy woods, to the dull red belt on the horizon. Jim thought her facing the West and brooding significant, and he imagined she had forgotten he was about.

He was acutely conscious of her bodily presence. If he moved, he would touch her arm; but, in a sense, he knew Margaret was not there. He wondered where she really was, and if her imagination carried her to the forests of Quebec. After a few moments, she turned, and gave him a quiet look.

"Have you had news of Andrew recently?"

Jim remarked her calm, but she did not pretend carelessness. Margaret was proud, and hated pretense.

"Hannah got a letter he wrote at Larne. The letter was short, but Andrew was rather jubilant—I think it's the proper word. He'd sold a quantity of coal for a good price, and obviously thought it something of an exploit."

"I know," said Margaret. "Hannah talked about the letter. Perhaps it was important for Andrew to sell the coal."

Jim felt she rebuked him for his sneer; but to some extent the sneer was unconscious, for jealousy had carried him away. He meant, if possible, to marry Margaret, but he knew she would not love him as she loved his cousin.

"You did not get another letter?" she resumed.

"We did not," said Jim. "Perhaps Andrew was annoyed; I expect he knew we did not approve his baffling the police and thought his experiment rash. Anyhow, he did not write. His ship signaled her number to a telegraph station on the St. Lawrence, and we knew he had arrived."

"But is that all? Didn't you inquire if your cousin were well, and meant to stay in Canada? Were you not interested?"

Jim smiled. He did not want to cheat Margaret and would sooner be frank, but frankness might cost him much.

“We certainly were interested. Hannah is her brother’s champion, my mother’s curiosity is rather hard to satisfy, and I owe Andrew much. All the same, we imagined we ought not to bother him. Sometimes he’s *thrown*.”

“Perhaps that is so,” Margaret agreed, and mused quietly.

Jim remarked that the reserve she sometimes used was gone, and he speculated about its going. Perhaps it implied that Margaret was willing to give him her confidence; perhaps she felt he was not important. Anyhow, he had cheated her, and if he could persuade her to marry him, he must do so before fresh news arrived.

“I wonder whether you know Andrew loved you?” he said.

“I have some grounds to doubt,” Margaret rejoined in a haughty voice. “But I do not see why you inquire!”

“Perhaps it looks like an impertinence, but my thinking Andrew loved you carried some weight. He’s my friend and cousin, and was my generous host. For me to be his rival was unthinkable. But I love you, Margaret.”

Margaret gave him a cool, level glance. “Then, you have conquered your modesty?”

“Since Andrew is gone, I need not hesitate. I feel he has gone for good —” said Jim, and stopped with some embarrassment, because he saw his remark was ominous. For a moment he had forgotten that Andrew perhaps was really gone.

“We know Andrew’s temperament,” he resumed. “Canada will claim him; he, so to speak, belongs to the woods and rivers. He’ll find fresh interests, and if he comes back, it will not be to stay.”

“I think that is so,” Margaret quietly agreed.

“Then, will you marry me, Margaret?”

“I don’t know,” said Margaret in a thoughtful voice. “I will not now agree to marry you. For a time, you must leave it alone.”

Her calm bothered Jim. Somehow all was flat, and he was dull and anxious. He ought to argue with romantic fire, but he could not.

“To know you don’t altogether refuse is something, and since I’m not forced to think for Andrew, resignation’s easier,” he replied. “Then I’ve

some grounds to be modest. I'm not, like my cousin, a Scottish laird. I'm a lawyer, and my mark is not yet made, but an object helps ambition, and now I have an object——”

“Ah!” said Margaret with a baffling smile, “Andrew’s advantages were personal, and one liked him for his extravagances. Yours are not very numerous.”

“It’s possible. My job’s not romantic; but I wonder whether you approved all Andrew’s extravagances.”

The blood came to Margaret’s skin. “For a lawyer, you don’t use much tact.”

“After all, I’m human, and I love you, Margaret. Then, you see, for long I felt I must hold back and let my lucky relation carry you off, if he could. He had much, but it looked as if he claimed all I wanted. Well, I own I was jealous!”

Margaret’s glance was gentler, but she got up.

“You mustn’t urge me yet,” she said, and Jim knew she was firm.

He went off soon afterwards, and Margaret went to the house. When she came in Johnston gave her a keen glance.

“Jim is soon away.”

Margaret smiled. “Mr. Grier asked me to marry him; I said we might perhaps talk about it again.”

“Men and manners change, and I reckon you are up to date!” Johnston remarked. “When I courted your mother, her coolness was not as remarkable as yours.”

“Perhaps mother wanted to marry you. I don’t know if I want to marry Jim.”

“Jim’s a lad o’ pairts,” said Johnston thoughtfully. “So far as I ken, the pairts are good, but maybe no’ the best.”

Mrs. Johnston said nothing, and they talked about something else. The Scots are like that, but Margaret pondered much.

The following morning Jim returned to Glasgow. On the whole, he was satisfied, but Margaret’s forcing him to wait was awkward. Before very long Turnbull’s message would arrive and she must know about Andrew. Jim imagined she would be moved, and since he thought his mother’s argument

sound, he hoped, altogether sincerely, Andrew was alive. He must account for his keeping back the packet, but perhaps he could do so. His justification was, he felt they must not disturb Margaret until they got certain news.

When he returned for the week-end, he carried a bundle of documents to the table on the grass, and lighting a cigarette, studied the papers. Mrs. Grier was sewing, and left him alone. By and by Jim looked up.

“A lawyer gets some queer jobs,” he said. “A client of mine died recently, and I have undertaken to wind up his estate. The stocks and shares will be sold, but the trustees think they ought to carry on two or three of his speculations. One’s a tea and cake shop, and my duty is to engage a manager. I’m advised that she must be attractive, polite, and a good business woman. The tea-shop’s famous, but, so far, our advertisements have not brought us an applicant of the proper type.”

Mrs. Grier put up her sewing and smiled. “Perhaps I can help. I imagine Minnie Douglas is the type you want.”

“Rutherford’s niece?” said Jim, with some surprise.

“Miss Douglas is attractive, and her manners are good. She is a business woman, and I understand really manages the hotel. If she takes the post, I think you will be satisfied.”

“You obviously know something about her,” Jim remarked. “All the same, I thought you did not approve Miss Douglas.”

“I made some inquiries,” Mrs. Grier admitted. “I did not approve her entangling Andrew; but that is another thing.”

Jim knew his mother, and he gave her a keen glance, but her look was inscrutable.

“Well, the pay is good, but if the girl has control at Rutherford’s, she might not want to go.”

“For a month or two in summer, tourists stop at the *Murrendale*, but Rutherford’s customers are small farmers and fishermen. The town is dreary, and Minnie’s ambitious. I don’t see her refusing the Glasgow post.”

“Do you want me to engage her?” Jim inquired.

“I thought you could not find a manager, and I tried to help,” Mrs. Grier rejoined. “All the same, if Andrew returns, I would sooner Minnie was not about.”

Jim went to the hotel, and was annoyed because he was allowed to wait for some time in the noisy smoking-room. The evening was Saturday evening and the moorland farmers were rather boisterous. One or two bantered Jim in uncouth Border Scots. At length, a waitress showed him into the office. He had asked for Minnie, but Rutherford joined them.

“How’s a’ wi’ you and your cousin? Maybe ye’ll tak’ a drink?” the landlord inquired.

Jim refused politely. His habits were not Andrew’s habits, and the other’s hospitality jarred. Jim thought it calculated. He said they did not know much about Andrew, but imagined he would stay in Quebec. So far as Jim could see, Miss Douglas was not disturbed.

“Aweel,” said Rutherford, “Canada’s the country for the man who means to work. I hae two-three relations who made good. But ye wanted my niece _____”

Jim talked about the tea-shop and drew an attractive picture of Glasgow’s advantages. The shop was fashionable, the pay was good, and the recent manager went because she made a first-class marriage. He thought Minnie interested, but she said nothing. Rutherford leaned against the table and quietly studied Jim. On the whole, Jim was annoyed. Glasgow folk were alert and keen, but the slow Borderers baffled him.

“Why were you wanting me to take the post?” Minnie asked.

“The shop’s not mine. I’m administering the estate for the trustees, and so far we cannot get a proper manager,” Jim replied. “My mother imagined you might help us out.”

“Just that!” Rutherford remarked, and turned to his niece. “Weel?”

Minnie hesitated. “Murren’s dreary. Perhaps you could get Bella from the Moffat hotel.”

“I doubt if I’m wanting her,” Rutherford rejoined, and added meaningly: “For ye to go to Glasgow was Mistress Grier’s notion.”

Jim looked up. The plan was his mother’s, but he had not reckoned on Rutherford’s thinking it important.

“If you would like the post, I must know before I start on Monday, because if you’d sooner leave it alone, we must try a fresh advertisement,” he said to Minnie.

Minnie knitted her brows. The city called and she rather wanted to get away from Murren. For her to go might spur on a hesitating lover, for she had not cheated herself about Andrew. Yet she saw Rutherford doubted and she knew his shrewdness.

“What do you think I ought to do about it, uncle?” she inquired.

“Weel,” said Rutherford, as if he pondered, “I’m thinking ye had better stop. When ye have paid your city lodgings and the expensive clothes ye’ll need to wear, ye’ll no’ be rich. Then at the *Murrendale* ye’re mistress; at Glasgow ye must account to the trustees and auditors.”

The argument was plausible, but Minnie knew it was meant for Jim. Rutherford had not yet stated his real objection, and perhaps he would not do so. For all that, she trusted his shrewdness.

“You are kind, Mr. Grier, but I don’t know if I could manage a big city tea-shop. Then perhaps I’m independent, but I am mistress at my uncle’s house. I know all he likes, and he leaves me alone. To take strangers’ orders and account for cups and teaspoons is another thing.”

“Solway folk are independent,” Rutherford remarked with an apologetic smile. “Your thinking Minnie might fill the post is a compliment, but the lass is modest, and whiles a bit contrary. For a’ that, ye’ll carry our thanks to Mistress Grier.”

Jim replied politely and went off. He imagined Rutherford saw something he himself did not, and he doubted if he would get much enlightenment from his mother. When he got home, and narrated the interview, her annoyance was obvious.

“The Murren people are a ridiculously proud and ungrateful lot,” she said. “But who refused your offer? Rutherford, or the girl?”

“I think Rutherford was first. All the same, Miss Douglas agreed.”

“Oh, well, I expected something like that! Uncultivated people of his sort are marked by suspicious cunning. However, we won’t bother about it. You must try a fresh advertisement.”

When Jim went out of the hotel office, Minnie gave Rutherford a searching glance.

“Why did you not want me to go?” she asked.

Rutherford smiled. In a small Scottish town the character and idiosyncrasies of all important people are accurately weighed.

“I do not trust yon calculating auld bizzom at Rowans, and she sent her son to offer ye the job. For a’ he’s a lawyer, he’s no his mither’s marrow.”

“But I don’t yet see,” Minnie resumed and blushed. “Since they think Mr. Andrew will stay in Quebec, his aunt’s wanting me away is queer.”

“It’s a’ that, and we’ll let it bide. Andrew Grier’s a leal, kindly lad, but he’s no your sort. When he was oot wi’ the poachers I was willing for ye to put Morton off his track, but I did not reckon on your allowing he stopped at the hoose.”

“I was foolish,” said Minnie, and her color got higher. “When Morton began to talk about the poaching, I was frightened, and I did not think—— Afterwards, when the old wives began to talk and people joked——”

“Aweel, I was forced to support ye, and we baffled the sergeant. That’s something, but I ken where to stop,” said Rutherford dryly. “We have done wi’ a’ at Rowans, and if ye meddle anither time, I’m thinking ye’ll get worse hurt. Onyway, ye’ll no play up to Mistress Grier.”

