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APPLETONS' JOURNAL.

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ON THE IRON MOUNTAIN.

"SHALL we go, Helen?"

"Yes," she said; then, after a moment, "no," then "yes" again.

"Why do you change your mind three times, Miss Fay?" said one of the chorus; and here it may be stated that the chorus consisted of a dozen or more worthy people, young and old, who, no doubt, played first parts in their own little dramas, but, in this, belonged to the respectable and necessary class of fillers-up. We are all fillers-up at times.

"I am not sure that I know," replied Miss Fay, gazing dreamily off over the lake, as though her mind was in British America, following the course of the Saskatchewan.

Helen Fay was attractive; that is, the majority were attracted to her without being able to explain the magnetism. She had beauties, but others even in the chorus possessed more, so it was not beauty. She had a bright mind, but others even in the chorus had brighter, so it was not intellect. It must have been a depth of feeling, imagination, and tenderness, making her so tremulously alive to other minds, other souls, and other hearts. She was extremely nervous, in the normal meaning of the word; not the tea-drinking, neuralgic meaning of thin women nipped by the east winds, but the meaning

"He glanced aside, and caught Marmaduke's face lifted above the bushes."—Page 229.

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which means sympathy with all the earth's influences. She could not see suffering without herself suffering; she could not see joy without herself rejoicing; a gray storm depressed, a black storm excited, and a bright sun cheered, her spirits; she could not reason, but felt all her conclusions by intuition; and, as no wise mother had taught her to understand and control herself, she had the habit of following her feelings wherever they led her, and dearly loved, without knowing it, a new sensation. In this, however, she was only following the example of the old Athenians, Acts xvii. 21, and the modern Parisians with their *haute-nouveauté*.

We all like to feel ourselves understood and appreciated, and Helen Fay seemed to give without effort this quick, unspoken recognition, a soul-sympathy, as it were, which a glance can establish in an instant between two comparative strangers; therefore, she was attractive, and therefore, when she spoke, people listened, thought over what she said, and would not let it drop. So, when she answered, "I am not sure that I know," the chorus went on, "Let us have your uncertainty, then—I am sure there is something behind—won't you? Well, then, we shall call in the best advice.—Mr. Preston, can you tell us why Miss Fay changed her mind three times?"

"Oh, that's nothing!" said Marmaduke Preston, lazily lying at full length under the pines; "she changes her mind merely from a certain feverish industry she possesses. She has discovered the secret of perpetual motion."

"Am I then so industrious?" said Helen, smiling.

"It would be more in accordance with the truth if I were to say that she changes it for the mere novelty of the thing," said Aunt Kane, severely. "What should you say of a young person who keeps her picture of Faust and Gretchen constantly travelling around the walls of her room because she never wants to look at it twice in the same spot?"

Here there was a laugh, as much at Aunt Kane as at her wilful niece. "Am I then so restless?" said Helen, carelessly.

"No; I'll tell you what it is," said the chorus. "She changes her mind, just to see what effect it will have upon us; she is like the moon, and we are the tides."

"Am I then so curious?" commented Helen, as she went on fitting the pine-cones into each other.

"There comes the Manhattan," cried one, and instantly the chorus ran forward to the bank to see Lake Superior's one steamer, the Manhattan—hauled over the Sault portage the preceding year on greased boards, and, since then, making the speed of nine miles an hour on the great inland sea; for this was in 1853. Under cover of this movement Victor Lee leaned forward. "You changed your mind because you were afraid, Miss Fay," he said, in a low tone, with a single glance of his blue eyes. The cones fell from Helen Fay's hands, and she turned her head away.

"Well, shall we go?" said the chorus, coming back. "Mr. Preston, how lazy you are; the personification of indolence! Why don't you do something?"

"Look at that wheezing old Manhattan, for instance," said Marmaduke, with closed eyes.

"Yes; that is better than nothing."

"Cui bono?" asked the lazy young Saxon, with all his long length unstirred.

"Oh, if you are going to talk Latin, we give you up," said the chorus.—"Say, good people, say, shall we go or not go to the Iron Mountain?"

"We will go," answered Victor Lee; "we will start this afternoon at three o'clock."

Miss Fay left her knoll and went over to her lethargic giant. "Duke, come and walk with me along the beach," she said, with her back toward the rest of the party. A smile gleamed over Victor Lee's face as he looked after her a moment. Then he set himself to work to entertain the chorus, something of a task, since it embraced all grades, from grim Aunt Kane to volatile Eunice Gregory, the New-York school-girl. But, so well did he succeed, that the sound of laughter reached far down the beach where the lovers were strolling. Involuntarily, Helen looked back. Marmaduke yawned a mighty yawn. "Oh—oh!" he said, "this lake-air makes one sleepy, doesn't it?"

"Not me," answered Helen, taking her hand from his arm and slightly quickening her pace.

Then Marmaduke lighted a fresh cigar, put his hands deep down in his coat-pockets, and in silence they walked on.

Marquette, on Lake Superior, is now a busy town, soon to be a city; it has railroads on shore and fleets of steamers and vessels on the water, people to do business and business to do, all coming from the Iron Mountain behind it. But, in 1853, it was a lonely settlement in the woods, with one little stamping-mill stamping on the ore with wooden legs; a few houses of those hopeful pioneers, who so often sow the seed in the West and so seldom reap the harvest; and a swampy, rocky, sandy, corduroy road, inland to the mine. The Iron Mountain stood there, great and wonderful, waiting for capital. Capital has come, and dug and blasted into its sides for years; but it remains great and wonderful still.