He went off and for a few minutes Minnie was very quiet. Her color came and went, for she began to see a light. When she got up her face was rose-red, and her look was hard. She hated Mrs. Grier, and resolved that somehow she should pay.

CHAPTER XXV

THE CALLING SURF

Jim tied the boat to a broken post, picked up his basket and the fishing-rods, and gave Margaret his hand. She jumped to the mossy stones, and for a few moments looked about. The sun was gone behind the hills, the wind had dropped, and the shadows of thin birches and mountain-ashes touched the glassy moorland loch. All was very quiet but for a tinkling burn, and then a cock-grouse called from the top of the brown moor.

The landscape's austere beauty moved Margaret. For two or three hours she had been happy at the loch, and so long as the west wind blew the fishing was good. Now, however, she was conscious of a gentle melancholy. The birch leaves were yellow and the mountain-ash berries got red. Summer was going, and much she had known and valued was gone.

For all that, she was happy at the loch, and perhaps tranquil satisfaction was better than romantic shocks. She liked the serene hills and the brooding quiet that marked the lonely spot. Then Jim was a charming companion and Margaret noted his cleverness in the little arts that please. He studied her moods and his touch was light. Moreover, he was a good fisherman, and they had caught some fine trout.

Yet not long since Margaret was satisfied with a man of simpler, and so to speak, larger type. Sometimes she did not want to be soothed and indulged; she would sooner be forced to brace up and use her powers. All the same, her romantic impulses must not again carry her away; she had allowed them to do so and had not yet recovered from the knock she got.

Jim was not romantic. He studied where he went and she saw herself carried along by his steady advance. He was not the sort to let her down and risk rude shocks. He would think for her, and if obstacles blocked their path, he would go another way. Margaret liked him to think for her, but sometimes she liked to push ahead and face the obstacles.

Anyhow, she was calmly satisfied with Jim. He was urbane and cultivated; he cleverly indulged her. In fact, sometimes she was bored by his plans to meet her varying moods. He hated to jar, and when, they did jar Margaret admitted she was accountable.

“You have the rods and my fly-book,” she said. “Where are the trout?”

“The trout are in my creel, packed in wet fern and dock leaves.”

“Perhaps your gathering the leaves was typical,” Margaret remarked. “You do not forget much.”

“I don’t see much use in catching trout and then leaving the fish in the boat,” Jim rejoined. “Have you got your cast box?”

“I have not,” said Margaret, and smiled when Jim pulled out the little aluminum box. “I expect my allowing you to think about it was typical.”

“My business is to think for you,” said Jim politely.

“You carry out your business; but perhaps you might have taken it for granted that I knew.”

“Oh, well,” said Jim, smiling, “I am a city man, and you must make allowances. At Glasgow modesty does not get a large reward.”

Margaret liked his humorous frankness, and was rather ashamed.

“I expect I’m ridiculously fastidious, but it’s only for my friends.”

“For some time I’ve studied your rules. The trouble is, I don’t make the progress I want to make.”

“You’re a very good sort,” said Margaret, and blushed. “But perhaps we ought to start.”

A sheep path curved across the hill between granite boulders and fern. The grass, cropped by rabbits, was short and smooth like velvet; the tall fern was going yellow and smelt sour. Where it stopped, long tangled heather rolled back to the moor’s broken crest.

“The bracken’s turning,” said Margaret. “Summer’s gone. Do you get melancholy when the fern withers, Jim?”

“I’m not at all melancholy. Summer will come again; perhaps a better summer than all I’ve known.”

“Ah!” said Margaret, “you’re an optimist! Well, I wonder——”

Her look was thoughtful but she did not think about Jim. She pictured the happy, lengthening days, when the fresh green sprang from the brown tangle and the birch leaves opened. She herself was then an optimist, and knew high hope, but the golden days were gone. Well, she must not grumble. Andrew was unworthy, but she had another lover, and so far as one could see, he had all the virtues Andrew had not. The strange thing was, she

contrasted Jim with the man she had thought Andrew was, and felt she resigned herself to take the second best.

Where the path crossed a shoulder of the hill a granite shelf pierced the velvet turf. The high spot commanded a noble view, and Margaret stopped. A mile off, in a green valley, she saw the farmstead at which they had left the car.

“I like the view from Watch Hill,” she said. “Suppose you smoke a cigarette.”

Jim wanted to stop, but Mrs. Johnston had fixed the time for dinner. Margaret remarked that he pulled out his watch and she laughed.

“You certainly are a city man; a Borderer does not bother about food. In the old days, when we started for England we carried a bag of meal and a lance. Cumberland supplied the ale and beef. Now we carry application forms for Scottish industrial shares. Well, I expect we’re lucky because the other plan’s out of date. I don’t see you putting on a steel cap and mounting a Galloway pony. You like a corner seat in a dining-car.”

Jim smiled. There was no use in stating he did not want to risk Mrs. Johnston’s being annoyed. Margaret would banter him about his caution. When he suggested their going fishing, he had an object, but it looked as if Margaret knew. Anyhow, she had baffled him, and now if she were resolved to stop, he was willing.

“A dining-car goes faster than the moss-troopers’ ponies, and perhaps one can collect as much booty with a company prospectus as your ancestors got by the lance,” he remarked. “Still, I expect you can picture Andrew’s carrying the older weapon. Where another would have used a steamship he was satisfied with a sailing vessel his grandfather built.”

“Well, yes,” said Margaret thoughtfully. “Andrew, so to speak, goes back. The old Border type is not yet run out.”

“The type ought to run out,” Jim rejoined. “Your moss-troopers were frankly ruffians, and were patriotic only when patriotism paid. Your Covenanters were stubborn rebels, and sometimes used worse cruelties than the king’s dragoons. Anyhow, they’re gone, and I’d sooner help build a modern liner than burn a Cumberland farm. Industrial Glasgow stands for Scotland.”

“I wonder——” said Margaret. “At all events, the Borderers are a virile lot. Of all famous Scots—poets, historians, explorers, soldiers—most of

them sprang from our barren hills. At Glasgow you're satisfied to trade and hammer iron."

She stopped. Since she was resigned to take the second best, there was no use in bantering Jim, but sometimes she doubted if she really were resigned. She mused, and studied the landscape.

Criffel's dark-blue top cut the melting sunset. Farther back, one saw the rocks at Southernness. The tide had run two hours' ebb, and Solway sands were marked by lines of foam. Dark sails dotted the green channels, and the smoke of a steamer steering west floated down the sunset's track. In the distance, the surf beat the shoals and its faint turmoil, carried across rock and heather, was like chiming bells. The elfin chime had called Andrew, and Margaret felt it called her, away from all for which Jim and Glasgow stood. Andrew was a fool and a wastrel, but he knew the thrill of splendid risk and rash adventure.

In the meantime, Jim smoked his cigarette. He was anxious, for he expected soon to get news of Andrew, and when the cablegram arrived, Margaret must know. At the loch she had cleverly eluded him, but now she could not keep him occupied by the boat and fishing-rod. He got up and threw away his cigarette.

"When I was at the Garth two weeks ago, I asked you to marry me, and you said I might talk about it again."

"Two weeks is not very long, Jim."

"Would agreement be easier if I waited?"

"I don't know," said Margaret. "It might be less hard. You ought to have talked about it at the loch. I was happy on the water."

Jim looked at her with surprise and smiled. "I imagine you saw I wanted to talk, but you were resolved I should not."

"Perhaps that is so, Jim. Sometimes one uses instinctive caution. I expect I was afraid you might carry me away."

"But if you were afraid, it implies you were not altogether unwilling. You puzzle me, Margaret!"

"I want to agree," said Margaret. "You're kind, and although I'm not, you play up nobly. In fact, you have all the qualities one ought to like. If I were logical, I'd be keen to marry you; but I'm not logical. Love has nothing to do with logic, and I hesitate——"

She stopped. The light was going; grouse and plover called, and in the evening calm the surf struck a sharper note. The distant chime troubled Margaret. Jim studied her, and frowned. Since he kept back the letters he had borne some strain.

“It looks as if you rather wanted a safeguard than a husband,” he remarked.

The blood came to Margaret’s skin, but she tried for calm.

“You’re not remarkably obvious, Jim.”

“I think I’m accurate. You are really afraid of Andrew. You know you ought not to marry him, but you’re attracted—— After all, his romantic extravagance has some charm. You feel, if you engaged to marry a sober fellow, you needn’t bother about Andrew’s coming back.”

“Sometimes you’re rather keen,” said Margaret in a level voice. “Well, if I admit your supposition accurate—— Would you be satisfied with your part?”

“I’d try to be resigned. I want to help; I want to make all smooth for you. Still, I’d hope that by and by you’d give me an easier part.”

“Ah!” said Margaret, “if you really were resigned, you’d be very noble! To think for another and not at all for oneself is fine. But I doubt if you could keep it up. I could not.”

“Will you let me try, Margaret?”

“I don’t yet know, Jim. We are flesh and blood, and the experiment might cost us much.”

For a few moments they were quiet, and Margaret thought the surf got louder but she did not want to listen. The tide went west, where Andrew was, and she thought about him when she heard the sea. Jim knitted his brows. He saw he had moved Margaret, and to some extent, he was sincere. His plan was to wait, but he dared not. If he could not persuade her now, it would be harder by and by.

“Andrew has left us; I think it’s the proper word,” he said. “If he comes back for a time, he will not be the man you knew. You admitted you could picture his carrying the lance; can’t you picture his carrying the ax? In the Canadian woods he’ll find his real occupation, and the job will absorb him. The lumbermen and river-jacks are his proper friends. At Murrendale his friends were fishermen and poachers. You must see its importance. Andrew has no use for cultivated society and domestic calm.”

“You stated something like that before,” said Margaret, and her eyes began to sparkle.

“I thought my argument logical,” said Jim, in an apologetic voice.

“After all, you don’t know if I have much use for domestic calm. Your other argument carried you farther; but you don’t know where to stop.”

“It’s possible,” said Jim. “You see, I love you, and I am flesh and blood.”

Margaret got up. “I think we’ll let it go,” she said, with a touch of haughtiness. “Perhaps I’m highly strung and exaggerate; but I liked you better at the loch. If you urge me now, I must refuse.”

“Well, I suppose I must wait for another time,” said Jim, and frowned. “The trouble is, as soon as I do urge you, we begin to dispute.”

“Then your line is obvious,” Margaret rejoined, and stopping for a moment, resumed with a smile: “I’m bothered, Jim, because I don’t see my proper line, and when I’m bothered, to hurt another is some relief. Besides, your serenity isn’t very marked. But I don’t want to dispute, and we ought to start.”

Jim said nothing. His habit was not to let himself go, and he knew Margaret’s blood was hot. They started down the hill, and he speculated rather moodily about her emotions when Turnbull’s cablegram arrived. He must admit he had kept back Andrew’s letters, but Margaret ought to see his not enlightening her was justified. For all that, he was anxious. Margaret was very keen.

CHAPTER XXVI

MARGARET WONDERS

When Jim next returned from Glasgow he left the city two days sooner than his habit was. Mrs. Grier telegraphed that Hannah was coming back; Hannah must be told about Andrew, and since she would inform Margaret, Jim saw he ought to be about. Then, before Hannah went to Johnston's, he must give Margaret Andrew's letters and satisfy her he had, for her sake, not done so sooner.

So far, Jim admitted his luck was good, although perhaps his mother's cleverness accounted for something. Andrew was not the wastrel Margaret thought, but he was a fool, and in a sense, he had forced her to let him go. Anyhow, she had let Andrew go, and, but for Hannah's arrival, Jim imagined she would soon have acknowledged him her lover. Now he saw he ran some risk, and he began to think his luck had turned. When he got to Rowans in the evening, he found Hannah had arrived sooner than he calculated and Margaret had come across from the Garth.

After dinner he joined the others in the square hall. Hannah knew about Andrew, but Jim thought she had not yet informed Margaret; he imagined his mother had seen they had not an opportunity for confidential talk. The trouble was, so long as Hannah stayed by Margaret, Jim could not talk about the packet.

The large hall was old-fashioned, and Andrew, the shipbuilder, had left it alone. The walls were paneled with dark wood, and crooked oak beams crossed the roof. Old black presses occupied corners and a battered copper lamp hung by a chain. Mrs. Grier had wanted to modernize the room. She declared Rowans was not now a Border pele, but Andrew was firm.

The evening was cold and stormy, and a fire burned in the big old-fashioned grate. A broken rose-tree tapped the window, and the hazels and rowans tossed. Mrs. Grier would not use the clumsy lamp, and candles in branching silver sticks occupied a table, but the light was not altogether gone, and the casement windows faced west. One saw lead-colored clouds roll across an angry yellow sky, and bent, black trees.

Hannah had got a shock, and was not yet willing to talk about Andrew. If the others went off, she might give Margaret her confidence, but they did not

go, and she narrated her fishing exploits in Norway. By and by a car throbbed, and she turned to Mrs. Grier.

“Do you expect somebody?” she asked with a touch of annoyance.

Mrs. Grier said she did not, and Margaret thought Hannah’s not wanting to see people strange. Jim frowned, for he imagined he knew the car, and a few moments afterwards Mackellar came in.

“The evening’s stormy, and in the Kells plantation a branch broke my screen,” he said. “For all that, I felt I would rather carry the good news and see Hannah’s satisfaction than telegraph.”

“Then you have a cablegram?” said Hannah eagerly.

“The message arrived ten minutes before I took the road,” Mackellar replied. “Andrew’s well and at the cove. He states he’s sailing soon.”

He pulled out a yellow envelope, and going by Mrs. Grier, gave Hannah the message. Since Mackellar, as a rule, was formally polite, Margaret was puzzled; then Andrew had obviously run some risk she did not know. Her curiosity was excited, and she looked about. Hannah’s color was high, and her eyes sparkled. Jim smiled, but his pose was stiff, and Margaret felt his smile cost him something. Mrs. Grier was in the shadow and said nothing. Then Hannah gave her aunt the telegram, and turned to Mackellar.

“Thank you,” she said with emotion. “Andrew is all I’ve got. Now I know he’s safe, I expect you can picture my relief.”

“But was Andrew in some danger?” Margaret inquired.

“D’ye not know?” said Mackellar, and his voice was hard.

“I have heard nothing about Andrew since he sailed,” Margaret replied, and added: “I am not his relation.”

Mackellar studied the others, and his look was inscrutable. Then he turned and gave Margaret a humorous glance.

“For a’ that, the lad sent ye a packet. I expect it covered some letters.”

“Then, where is the packet?”

“I delivered it to Mistress Grier.”

Mrs. Grier faced Margaret calmly, and Mackellar admitted he liked her pluck.

“I kept back the packet. Although you are not Andrew’s relation, you are his friend, and we did not want you to share our anxiety. We were anxious, but now the telegram states Andrew is safe, I will get you the packet.”

She took a candle from the table and went off. Margaret crossed the floor and joined Hannah.

“Since you have got comforting news I am very glad; but I don’t yet know much——”

“Until I got home, I knew nothing,” Hannah replied. “Aunt and Jim thought they ought not to tell me Andrew was lost in the woods. They meant to wait until the search party his friend sent off got back.”

“That is so,” said Jim. “I expect Hannah will admit we were justified. Turnbull’s letter gave us good grounds to hope they’d soon find Andrew.”

“Then, you got a letter from Quebec some time ago?”

“A letter, and a packet for Miss Margaret Johnston,” said Mackellar with a touch of dryness. “I brought the packet to Rowans, but perhaps Andrew’s relations took the proper line——”

He stopped, for Mrs. Grier, carrying a long envelope, came in.

“To give you the letters in happier circumstances than we not long since expected is some relief, my dear,” she said. “However, now Andrew is back at the cove, it is possible he is sorry the packet went. Perhaps he would sooner you did not read the letters.”

“Andrew stated, if he did not return with the party, Miss Johnston was to get the envelope. It’s all we know,” Mackellar remarked. “Well, my errand’s done, and since I’m in the neighborhood I’ll look up a customer.” He turned to Margaret. “The evening’s stormy, and I go by the Garth. Are ye for home?”

Margaret got up. She had Andrew’s letters, and although her curiosity was not satisfied, she resolved to question Hannah when the others were not about. Besides, she thought Mackellar wanted her to go.

After a few minutes they started, but at the top of a hill Mackellar jumped down to open a gate. A larch wood opposite broke the savage wind, and when he came back he did not start the car.

“Andrew was your friend and I expect ye’re interested,” he remarked. “It looks as if his relations had not told ye much about him.”

“I am interested, but I imagined the others did not know much.”

Mackellar narrated Andrew's speculation in coal. "Although I did not give him a large sum, in a week he had got by his own efforts all he needed," he resumed. "Maybe he was lucky, but the lad has pluck and judgment, and where others hesitated he seized his chance."

"Andrew has pluck. Perhaps he has more useful qualities than his friends imagine," Margaret agreed.

"Just that!" said Mackellar and narrated Andrew's excursion to the height-of-land. "A word in the cablegram indicates that he carried out his plans. It's possible he thinks me old and dour, but I ken the lad, and if ye make allowances, he's good stuff. Ye'll note he did all he undertook to do."

Margaret thrilled. She admitted the thrill was not logical, but she liked to know Andrew, after all, was to some extent the man she had thought. She said nothing, and Mackellar resumed: "Maybe I ought not to have given the envelope to Mistress Grier, but when I carried it to Rowans, Hannah was not at home. Well, ye have got the letters, and we must push on."

He started the car, and Margaret thought his stating he doubted if he ought to have left the envelope important; Mackellar knew all he implied. Then he had wanted to talk about Andrew, but he had not done so at Rowans. Mackellar was obviously Andrew's champion, but Margaret knew him sincere. Anyhow, the letters were hers. Nobody was entitled to keep them back, and since Jim had allowed his mother to do so, he must satisfy her his object was good.

In the meantime, there was no use in bothering Mackellar. He had said all he was willing to say, and his frankness was rather remarkable. Moreover, one could not talk. The wind screamed about the car and, when they ran through a wood, dead leaves and broken twigs beat the screens. The beam in front touched broken trees, and when they plunged down a hill Margaret heard a flooded burn. Water sparkled in the speeding light and leaped about the wheels, but Margaret clutched her letters and felt the turmoil chimed with her mood.

Her emotions were stormy and mixed. Sometimes she speculated angrily about Mrs. Grier and Jim. They claimed they had thought for her, but Margaret doubted. Sometimes she indulged her triumphant thrill. Andrew was not a loafer; he had found his occupation and was making good. Mackellar was a cool and critical Scot, but he was satisfied. For all that, Margaret had let Andrew go, and perhaps, in a sense, she had agreed to marry Jim. At all events, she had not refused, but she recaptured her strange,

instinctive shrinking when he had urged her. Now she did not see what she ought to do about it. She must wait until she studied the letters.

Not long after the car started Hannah went to her room and pulled an easy-chair to the fire. At length she was alone and could relax; to talk to Jim and Mrs. Grier was something of a strain. They were polite, but she thought them glad for her to go. Hannah knitted her brows.

She was Andrew's champion. To some extent the others were his antagonists, and she wondered how far antagonism would carry her aunt. She did not speculate much about Jim. He was weaker stuff than his mother, and if he went where he ought not, it was because she pushed him along.

Mrs. Grier had not told her about Andrew's getting lost, but Hannah wanted to be just, and acknowledged the other's excuse plausible. All the same, she had kept back Andrew's letters to Margaret, and there her excuse was not plausible. Since Mrs. Grier knew Margaret was no longer Andrew's friend and it accounted for his going to Quebec, she had no grounds to think Margaret would feel much suspense.

Then Hannah began to speculate about Margaret's breaking with Andrew, and whether Mrs. Grier had not something to do with it. Andrew had not much balance; he allowed his boyish temperament to carry him away. In a sense, perhaps, Margaret was forced to think him something he was not. Margaret's habit, however, was to trust her friends, and Hannah imagined Mrs. Grier had worked on her jealousy and exaggerated the importance of all that weighed against Andrew. Yet Hannah felt his punishment was unjust. Perhaps Andrew was entitled to pay for his carelessness, but it looked as if he had paid for being stanch.

Anyhow, Minnie Douglas knew. The trouble was, one cannot force an unwilling Scot to be frank, and Hannah doubted if the girl would give her her confidence. The ground was awkward. All the same, Andrew was the man for Margaret, and Jim was not. Then Margaret was Hannah's friend and Andrew was her brother. Sometimes to meddle was rash, but Hannah resolved, if she saw a useful line, she would not hesitate.

CHAPTER XXVII

MINNIE'S NARRATIVE

In the morning the wind was gone. The sun touched the front of Johnston's house, and Margaret carried Andrew's letters to a bench on the flagged walk. For an hour or two after she got home from Rowans she had occupied herself with the packet, and sometimes she was moved to shame for her unworthy doubts, and sometimes to gentle tears. Yet she was a Scot, and would not allow emotion to conquer her. Now the thrill she had got was going, she must weigh all she wanted to believe against all she really knew, and try to strike a just balance.

After a time she put up the letters, and her eyes shone. She hated herself, and particularly she hated Mrs. Grier, but she was satisfied about Andrew. His letters vindicated him; he had not thought she would get the packet unless he were dead, and his sincerity was obvious. Then, in a sense, the letters were not love letters. Andrew had not consciously tried to move her. On the whole, he was naïve, and where his touch was sure and skillful was where he drew the background for his adventures. Margaret pictured the long white seas, the battered, plunging schooner, and the tired men handling swollen canvas and laboring at the pump.

But Andrew's unconscious portrait of himself, rather than the background, interested Margaret. She saw him, as she had known him; altogether a man, but with boyish moods, trusting his luck and trusting others, sometimes cheated and yet conquering. Obstacles did not stop him; Andrew was indomitable, and, as he had made good on board ship, he would make good in the woods. People trusted him because he took their honesty for granted, and he did not bother about shabby antagonists. Yet he was not a fool, and, if he were forced, he would fight.

Margaret blushed for her mean credulity. Andrew was altogether flesh and blood, but he loved her, and to picture his carrying on an intrigue with Rutherford's niece was ridiculous. In fact, now she thought about it, his carelessness was his justification. It looked as if he did not see where his sticking to his friends led his critics. Margaret, however, would not dwell on that. She herself had condemned Andrew, and she was ashamed.

Then she began to contrast Andrew and Jim, and she smiled, a scornful smile. Jim, fastidiously correct and cultivated, so to speak, was by

comparison anemic and colorless. He pondered and weighed the risk; Andrew plunged ahead. Where Jim saw an attractive part he played up gracefully; Andrew was stanch where stanchness cost him much. All the same, Margaret admitted Jim had grounds to think she had let Andrew go, and perhaps for imagining he could persuade her to marry him. She hated to cheat, and she frowned——

She heard steps and looked up. Johnston came along the terrace and took his pipe from his mouth. Margaret knew he had noticed the letters she had not thought to hide, and he no doubt knew she had studied them before. When she got home from Rowans she had talked about Andrew.

“Is the lad for stopping in Quebec? Does he tell you much about the sawmill?” Johnston inquired.

“He will go back,” said Margaret. “He’s keen about the lumber business. In fact, I think Andrew has found his proper job; but he and his partner are embarrassed for money and he is coming home.”

“I doubt if he’ll persuade Mackellar,” Johnston remarked. “What for are they needing money?”

“They must buy new machines and cut roads in the woods.”

Johnston smiled. “When I was young and wrote to a bonnie lass I did not write about things like yon!”

In a sense, Margaret admitted Andrew’s doing so was strange, but his letters were boyishly frank and she approved his reckoning on her interest. All the same, she was rather embarrassed.

“Yet, when you were nearly broken, mother knew your troubles, and you took her help,” she rejoined.

“That is so,” Johnston agreed with a twinkle. “Still I wouldna’ state the circumstances are altogether similar. When, for my sake, your mother fought her trustees, she was my wife.”

Margaret blushed and Johnston resumed: “Weel, the lad’s friends are numerous and one would not like to see him beat. But I must away and meet the builder I asked to examine Orchardton’s barn.”

He went off, and Margaret pondered. She had imagined Johnston was Andrew’s friend. Moreover, although he was a successful business man, she knew he was rather Andrew’s sort than Jim’s. But her reflections began to disturb her, and she went to the house.

In the meantime, Hannah had resolved to see Minnie Douglas. To inquire for her at the hotel would excite curiosity, and Hannah would rather meet her as if she had not thought to do so. She waited for some time; and then, when she took the road by the water splash one morning, her patience was rewarded. Minnie crossed the foot bridge, and meeting Hannah, stopped.

“We heard you had news of Mr. Grier,” she said. “Uncle and I were glad to know he was back from the woods.”

Hannah saw Minnie’s satisfaction was sincere, and did not think her knowing strange. In a small Scottish town, people talk about their neighbors, and Andrew’s sailors were Solway men.

“Thank you,” she said. “You were kind to think about my brother.”

Minnie smiled. “I expect you do not know how many friends he has. Not a fisherman comes to the house but asks for him.” She stopped for a moment and her look got embarrassed, but she resumed: “I wanted to meet you, Miss Grier, and when I saw you in the road I thought I was lucky. Mrs. Wilson was over from Dumfries, and she told us Mr. Andrew’s coming home——”

“Well?” said Hannah and waited. Minnie knew much about Andrew that Hannah wanted to know, and it was possible she knew about Margaret and Jim.

“When Mr. Andrew was with me at the bridge before he went away, you were in the car. He did not expect to meet me; I stopped him in the road.”

“I did not think my brother had arranged to meet you,” Hannah remarked in a quiet voice.

“Others thought it,” said Minnie, and although she blushed, her look got hard. “For all that, your cousin stopped the car.”

Hannah imagined she could account for Jim’s stopping, but she said, “Please go on. You want to tell me something?”

“To begin with, I’m engaged to marry Rob Drummond o’ Penkiln——”

Hannah saw the statement was important, and she nodded.

“I waited for Mr. Andrew because I was anxious for uncle. Sergeant Morton wanted to know about a cap a shrimper found on the sands. It looked as if he knew your brother was not at the hotel when the poachers fought the police.”

“Then Andrew was, after all, not at the hotel?” said Hannah with surprise.

“It’s by with now. Mr. Andrew went off with the poachers at ten o’clock, but when Morton asked about him we allowed he stopped for the night. You see, all I thought was, we must help Mr. Andrew out, and if he was at the *Murrendale*, he was not on board the boat. I didn’t reckon on folks talking _____”

Perhaps Minnie’s carelessness was strange, but Hannah pictured her, frightened and excited by the sergeant’s stern questions. Hannah knew her brother, and she saw a light.

“Then, you cheated Morton, and Andrew would not let you down? If Morton found out you had baffled him, it would be awkward for Mr. Rutherford. When you met Andrew, you wanted to warn him he must support your story?”

“Just that,” Minnie agreed, and for a moment or two was quiet. Then she gave Hannah a steady look.

“Not long ago, Mr. Grier asked me to go to Glasgow and manage a smart tea-shop. The pay was good, and I’d not yet promised to marry Rob. His mother was against our marrying, and I thought if I went away a while—— Well, uncle said I ought to bide, and I began to see——”

Hannah did not altogether see, although she thought Minnie’s plan to encourage a hesitating lover perhaps was good. If Jim were sincerely Andrew’s friend and believed Minnie had entangled him, his trying to banish the girl before Andrew returned was justified. Hannah, however, doubted Jim, and since he wanted Margaret, she did not see him using much effort to stop the supposititious intrigue. In fact, she rather thought he would be willing for Margaret to imagine Andrew Minnie’s lover. Minnie noted that she was puzzled, and the blood came to her skin.

“For me to take the Glasgow post was Mrs. Grier’s plan, and I’m thinking Mr. James did not know all she wanted. Well, he’s your relation and I’ll soon be Mistress Drummond; but Mr. Andrew was very leal and maybe he paid for’t. Anyway, we dinna’ forget, and I thought I might help you to help your brother.”

Hannah gave Minnie her hand and let her go. The girl’s face was red, but she was marked by a touch of dignity. Hannah knew the Borderers do not forget.

When Minnie was gone, she pondered. Perhaps at the beginning Andrew had attracted the girl, but he had not consciously done so, and Minnie was soon resigned to know he was not for her. At all events, she was not spiteful, and when the police inquired about the poachers she baffled Morton. Perhaps her rash meddling cost her more than she had thought. It certainly cost Andrew much, but now Minnie imagined Hannah could put all straight.

Hannah was willing to try, and to persuade Margaret she was not just, ought not to be hard; but she did not yet see Mrs. Grier's object for giving Minnie the Glasgow post, and Minnie thought it important. For a few moments she concentrated, and then her eyes sparkled. At length, all was plain. Minnie must be banished before Andrew returned, in order that people might imagine his relations were resolved to stop the intrigue. In fact, it would look as if they had tried to compensate the girl. Anyhow, they had offered her a first-class post for a bribe to go away. Although the plan had not worked, it was clever and unthinkably mean.

When Hannah went back to Rowans she was resolved to punish her aunt, but since she meant to help Andrew, she must use caution. Perhaps for a time she would allow Mrs. Grier to think she had not found her out. Hannah did not know about Jim. Where he saw an advantage, his code was not very stern, but on the whole Hannah thought he would stop where his mother would not. In the evening when they got dinner, she made an experiment.

“Is your tea-shop flourishing, Jim?” she asked.

Mrs. Grier gave her a keen glance, but Jim smiled.

“The shop is not mine. It belongs to an estate I'm administering for the trustees. So far, they do not grumble.”

“Oh, well,” said Hannah, carelessly, “I know why Minnie Douglas refused the manager's post. She is going to marry Johnston's tenant, Drummond of Penkiln. The marriage is rather good.”

“It is not good for Drummond,” Mrs. Grier remarked. “His mother tried to break the engagement.”

Hannah was satisfied about Jim's part. Mrs. Grier had used him, and although he probably knew she had done so, Hannah thought he did not see where she led. It was possible he refused to inquire. She turned to her aunt, and her look was calm.

“Mrs. Drummond is old and crotchety. Do you imagine she ought to break the engagement?”

“I’d sooner not talk about it. The ground is awkward,” Mrs. Grier replied in a meaning voice.

Hannah smiled. “I don’t know if you will embarrass Jim, but I am not remarkably sensitive. Besides, your rules are out of date; the war banished the old school for good. Well, you imply Minnie Douglas is not the proper wife for Drummond. What are your grounds?”

“The girl’s temperament. Since you force me to talk about it, she is an adventuress. She tried to entangle Andrew. To some extent, I fear she did entangle him.”

“Not at all,” said Hannah firmly. “She did not entangle Andrew; I doubt if she tried. You would like to think she did so, because you feel it might justify you; but that’s another thing.”

Jim pushed back his plate and occupied himself with his cigarette case. Mrs. Grier’s face got red.

“I have used some patience, Hannah, and tried to bear with your rebellious moods, but I cannot allow you to be openly rude. I am your aunt, and your trustees gave me power——”

“Perhaps you will send my coffee to the smoking-room; I have not got the cigarettes I want,” said Jim in a languid voice, and got up.

“I’d sooner you stopped,” said Hannah, and signing him to sit down, turned to Mrs. Grier. Her eyes sparkled and her look was very hard.

“For some time I did not dispute your claims and was willing for you to think you ruled, but you meddled where you ought not, and I see no use in pretending,” she resumed. “Andrew is laird, and if he were not, Rowans would be mine. Then it’s important that he’s my brother. You have thought Andrew a proper subject for damaging implications and Jim’s humor, but when my brother’s not about I stand for him, and the jokes and implications must stop. So long as you are Andrew’s guests, you and Jim must use proper politeness to your host.”

She got up, and Mrs. Grier saw the significance of her ringing the bell. She knew her rule was gone, and the trustees would acknowledge Hannah’s claim. She had got a nasty knock, but she said nothing, and Jim opened the door. All went out, but Hannah did not go with the others. She went to the terrace in the dark, and although her heart beat, she smiled. Perhaps she had allowed her just resentment to carry her away, but she thought Mrs. Grier did not yet know she had altogether found her out. Anyhow, she was resolved to fight for Andrew, and she meant to conquer.

CHAPTER XXVIII

THE ANNE SIGNALS

In the morning Mrs. Grier met Hannah calmly, and although she did not talk much, implied that she was willing to make allowances for her niece's wayward temperament. Jim was philosophical. He went to Johnston's, but he did not stay long, and when he came back Hannah thought him moody. On Monday he started for Glasgow, and did not return at the week-end.

Hannah said nothing to Margaret about Minnie's refusing the Glasgow post. If she were forced, she might enlighten Margaret, but caution was indicated, and she liked to feel she had a weighty argument in reserve. Margaret, however, must know Mrs. Grier had cheated her. The *Anne Musgrave* had sailed, and when Andrew arrived Hannah reckoned on Margaret's feeling something of a reaction. She meant to work upon her when she moved.

Seven or eight days after Andrew sailed, Mackellar brought across a shipping newspaper. A paragraph stated that the S.S. *Caliope*, at Glasgow, from Montreal, sighted the British schooner, *Anne Musgrave*, hove to in a northwest gale, with jib-boom and fore-topmast gone. The schooner signaled for assistance, which was given by the engineer, and the steamship proceeded. The latitude and longitude, not far east of Newfoundland, were stated.

"The *Anne's* in the liners' track, and if she were badly damaged, all on board would soon be taken off," Mackellar remarked. "Still, it doesn't look as if she were damaged much, and the strange thing is, a steamship engineer was able to help. To mend a broken topmast is not his job."

"You must try to find out—" said Hannah. "Perhaps the steamer's captain would tell us what his men did on board."

Mackellar nodded. "I thought I'd write to the company's office, but first I'll see Johnston. He's called to a board meeting at Glasgow, and he'll know where to make inquiries."

He went to Johnston's, and for two or three days Hannah waited for news. Then one afternoon a car from the Garth arrived for her, and she found Margaret in the drawing-room. After a few minutes Johnston brought

in an Atlantic chart, and stated that he had sent the car as soon as he got back from the station.

“My news is good,” he said, and indicated a spot on the chart. “The *Caliope* sighted the *Anne* where ye see the mark, and the captain sent a boat across. The gale was strong, and the mate and third-engineer were nearly beat to get on board, but the lad went twice——”

“The engineer went?” said Margaret.

“Just that. The narrative is his. Fergus is a Grennock lad, and he was willing to oblige the chairman o’ the Green Funnel line. Well, the *Anne* was hove-to; a jib hoisted forward, and a bit main-trysail holding her head-to-sea. Her topmast was gone, but when the wind is fresh a schooner does not need her topsails, and the foreyard was on its trestle. She carried a deck load and when she plunged the seas came on board. A hatch cover was broken, under the load, and the water got down.”

“But you said the news was good,” Hannah remarked. “Did the steamship men mend the hatch?”

“They could not get at the hatch for the timber on deck, and in a strong gale Captain Wilson could not put the big battens overboard. When the steamship mate asked if they would abandon her, Andrew laughed. All he wanted was for somebody to mend the pump, and Wilson reckoned if she was waterlogged the timber would keep her afloat——”

Johnston stopped and resumed with a chuckle: “One does not get an inscribed telescope for mending a pump, and the mate declared he was not a blacksmith, but he was ready to take off the crew. Anyway, his remark was something like that. Wilson replied that the crew did not want to go, but Fergus reckoned some were not very unwilling. Ye see, a batten that fetched adrift had driven the plunger-rod into the vitals o’ the pump, and since the pump would not work they could not keep down the water. Andrew thought it could be mended, and Fergus agreed to try.

“Well, when an Atlantic gale rages, to cross two hundred yards o’ leaping foam is daunting, but Fergus must carry the broken gear to the *Caliope’s* engine-room and carry it back. The pump interested the lad. She was a new pattern, and a marine engineer likes to handle a fresh contraption. If ye want him for a friend, let him mend your watch, so long as ye have another. A grand machine, he said, and he drew me a diagram o’ her bucket and valves. Andrew told him he gave a good price for her in Cumberland, and I’m thinking the investment was sound.

“However, Fergus mended the pump, the boat was hoisted in, and the *Caliope* went ahead. For a minute or two Fergus stopped at the gangway and saw the *Anne*, steadied by her two bits o’ sail, climb a long white sea and vanish behind its top. Then he went to his room, for when he ought to have slept he was occupied with the pump, and he must soon keep his watch. A modest lad, but he knew his job, and when the company launches another boat maybe I’ll look him up.”

Hannah thought Johnston’s approval justified, but she pictured the *Anne*, waterlogged and crippled, plunging across the angry seas, and wondered whether Margaret had remarked Andrew’s pluck. Although Margaret’s calm was baffling, her color, perhaps, was high. Then Johnston picked up the chart and, counting the meridians, indicated another spot some distance east.

“An hour before I started, we got the *Algerian’s* report. She passed a British schooner steering east, with topmast and jib-boom gone. The schooner signaled the *Anne’s* number and all’s well. It looks as if the pump worked and Andrew had made a fine run. In the meantime, that’s all, Miss Hannah, but when he passes Tory Island, I’ll see ye know.”

He carried away the chart, and Hannah studied Margaret. Margaret smiled.

“Father likes an interested audience. His narrative had a dramatic touch.”

Johnston, as a rule, was not theatrical, and Hannah wondered—— Since he knew all she wanted to know was if Andrew were safe, she did not see his object for working on her emotion. All the same, she thought him Andrew’s friend, and perhaps he had tried to work on Margaret’s.

“I was interested; Andrew is my brother,” she rejoined.

“Andrew stuck to his ship, but father’s hero was the young engineer, who knew his job,” Margaret remarked.

Hannah nodded. Johnston was keen, and sometimes to be obvious has disadvantages.

“To know one’s job is much, particularly when the job is a man’s job, and perhaps it accounts for one’s liking sailors and engineers. Their business is to steer big ships and control big machines; and they must make good. When one fronts an Atlantic gale, subtlety and pretense will not help. One must conquer by steady nerve.”

“I expect that is so,” said Margaret. “Still, I don’t see the implication _____”

“Oh, well,” said Hannah, “sometimes I rather let myself go, and your father’s story carried a thrill. I like to picture Andrew’s sticking to his waterlogged ship and conquering the leak.”

Margaret got up. “The room’s cold. I’ll have tea served by the fire in the hall.”

After the *Algerian’s* arrival, the *Anne Musgrave* was not reported. It looked as if she had vanished, and all the comfort Hannah got was Johnston’s statement that on the Atlantic the weather was fine. Jim stopped at Glasgow until Mrs. Grier got disturbed, and telegraphed for him to return.

When he got to Rowans, Hannah was at the Garth, and Mrs. Grier was satisfied to know they were alone. In the evening she and Jim talked by the drawing-room fire. The wind roared in the chimney, doors and windows shook, and dead leaves beat the glass.

“You ought not to have bothered me; I was occupied at the office,” Jim grumbled. “Then, so long as it rains and blows, I don’t see much use in haunting the Garth. In fine weather Margaret was much in the garden, and sometimes agreed to an excursion in the car, but I’d sooner stop at Glasgow than talk to Johnston.”

“All the same, for you to cultivate him would be useful.”

“Margaret seems to think that my object,” Jim remarked with a dreary smile. “Anyhow, she gives me numerous opportunities, for, as a rule, when I want to talk to her, Johnston is about. I don’t know his feelings, but I admit I’m bored. There’s another thing: Hannah is Andrew’s supporter, and one evening not long since her antagonism was rather evident. I feel I ought not to take her hospitality.”

“You exaggerate, Jim. Sometimes Hannah indulges her rebellious temper, and perhaps my remarks about Andrew were not wise, but she is not revengeful, and she soon forgets. At all events, her supporting Andrew ought not to bother us.”

“I don’t know. Perhaps Hannah is cleverer than you think. Margaret trusts her, and I begin to imagine she sees a plan to baffle me.”

Mrs. Grier had imagined something like that, but she said, “Then, you must not help her by staying away. I suppose you really want Margaret? You admit you must make a good marriage.”

For a few moments Jim was quiet and looked about. Rowans was old-fashioned and rather austere, but the house had charm and a touch of dignity.

Jim pictured his dreary Glasgow lodgings and his office at the top of a block in a side street, where rents were cheap. He knew he had some talent, but in order to use his talent he must get money. People were not keen about engaging a lawyer whose poverty was obvious. Yet ambition did not account for all. His love was selfish, but he did love Margaret, and he frowned.

“Margaret’s baffling, mother,” he said in a moody voice. “Sometimes she’s kind; sometimes I know she doubts. I feel I make no real progress. Although she imagines she has done with Andrew, he is my antagonist. Then, in a sense, I tricked her, and to feel your part is a shabby part, is an awkward load.”

“Your hesitation is ridiculous,” Mrs. Grier rejoined. “Although I am your mother, and think for you, I’m Margaret’s friend, and I want her to be happy. She would not be happy with Andrew; he’s a wastrel. You must persuade her before he arrives.”

“I doubt if I can persuade her. When I try she’s annoyed. In a way, I think her hesitation’s unconscious, perhaps instinctive. She rather feels than argues that, until she sees Andrew, she must put me off.”

“If you allow her to do so, you are very rash.”

“Oh, well,” said Jim resignedly, “I expect I must brace up for a fresh effort. When one is poor, one must not be fastidious.”

Mrs. Grier gave him a puzzled glance. “Your pluck is not very good, Jim, but for Margaret’s sake you ought to use some effort, and you must do so soon. Andrew’s ship cannot be far from the Irish coast.”

Jim remarked her glance. Perhaps it was strange, but she was puzzled. She really thought his scruples extravagant, and Margaret ought not to marry Andrew. Anyhow, he admitted her pluck was good. He was quiet, and Mrs. Grier got some sewing.

CHAPTER XXIX

THE FULL MOON

The moon was full, and the reflections on the damp, tarred road were like silver pools. Dew sparkled on the grass and hedgerows, and for a time Johnston's big car rolled smoothly by checkers of dull-blue turnips and yellow stubble. Then, where dark trees rolled down to Murren Water, he turned and steered up a rough, steep lane.

"By the Solway, nights like this are not very numerous, and I do not know a nobler view than one gets on the Watch Hill," he said.

Hannah and Margaret agreed. Mrs. Grier said nothing; the concert at Dumfries had bored her, and she was sleepy. Then she was vexed for Jim. He was not a musician, and when they reached the concert hall, Hannah had rather cleverly defeated her plan to give him and Margaret neighboring chairs. In fact, not for a moment since they started had Hannah left Margaret alone, and Mrs. Grier imagined Margaret approved. Jim was disturbed and moody. In two days he must return to Glasgow, but he had not yet enjoyed a quiet talk with Margaret. Sometimes Hannah, and sometimes Johnston, had baffled him. He rather thought Johnston had consciously done so.

The car lurched up the hill, by dry-stone dykes and bent thorns, but at the top Johnston steered across the mossy grass and stopped. Getting down, he stretched his legs and lighted his pipe.

"For five minutes ye can look about," he said.

Margaret and Hannah started for a neighboring cairn and Jim knew they did not want him to join them. Mrs. Grier said she was tired, and the time when she could walk about wet grass was gone. In fact, since Hannah's shoes were thin, she thought she ought to stay with her. Jim imagined Johnston smiled, but the old fellow was occupied by his pipe. Jim would sooner they had kept the main road. When Margaret and he were on Watch Hill before, he had thought the sea and mountains helped her to recapture something of a vanished romance. All the same, he admitted the view was noble.

The moon touched the broken moor, and lighted shining pools. Smooth fields rolled down the hill, and although for the most part the landscape was silver and gray and blue, the stubble was pale yellow and the pasture dusky

green. The sheaves were gone and the cattle were not in the fields. Behind the shadowy coast belt, wide channels pierced the sands, but farther back all was sparkling water. In the distance the gray Cumbrian peaks cut the sky. On the Scottish side, Criffel's dark slopes commanded the silver Firth.

All was spacious, and the hills were serenely calm; but the Solway tide is never quiet, and one heard its measured beat. When the moon is full, the current goes five miles an hour, and belts of foam marked the shoals that hampered its advance.

"I wonder," said Margaret, "where the stream that sweeps the sands begins. One pictures its filling St. Mary's loch, breaking on Abbey Head, and swirling round Southernness. It brings us tangle-weed from the North Channel and salmon from the deep sea. It carries home the trawl-boats, and the little screw coasters to the ports in Cumberland. The strange thing is, when I hear the full-moon tide, I get restless and highly strung."

"Oh, well," said Hannah, "I am not romantic, and if the next high tides carry Andrew home, it's all I want. Since his ship signaled the *Algerian*, she has not been seen, and your father calculates she ought to have made Tory Island a day or two ago."

"She might have passed the signal station in the dark," said Margaret, and after looking about for a few minutes, touched Hannah. "Do you see something by Southernness?"

Hannah saw a dark object, outlined faintly against Criffel's foot. The mountain background was velvet blue; the object was black.

"A sailing coaster, I think," she replied. "She is not a fishing boat, because her sails are high——" She called to Johnston. "Have you not field-glasses in the car?"

Johnston got the glasses, and Hannah resumed: "For a coaster, the vessel is large, but the captain did not burn a flare for a pilot. Perhaps they got a man from a fishing boat. Now she leaves the mountain——"

The vessel crossed the moon's track and got distinct. Her hull and sails cut the glittering silver streak like an ebony silhouette. All saw she was a schooner, but, as a rule, a coasting schooner carries two topsails and she carried one. Under the foreyard a dark squaresail swelled, and one noted her fast advance across the shining belt.

"Somebody on board knows the Firth," Johnston remarked. "When the tide is running five knots, a stranger would not carry full sail——"

He took the glasses, and for a few moments was very quiet. The others knew him interested, and Hannah's heart beat. Then he said, "The topmast's a jury spar; the bowsprit's short. A Solway man is at the helm—I'm thinking it's Andrew! Her jib-boom is gone."

Mrs. Grier and Jim joined the group. Hannah asked for the glasses, and when she turned the screw her hand shook. For all that, her voice was calm.

"The schooner is the *Anne Musgrave*, and the helmsman knows the sands—— He leaves the *Barbara* deep and steers for Friar's pool. He means to bring up; there is not another spot where the anchor would hold."

The others said nothing, and Hannah speculated about their emotions. Hers were frankly triumphant. All, to some extent, had thought Andrew a careless loafer, and now they must admit they had not known him. He had undertaken to carry a load of timber from Quebec to Murren-foot, and when the next tide went up the Firth the timber would arrive. Perhaps his exploit was not romantic, but his tools were out of date, and when one has not much money, obstacles are numerous. For all that, Andrew had conquered, and he would not yet stop. He meant to mend the fortunes of the old lumber house, and Hannah was persuaded he would do so.

She thought Margaret saw Andrew's doing all he engaged to do was important. Jim was very quiet, and it looked as if Mrs. Grier forgot the grass was wet. Perhaps she knew she was beaten, but Hannah was not going to reckon on that. In the meantime, to allow the others to study the picture and note its significance was the proper line.

Carried along by the urgent tide, the *Anne* got larger. The captain jibed the mainboom, and, with the big squaresail on the other side, she was a pyramid of swelling canvas. The sharp, black sails cut the cold blue background, and the foreshortened hull was dark against the sparkling sea. One did not see the patches and blistered paint. In the moonlight, the schooner was beautiful. At length, she circled head to wind, and the sails went down. Johnston knocked out his pipe and started the engine.

"The captain will wait for the morning's tide, and we must take the road. The flood's not done, the sea is smooth, and if they launched a boat, Andrew would reach the water-foot in about an hour."

"Andrew will not launch a boat; he likes to finish his job," Hannah rejoined. "Then he really hasn't much grounds to think us keen to see him. When he started nobody wished him luck, and I expect he knew we didn't reckon on his making good."

“Then, we must go down to-morrow and give him a proper welcome,” said Johnston heartily.

They went back to the road, but Margaret allowed the others to go in front and stopped Hannah.

“Perhaps you are entitled to enjoy your triumph,” she remarked.

“I expect I was shabby, but I’m human, and people were not just. Perhaps all but your father doubted Andrew, and he had an unscrupulous antagonist.”

“I begin to think that is so,” Margaret agreed in a quiet voice. “All the same, Andrew was careless. When he ought to have stayed and satisfied his friends, he vanished.”

“Ah!” said Hannah, “you don’t yet know my brother. He trusts his friends, and his word goes. He engaged he’d not let Rutherford down. For his sake, Rutherford had run an awkward risk. You see, when the poachers carried off the policeman, Andrew was not at the hotel.”

“You know he was not?” said Margaret in an eager voice. “Then, where was he?”

“He was on board the poachers’ boat——”

The horn blew and Hannah saw the car roll back into the road.

“We’re waiting ye,” Johnston shouted.

“I must know——” said Margaret. “We must talk where we will not be disturbed. Come across in the morning; I’ll expect you soon.”

Jim opened the door and Hannah thought he looked at Margaret rather hard, but they got up and the car noisily rolled ahead. Margaret must wait for the morning and Hannah was willing for her to wait. After all, Margaret had not trusted Andrew as she ought.

Soon after breakfast, Hannah was at Johnston’s, and Margaret took her to the bench on the flagged walk. The trees were bare, and the wind was cold, but the sun was on the house-front, and Margaret knew they would be left alone.

“It looks as if I was not just,” she said by and by. “All the same, perhaps I had some grounds. If Andrew went poaching, why did he admit he was at the *Murrendale*?”

“He refused to deny he was there, but that’s another thing. You see, at the beginning, when the police inquired at the hotel, Minnie Douglas tried to put Morton off Andrew’s track; she was frightened, and it was all she thought about. After a time the sergeant bothered them again, and since they saw he doubted, Rutherford was afraid for his license, and Andrew was forced to support Minnie’s tale.”

“Did Andrew tell you he was not at Rutherford’s?”

“He did not. I think Andrew told nobody; he’s proud, and his habit is not to urge people to believe in him. Then, unless his statement, so to speak, was public, it would not help much, and a public statement would make trouble for Rutherford.”

“It’s obvious,” Margaret agreed, and blushed. “Perhaps you don’t know I urged Andrew to say where he was? He might have enlightened me, but I wasn’t satisfied. I declared all must know. He refused; I thought he dared not be frank.” She stopped, and her look got hard when she resumed: “I was not just. I ought to have trusted Andrew, but I was hurt, and Mrs. Grier insinuated——”

Hannah had resolved, if she were forced, to inform Margaret about Mrs. Grier’s plan for giving Minnie the Glasgow post, but she saw Margaret had had enough. She knew she had been tricked, and after all Mrs. Grier was Hannah’s relation. For a few moments Margaret brooded, and then she looked up.

“I don’t at all doubt, Hannah; but I’m puzzled. You admit Andrew did not tell you he was poaching.”

“Minnie Douglas told me,” said Hannah. “She was about when Andrew fixed to go and saw him start——” She stopped, for Margaret was proud and the ground was awkward. “Suppose we let it go?” she went on. “Andrew was poaching.”

“Very well,” said Margaret, and her face got red. “I feel I hate your aunt. Had Andrew, after all, stopped at the *Murrendale*, for me to think he ought not was ridiculous. Mrs. Grier exaggerated its significance and I allowed her to carry me away. But there’s another thing. Sometimes Jim talked as if Andrew was a joke. His humor was clever, and perhaps it weighed. How far was he his mother’s accomplice?”

“I frankly don’t know,” Hannah replied in a thoughtful voice. “To some extent, Jim played up, but perhaps he did not altogether see where he was

led. I think he refused to inquire. So long as he did not see, he was willing for his mother to use him.”

She hesitated. Her object was not to hurt Margaret, but perhaps she deserved some punishment. Anyhow, Hannah was Andrew’s champion, and since she was forced to fight, she meant to win.

“Jim is like that,” she went on. “He’s fastidious, and I think he’d sooner his part was a graceful part, but he stops there. The line that pays is his line, so long as it does not imply much risk. Jim hates a risk and he hates to be jarred. His code’s an easy code, but after all he is not a rogue.”

Margaret’s color came and went, for she felt the portrait was accurate. Jim and his mother had worked her, but she admitted she had allowed them to exploit her jealousy.

“If you would not have me for a friend, I could not think you unkind,” she said. “I was horribly shabby, and I’m ashamed.”

“It’s done with,” said Hannah gently. “Andrew was careless, and his carelessness was the other’s advantage. He ought to have weighed things, but that’s not his habit. Well, the tide is full at twelve o’clock, and I expect the *Anne* will make the river when the stream gets slack. Are you going?”

Although Margaret blushed, her look was resolute. “I am going, Hannah, but it will not be easy. I feel I dare not meet Andrew. Perhaps, however, he’ll be occupied on board.”

Two hours afterwards Hannah, Margaret, and Johnston crossed the rough pasture by the river mouth. The morning was gray, the wind was east, and a light haze drifted down the Firth. The tide was not yet slack, and streaks of foam marked the weirs and trailed about the tall net-posts. Behind the sandy point angry eddies revolved and melted in the yellow current running up-river.

A small crowd occupied the point. The *Anne* was the largest vessel that had for long carried a load to Murren-foot, and her arrival was something of an event. The railway had not helped the little port, and now frugal shopkeepers speculated about a revival of the town’s vanished foreign trade. Hannah saw Mrs. Grier and Jim on the stage where the nets were dried. She thought Jim was not altogether happy, but Mrs. Grier waved to Margaret and smiled. Well, Hannah knew her aunt’s pluck.

By and by a pale sunbeam moved across the bent-grass and battered hedges. The light touched the sand, and the water sparkled. Somebody shouted, the crowd pushed along the point, and the *Anne Musgrave* stole out

of the mist. The hazy background magnified her. She looked very large, and stacks of raw-white wood topped her bulwarks. Tacking across the Firth, she got distinct. She slanted gently and the sandy water splashed about her bows. All her sail was set but an outer jib and the topsails she had lost. One saw the patches and shabby paint, the short jury topmast, and the jib-boom's broken stump. Yet she was beautiful, and her scars were got in stubborn battle with the savage Atlantic seas.

“Wha d’ye think is steering her?” somebody near Johnston’s party asked. “Did they get a pilot at the Ness?”

“What for would they get a pilot?” a bent old man rejoined. “An’rew Grier kens the sands like a flounder.”

“Maybe she’s a bit airy on the tide,” a fisherman remarked. “The flood rins hard yet, and when the win’s light, if ye dinna’ hit the slack bit, ye’re whippit by up the Firth. Then she’s deep-loaded and there’s no’ much watter _____”

“Murren shrimpers draw three-foot-six, and whiles ye go aground,” said the old boat-builder with a scornful laugh. “When I was young we carried up three-hundred-ton brigs. I’m thinking, for a’ the *Anne’s* deep-loaded, the man who steers her will no’ touch bottom.”

Margaret and Hannah knew something about boat sailing, and saw caution was indicated. The river mouth was narrow, and on one side were broken weirs and rows of thick net-posts. If the *Anne* were swept past the sandy tongue, she would plunge into the nets. Then in order to stem the treacherous eddies she must carry all her sail.

She forged ahead. People began to shout, and men on the deck-load waved to friends and relations. They stopped, and for a few moments all was quiet. It looked as if the helmsman had overshot his mark and the schooner were going up the Firth. Then the foreyard swung round and the topsail went flat against the mast. Chain and wire rattled, two jibs were hauled to windward, and the *Anne*, swerving, blocked the river mouth. All knew her keel was near the sand, but she did not stop, and the muddy wave she displaced broke along the bank. She was in the channel, and went up with the tide.

Men ran about the deck-load and threw down coils of rope. Wilson balanced on the rail, his glance fixed ahead. Andrew, behind the captain, turned the wheel. His clothes were sailor’s clothes, his battered cap was greasy, and his boots went to his knees. The crowd shouted to him, and

Johnston waved. Andrew saw Margaret, and his face got red. He moved his hand, smiled, and seized the wheel again. The *Anne* went by, and at a bend in front her sails began to sink. Blocks rattled, falling canvas flapped, and the bare masts went slowly up-stream.

Ropes were thrown and a teamster drove his horses along the high grassy dyke, but Johnston signed the others and they went back to the car. The *Anne* had arrived, and to follow with the crowd while she finished her voyage behind the laboring horses was something of an anti-climax. Besides, Andrew knew his friends were there to greet him and acknowledge he had carried out his job.

CHAPTER XXX

JIM STEALS OFF

Two or three hours after the *Anne* arrived Andrew was shown into Mackellar's office at Dumfries. He had undertaken to see Turnbull out, and if they were to use the good timber by the watershed, speed was important. Before the river froze, rocks that blocked the channel must be dynamited and they ought to cut the logging road as soon as the snow began to fall. When the spring freshets broke the ice, all must be ready to drive the logs down-stream.

Moreover, Turnbull's fortunes were Andrew's fortunes. Rowans was a barren inheritance, and all he really had was his share in the Canadian mill. He was no longer content to be an impoverished landlord. Then he did not know if Margaret had forgiven his supposititious offenses. He must talk to Hannah, but in the meantime his duty was to carry out the other job. When he went into the bank office, Mackellar gave him an interested glance.

"Weel," he said, "ye won through! For a time we were anxious for ye, and but that I'm the bank's servant I would have been at the water-foot. Now I expect ye can tell a moving tale."

Andrew narrated his adventures, and Mackellar knew he was not the careless young fellow to whom he had not long before rather unwillingly lent five hundred pounds. Andrew's glance was steady, his mouth was firm, and his brown face was calm. In fact, the banker knew him a man to reckon on.

"I imagine you did not expect me to put across the job?" said Andrew with a smile.

"I gave ye the funds ye needed," Mackellar rejoined.

"Part of the funds. The sum, of course, was altogether inadequate. Your notion was, if I squandered the lot, it would not break me?"

"Maybe I did argue like that," Mackellar agreed with a twinkle.

"Very well. What do you think a good profit for a shipowner?"

"Just now companies paying five per cent. are not very numerous, and I know directors who are happy because they're not forced to use their reserves."

Andrew laughed. "Then it looks as if a venture off the beaten track was pretty good business! I got back my capital, and a very useful sum besides, and I expect my profit on the next transaction would excite the envy of a steamship shareholder. Perhaps I was lucky, and I'd not engage to do as well another time; but I think the experiment justifies a fresh plunge. Now I want ten thousand pounds——"

For some minutes he talked about the sawmill, and Mackellar knitted his brows. Then the banker shook his head.

"I would like to help, but I must not. My business is to see ye get Rowans, free o' debt and charges, at the time your father fixed. Then ye cannot give the security the bank demands, and a bank agent must not undertake a private speculation."

"Oh, well, you must not break your rules; but can I not borrow on an engagement to pay when I get my inheritance?"

"Ye might," said Mackellar dryly. "In the meantime, Hannah is next heir and she must consent. Perhaps she would consent, but ye're not justified to urge her. The mill is old, ye're up against the big combines, and the business has gone down. Ye may win through, but the risk's a risk your sister ought not to run."

Andrew's look got thoughtful, and he nodded.

"I think that is so. Well, Turnbull reckons on my supporting him, and somehow I must get the sum we want. Perhaps I may see a plan——"

Mackellar saw a plan, but Andrew obviously did not, and the banker dared not meddle. He persuaded Andrew to stay for dinner and sent him to his house.

Andrew was willing to stay. Rowans was his, and in the Canadian woods he had thought much about the old house and the quiet dale, but when he got home he was jarred. He felt only Hannah's welcome was sincere. The others' satisfaction was obviously forced, and on the whole he imagined they would sooner he had not come back. Then Hannah and his aunt were antagonists. Andrew did not know what he ought to do about it, and he had so far not had much opportunity to talk to Hannah.

Although he wanted to go to Johnston's, he hesitated. When he sailed for Canada he imagined Margaret would be resigned if he stayed for good, and although she was at the water-foot when the *Anne* arrived, her going was perhaps but politeness. Besides, to know she had received his letters embarrassed him. He had not meant her to get the packet so long as he was

alive. Something like that was obvious; but since he had not run much risk, it looked as if he had made a theatrical experiment. All the same, Johnston was his friend and he must go to see the old fellow; but he shrank from going yet.

After dining with Mackellar he got a train for Carlisle. In the morning he would look up Callender. They had business to transact and perhaps Bob might join his and Turnbull's speculation.

To know Andrew was not at Johnston's was some relief to Jim. When the *Anne Musgrave* made the river mouth he had studied Margaret, and he imagined the proper plan was to leave her alone until the emotional thrill he saw she got wore off. The trouble was, he had stayed at Rowans longer than he ought, and when he went back he must know if Margaret was for him or Andrew. Finding out that Andrew was on the Carlisle train, he resolved to wait another day and see Margaret before he left in the evening. All the same, he was not hopeful.

Andrew did not return, and in the afternoon Jim went to the Garth. Margaret was in the garden and went with him to a bench in a sheltered nook. All the flowers but the battered chrysanthemums were gone, and a cold wind blew dead leaves across the grass. The afternoon was dreary and Jim thought Margaret's rather inscrutable calm was ominous.

For a time they talked carelessly, and then Margaret said, "Where is Andrew? He has not yet come across to see us."

Jim had borne some strain, and he indulged his jealousy.

"I imagine Andrew's at Carlisle. When he landed he got lunch at Rowans, and then went off to Dumfries. We have not seen him since. He's absorbed by his Canadian speculation and doesn't bother about his friends."

"Perhaps he was forced to see Mackellar as soon as possible, and his friends were not very kind. But why do you imagine he is at Carlisle?"

"He was on board the Carlisle train."

"Then you inquired at the station?"

"I really don't think my inquiring strange. As soon as lunch was over my cousin vanished, and when he did not come back we wanted to know where he was."

"Oh, well," said Margaret, "you satisfied your curiosity! As a rule you were curious about Andrew, and when you found out something, you thought I ought to know!"

Jim colored, but he replied calmly: "I admit I'm jealous, Margaret. Andrew has much, and I'm not willing for him to take all I hope to get. Since he went to Canada I have used some control. You had obviously done with Andrew; you knew I loved you, but you baffled me and forced me to wait. Well, although the suspense was hard, I did wait, and now Andrew's back I feel you cannot expect me to keep it up. I'm anxious, Margaret, because I fear you may allow my romantic cousin again to carry you away."

"I see I must be frank. Very well! Another time you inquired where Andrew was, and perhaps you found out. Do you know where he really was when the poachers fought the police?"

"Rutherford declared he was at the hotel."

"He was not at Rutherford's. He was at the Scar pool, with the poachers."

Jim started, and Margaret saw he had got a knock. Yet she thought it was not because he had believed the landlord's statement. Jim was disturbed because she had found out.

"Then Rutherford misled us! Were you glad Andrew, after all, was poaching?"

The blood came to Margaret's skin, but her glance was steady.

"It was some satisfaction. If Rutherford misled you, you were willing for him to do so, but I doubt. There's another thing. Why did you keep back Andrew's letters?"

"I thought you knew why we kept back the packet," Jim replied with an effort for calm. "Andrew's Canadian partner hoped to find him, and to let you bear the suspense would not be kind. Then Andrew meant you to get the letters only if he were dead——"

"Since your mother imagined she had persuaded me Andrew was a wastrel, the line she took was not very logical."

"My mother was sincere. She knew about my cousin's entanglement, and she was justified to think he was not the man for you. I own I was not altogether unwilling for you to find him out."

"You were not sincere," said Margaret, and her eyes sparkled. "From the beginning you made Andrew a joke. You agreed for Mrs. Grier to cheat me, and where it was possible you helped. I have not found Andrew out; but at length I know your shabbiness——"

She stopped, for she heard Johnston talk to somebody, and steps on the gravel. Getting up, she went a few yards from the bench and saw Andrew in the path.

“For a lawyer, you are careless, Jim; you ought to have studied the railway time-table,” she remarked. “However, if you stay, you can perhaps persuade Andrew your object was good.”

Jim said nothing, but he did not stay. His face got very red, and he made for an arch in the thick beech hedge. Andrew advanced and Margaret gave him her hand, but after a moment or two he looked about.

“I thought I saw Jim.”

“It’s possible,” said Margaret, smiling. “He went a few moments ago. Did you want to see him? Perhaps if you go fast——”

“I didn’t want to see Jim, and I’m not going,” said Andrew firmly, and Margaret indicated the bench.

“You were at Carlisle? Since you did not come over before, I expect your business was important.”

“My business was important,” Andrew agreed, and gave her a steady look. “All the same, it did not account for my waiting. I wanted to come.”

“But you hesitated?” said Margaret. “Oh, well, when you sailed for Canada perhaps I was rather nasty. Sometimes I am nasty, but I was at the water-foot when you came back.”

Andrew remarked her calm. Margaret’s mood was not romantic, but so long as she was friendly he must be content.

“I thought your coming to meet me kind,” he said.

“Then, my effort was rewarded; but so far as one could see, your satisfaction was not very keen. You hardly moved your hand from the wheel.”

“If I had neglected my steering, the *Anne* would have gone aground. Perhaps it’s strange, but things go like that. As a rule, when I’m particularly anxious to do something I’m forced to leave it alone.”

“To be scrupulous is rather an embarrassment,” Margaret agreed. “Well, I expect you’re logical, because you don’t refuse to bear the consequences. For example, you supported Rutherford nobly!”

“Then you know where I was?”

Margaret smiled. "You were poaching; Miss Douglas recently gave Hannah her confidence. Perhaps you have heard she is going to marry Drummond of Penkilm?"

She studied Andrew. His rather stern look vanished and he smiled, but she doubted if Minnie's marriage interested him much.

"Drummond is rather a friend of mine, and Minnie's a very good sort," he said. "Had she not put Morton off my track, my poaching might have been an expensive joke."

"It is done with. The police admit they're beaten. Although I expect a number of people know who was on board the boat, nobody has claimed the advertised reward."

"A Solway fisherman does not let down his friends," Andrew remarked. "Then perhaps Morton and his lot were handicapped, because I think the Cumberland policeman I helped across the sands did not altogether enlighten his officers. It's possible he felt he owed me something."

Margaret had resolved their talk must be careless. She wanted Andrew to know she was again his friend, but in the meantime this was all. She was satisfied to touch the surface, and was not yet ready to disturb emotional depths.

"Then, you helped the policeman? Since you did so, why did the poachers carry him off at the beginning?" she said.

"The fellow was hurt. If we had left him in the water, he might have drowned, and we pulled him on board. When we landed him at another spot he hadn't got over the knock, and high-water mark was some distance off. Since the tide would soon cover the sands, I thought somebody ought to see him across."

"But didn't you see you ran some risk?"

"Oh, well," said Andrew, smiling, "Jock gave me the boat's oak tiller. Besides, the fellow was obviously not in fighting trim."

"And you went with him until you reached dry ground! Solway sands are treacherous. Were you bothered to get across?"

Andrew narrated their struggle at the creek and his giving the policeman the tiller where the sand was soft. Margaret was moved. She thought Andrew's exploit typical, but she laughed.

“You knocked out and kidnapped the policeman; and then you helped him to reach the watch-house, where he could use the telephone! You were, of course, very noble, but it was a joke.”

“When I started, in my sea-boots, for Carlisle, I began to think the joke was bad,” said Andrew with a twinkle. “I expect my humor’s unconscious humor, and when I helped the fellow I was rather annoyed. All I saw was, it might be awkward for him to cross the sands.”

Margaret’s look got gentle. In a sense, Andrew’s adventure was ridiculous, but she liked to picture his helping his disabled antagonist, and she knew his statement accurate. All he saw was, the other needed help. Andrew did not calculate and weigh the risk. He was splendidly rash, and she gave him a proud smile.

“Well, I like your humor. Sometimes it’s very fine——”

She stopped. Mrs. Johnston, on the flagged walk, waved, and they went to the house.

CHAPTER XXXI

MARGARET'S DOWRY

Next day Andrew went back to Johnston's, and Margaret and he occupied a corner in the quiet hall. The afternoon was dark and a boisterous wind swept the dale. Rain beat the windows and the bare trees, tossing in the blast, roared like the sea. Mrs. Johnston was at a neighboring house and Johnston had said he must write some letters; but Andrew was satisfied to sit opposite Margaret by the fire. Her look was gentle, and he could not picture their again disputing. For all that, he was bothered.

In Quebec the snow would soon begin to fall, and Turnbull awaited his return; but he did not know where to get the sum they needed. At Carlisle he had talked to Callender, and on the whole John approved his plans. John was willing to risk a small investment and thought one or two timber merchants might be interested, but he would not yet promise to give Andrew much support. In the meantime, Andrew must wait.

The trouble was, Andrew could not wait. Before the Canadian rivers froze he must get to work, and when he sailed he wanted to know if Margaret were willing to marry him. Yet, so long as he faced something like poverty, he ought not to urge her. Unless he got a proper sum, his speculation might break him and Turnbull. Anyhow, he was not going to bother about it, and he banished his moody thoughts.

"When I got home yesterday Jim was gone," he said. "He didn't state he was going, but since he stopped at Rowans only for two or three minutes, it looks as if his bag was ready."

"Oh, well," said Margaret, "when Jim went off I imagined he would get the next Glasgow train."

Andrew gave her a keen glance, but her smile baffled him.

"There's another thing," he resumed. "Hannah and my aunt are not friendly; in fact, a pretty stubborn fight is indicated. Somehow I imagine they fought about Jim, but Hannah refuses to enlighten me, and my aunt declares she does not mean to stay. When she has accounted to my trustee for her housekeeping, she is going to Jim."

"Then you ought to let her go."

“Hannah agrees,” said Andrew in a thoughtful voice. “Some time before I went to Quebec I began to feel my aunt was not my friend, and I doubt if she was remarkably delighted when I got back. For all that, she’s a first-class housekeeper, Hannah needs a companion, and Turnbull expects me to rejoin him soon. Then perhaps my loafing about the water-foot was not calculated to win my relations’ approval. Anyhow, Mrs. Grier was happy at Rowans, and although she thought herself entitled to rule, to play up was not hard. She’s not rich, and one hates to be shabby——”

“You are generous, Andrew, but if you persuade Mrs. Grier to stay, you are very rash,” said Margaret firmly. “Besides, if you do persuade her, Hannah will go.”

Andrew did not altogether see a light, but he knew Hannah was his supporter and Margaret’s judgment was sound.

“Very well, if you think I ought not to meddle, I’ll leave it alone.”

“You certainly ought to leave it alone. But must you go back to Canada?”

Andrew hesitated, and his look was embarrassed, but he said quietly, “Since you got my letters, you know something about the Rideau Mill. When I wrote the letters, I did not expect them to reach you.”

“Ah!” said Margaret with a baffling smile, “you need not blush, Andrew. You are not extravagantly romantic; anyhow, you are not a sentimentalist, but I liked your soberness, and to feel you reckoned on my interest was flattering. All the same, when you started for the woods the letters stopped.”

“Well, I think I ought to see Turnbull out. The old fellow was my grandfather’s friend, and for long he kept the business going. On the whole, the fight was a losing fight, but he felt he must be loyal to his Scottish partners. He was loyal, and when I arrived he somehow braced up. Perhaps he was romantic; you see, he’s very old, but he declared he felt as if his friend had come back. Anyhow, it was something like that, and I think he resolved to use a fresh effort before he was forced to let all go. Well, my talent for business is not remarkable, and we may not accomplish much, but I’d like to indulge the old fellow, and perhaps we have got a fighting chance.”

Margaret knew Andrew was loyal; she had had grounds to know it before. She thought his talent for business better than he imagined, and he was marked by an unconscious charm. People trusted Andrew and his friends were stanch; perhaps because he was stanch. Yet she herself had

doubted, and now she was ashamed. For a minute or two she was quiet, and Andrew said nothing.

He was satisfied to be with Margaret and he was not keen to talk. For long he had borne bodily strain and he was bothered about his fresh venture, but in the meantime he could relax. Margaret's friendly calm was soothing, and he liked the quiet spacious hall. In fact, he liked to sit by the snapping fire and hear the rain on the windows and the savage wind in the trees.

The corners began to get shadowy. Red reflections touched dark furniture and sparkled on polished brass. Johnston's house was homelike; where Margaret was all was homelike, but Andrew knew he must soon face Arctic frost and snowy gales in the Canadian woods. By and by Margaret looked up.

"Perhaps you ought to see your partner out," she said. "But are you not ambitious for yourself?"

"Oh, well, I'm frugal, but I'd risk something to see Rowans a model estate. For the most part, the land is boggy moor, and the small rents won't pay for expensive improvement schemes; but, if one were rich enough, one might do much by proper draining, and grow corn where a few sheep run."

"Then, your plan is not to remain in Canada?" said Margaret, and gave him a keen glance.

"I don't yet know," Andrew replied in a thoughtful voice. "It looks as if I must stay for a time. You see, I was rather a loafer, and I want a strenuous job. When I'm a country landlord I'd like to feel I had made good. Anyhow, before Rowans is a model estate we must recapture the Rideau Company's vanishing trade. Then, if Turnbull were willing to sell the mill, we could force our competitors to give a proper price. So long as we can fight he's resolved the combine must not break us."

Margaret remarked that all she knew was he had gone to look for useful timber, and Andrew narrated his adventures in the woods. He told her about Latour, and when he stopped her look was thoughtful.

"The fellow robbed and deserted you. Why did you let him go?"

"For one thing, he was Lucille's brother. Then there's not much use in battering a knocked-out antagonist," Andrew replied.

Margaret noted his frankness. His portrait of Lucille was attractive, but she thought the girl did not attract him much, and he was not revengeful.

She doubted if she would have let Latour go; at all events, she admitted she would like to punish Mrs. Grier.

“I expect Latour’s robbing you was awkward,” she said. “To carry out your plans will be expensive?”

Andrew agreed, but Margaret saw he would rather talk about something else, and after a time he said the post was due and he expected some important letters.

When he was next at the Garth he refused to talk about the mill, and Margaret imagined his plans did not go well. She did not bother him, and when he went she smiled. Andrew was rather obvious. He loved her, but he thought his poverty an obstacle. Until he imagined he could mend his fortunes, he would not claim her, and when he did so she must be satisfied he had some useful qualities. Margaret liked his pride, but his modesty was embarrassing, and he did not see that she must pay. For a day or two she pondered, and then one afternoon she joined Johnston in his smoking-room.

“I suppose we are rich?” she said.

“The company’s shares are at a premium. I see no grounds for grumbling,” Johnston agreed.

“Very well,” said Margaret, with a smile. “Some day I expect you will give me a marriage portion?”

“If I approve the man ye marry, I think ye may reckon on a proper settlement.”

“You do approve the man,” Margaret rejoined, and although she blushed her voice was calm. “But I don’t want a settlement; I don’t want to feel my husband is something like a pensioner. I’d sooner you now gave me a good sum.”

“Ye’re frank; I don’t know if ye’re modest. Still, ye see, a settlement guards a wife against her husband’s and, perhaps her, extravagance. The trustees and lawyers have some control.”

“There’s the trouble,” said Margaret, smiling. “I don’t want trustees to meddle. I’d like to trust my husband.”

“I reckon one might trust Andrew Grier,” Johnston remarked. “Ye do not state whether ye have fixed the wedding. Perhaps your mother knows.”

The blood came to Margaret’s skin, but her glance was level.

“Mother does not know; her school’s the old school, and I expect she would be jarred. Besides, the wedding is not fixed. In fact, Andrew has not asked me yet.”

“It’s obvious ye are modern, but I doubt if Andrew is as much advanced. The lad’s proud, and if ye talk about a marriage portion, I don’t see him very keen.”

“We’ll let the banter go,” said Margaret in a quiet voice. “You know men, and it looks as if you knew Andrew. Well, I am your daughter, and I like to be logical, but Andrew is not. Although he is my lover, he will not ask me to marry him until he thinks he can support a wife. The strange thing is, he takes it for granted I’m extravagant.”

“The other was not so fastidious,” said Johnston dryly.

“Andrew believes his chance has arrived,” Margaret resumed. “If he can get the money he needs, he can build up the Canadian lumber business, but he must get to work at once. His partner is old, and a big combine is trying to break the company. Well, since I am rich, don’t you think for him to let the chance go would be ridiculous?”

“I’ve known many a promising speculation stopped for want of money,” Johnston remarked. “Then, it’s possible Andrew is rash. I’m thinking for him to use the money at Rowans would be the better plan.”

“Ah!” said Margaret, “I’m not altogether businesslike, and I am not looking for a sound investment. Andrew feels he must satisfy me he is not a loafer. I know he is not; but that’s another thing; and sometimes he’s obstinate. Then I really don’t think the speculation is rash. Andrew has some talent, and all he undertakes to do he does.”

For a few moments Johnston knitted his brows; and then he looked up and smiled.

“Maybe I’m a fool, but to indulge ye will not break us. I think we’ll risk it!”

Margaret kissed him. “You’re a dear, and although you’re a very keen business man, you’re romantic. After all, when one controls a merchant fleet, perhaps a touch of romance is useful. Anyhow, to be forced to stop might break Andrew, and all that hurts him hurts me.”

Johnston let her go, and in the next two weeks remarked that Andrew was not much at the Garth. Sometimes he was at Carlisle, and sometimes he was at Glasgow. He did not talk about his embarrassments, but Margaret

knew him disturbed. She was a Scot, and she waited with Scottish calm. When he got back one day, he went to Johnston's and joined Margaret in the hall. The afternoon was bleak and dark, but the corner by the fire was cheerful, and Andrew stretched his hands to the flames. The spacious hall stood for much he might not again enjoy for long. When he turned to Margaret his look was gentle.

"My holiday has been happy, but I must get to work. A cablegram from Turnbull has arrived, and in three days I sail for Quebec."

Margaret's heart beat, but she knew she must be calm, and she asked: "Do you go on board the *Anne Musgrave*?"

"Speed's important, and I was forced to buy a ticket for an Empress liner," said Andrew, smiling. "The *Anne* would not arrive before the St. Lawrence freezes, and if I load another ship, she will be a steamer. All the same, it's possible the mills will stop."

"Then you have not got the money you require?"

"I have not got much. I might have got all, but the people who were willing to speculate wanted our reward."

"Since that is so, is there much use in your going back?"

The corners of Andrew's mouth went up humorously. "I imagine there is not very much use. Still, you see, I promised to go, and if the mergers beat us, for Turnbull to feel I'm in part accountable may be some comfort. However, let's talk about something else."

"I'd sooner talk about the mill," said Margaret, firmly. "Suppose you and your partner were beaten? Would it hurt very much?"

"It certainly would hurt," said Andrew, and his look got stern.

"Very well. You must not be beaten. For one thing, it would hurt me, and unless you're ridiculously obstinate, you can carry on the mill. The Cloth Bank will meet your check."

"I doubt," said Andrew, smiling. "In fact, I don't see the joke."

"If it were a joke, the joke would be bad," Margaret rejoined. "In the morning write a check."

Andrew got up. "I am not an adventurer, Margaret——"

She stopped him. "Oh, I know! You are Andrew Grier, who won the fishermen's cup, and went poaching; but I don't like you when you're

theatrical. Well, I suppose you love me?”

“I imagine you know I love you,” Andrew replied.

“Sometimes one does not take all for granted. One likes one’s lover to be keen——”

“Then, I think I began to love you when I was a boy. The trouble is, I’m going to risk all I’ve got, and since I may be broken, I can’t ask you to marry me.”

Margaret got up and touched him. “My dear, you are horribly old-fashioned, and I’d sooner you were logical. If you write a check, you will not be broken. You will help your stanch old partner, and beat the combine. If you refuse, the others may beat you, and I will not see you for long—I must wait, and brood and wonder—in fact, I must pay for your extravagant pride. We’re flesh and blood, Andrew, and the Victorian rules are gone. You must not be obstinate, my dear!”

Andrew’s mouth was tight, and Margaret saw he bore some strain. He hesitated, and the blood came to his skin.

“I want you, Margaret, but I’d hate to use your money.”

“Ah!” said Margaret, “I would hate to let you go, and if you marry me, all that’s mine is yours. I’ll marry you when you like, but since you’re ridiculously scrupulous, perhaps we ought to wait until you come back triumphant.”

Andrew’s hesitation vanished. He was frankly flesh and blood, and Margaret’s argument was logical. Advancing impetuously, he took her in his arms.

THE END

TRANSCRIBER NOTES

Mis-spelled words and printer errors have been corrected. Where multiple spellings occur, majority use has been employed.

Punctuation has been maintained except where obvious printer errors occur.

[The end of *Green Timber* by Harold Bindloss]