Our party, visitors from the East, felt themselves going to hyperborean regions when the steamer bore them out of the lovely St. Clair River into broad Lake Huron; and, when they had passed the odd little village at the Sault—pronounced "Soo" in Western phraseology—and taken passage on the unique Manhattan, heroine of the grease, to see all the wonders of Superior, they called themselves New-World Argonauts, in search of a fleece, not golden but iron. At Detroit, a new passenger had joined them, Victor Lee—"the Lees of Virginia, you know," said Aunt Kane, who scaled her letters with a crest. "Oh, yes," echoed the chorus to each other, "the Virginia Lees, you know; delightful acquisition!"

"Blood will tell," remarked Aunt Kane, on Lake Huron. "Mr. Lee has all that rare courtesy which comes only from a long line of refined ancestors. I suspect he is a grandson of Lee Loudon Lee, of Leesburg."

"Yes," commented the chorus, bland but calmly ignorant; "grandson of Leland Lee, of Lehigh, you know."

"Well, but who was Leland Lee, of Lehigh?" persisted one youthful inquirer who had not yet learned the accomplishment of pretending to know.

"Oh, he had a coal-mine, I believe," answered the chorus, vaguely.

Poor Aunt Kane!

"What do you think of that Virginian, Duke?" said Helen Fay to her lover after two weeks' close companionship had forced a close intimacy. She spoke carelessly, but her eyes looked away, and her fingers braided and unbraided the fringes of her shawl.

"Oh, Lee, do you mean? Seems to be a pleasant sort of fellow. Really, though, I have not noticed him closely."

"Do you ever notice any thing closely, Duke?"

"To tell the truth, not often, Helen," answered the young man, skipping pebbles over the water.

"Not even me?"

"It is not necessary that I should notice you closely, dear, for I so thoroughly understand you that we are like one person. We think alike on all points, we love each other, and we shall spend our lives together, I trust, in the happiness of loving repose—that restfulness which is the greatest charm of life." And, concluding this speech, unusually long for him, Marmaduke Preston turned and took Helen's lithe, little fingers caressingly into his own large, shapely white hand.

"Yes, we will, we will," said Helen, impetuously; "nothing ever can, nothing ever shall prevent it! Nothing but death, Duke—nothing but death! Nothing in all this wide world!"

"In heaven above, the earth beneath, or the waters under it," said Duke, taking up another stone.

"I wonder who is meant by the prince of the powers of the air," said Helen, after a dreamy pause.

"There, see that," interrupted Duke; "eight skips in a row! I cannot improve upon that. Let us go back; it must be dinner-time."

At three in the afternoon of the appointed day, the party started for the Iron Mountain. All were on horseback save a half-breed at the head, as a guide, and Jean, the old Frenchman, at the foot, a retired *voyageur*, who had the reputation of needing only a damp spot in the grass to catch a brook-trout, and two twigs to cook it to perfection. After entering the forest they were obliged to ride single file through the narrow trail. "You go first, Preston," said Victor Lee; "I will ride behind Miss Fay." These three were the last of the file, save old Jean and his dog. There was much talking among the chorus in front, but Marmaduke had his pipe in his mouth; and a pipe disposes to meditation. Helen rode on in silence, but gradually a strange agitation took possession of her; she moved restlessly in her saddle, plucked leaves from the overhanging boughs, and hummed fragments of songs. At last she turned slowly and looked back, but, when she met Victor's eyes, she averted her head quickly, as if in dread. Again and again was this little pau-

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tomime repeated, and each time her face grew paler. At last, as if in desperation, "Duke," she called, in a sharp tone, "are you asleep?"

"Only day-dreaming," answered Preston, looking lazily over his shoulder.

"Rein up your horse and ride at my side," commanded the lady, imperiously.

"That is a manifest impossibility, Helen."

"Well, then, let me pass you."

"You are better off as you are. You have Lee behind you, and I am in front; so that, if your horse should stumble, we can see to you. Do you feel restless, dear?"

"Yes," replied Helen, coloring; then settled herself firmly in her saddle, and resolutely squared her shoulders, saying to herself, "I will not look back again." But the nervousness only increased; it seemed as if something was burning through her from behind—as if something drew her head to the left so that her eyes could glance backward—as if something was touching her with a magnetic power, a power both gentle and dreadful, which made her shiver. She endured this state as long as her strength and her pride held out; then, as the road became rocky and broken, she seized upon that pretext. "Duke, I am afraid. Do come nearer."

"How can I, Helen? The road is perfectly safe. You never used to be so timid."

"I know it; but I am now."

Victor Lee jumped down from his horse, and, leaving the steady old animal to keep his place in the rear of the slow-moving file, he stepped forward and laid his hand on the lady's bridle. "I am tired of riding at this snail's pace," he said; "let me be your squire a while, Miss Fay."

"Oh, no," answered Helen, shrinking back.—"Duke, persuade Mr. Lee to mount again."

"Mr. Lee does not wish to be persuaded," interposed Victor, gayly; "he intends to walk, anyway, and why not here, since you feel nervous?—Preston, won't you get down and keep me company? A walk will do you good, you lazy Hercules."

But Marmaduke rode on, as Victor knew he would.

"Walk if you like, Lee," he said, laughing at the other's unnecessary exertion. "Unhappy mortal, you do not know the deliciousness of a lazy pipe on a balmy afternoon."

"No, I am no smoker," replied Victor; then, after a pause, he added in a lower tone: "But there is no power in tobacco, opium, or all the drugs of the East, that I have not fully tested.—I described to you on Lake Huron one of the visions that came to me in opium; shall I tell you another now, to pass away the time, Miss Fay?"

Helen turned, moved, glanced away, glanced back, as if trying to escape from those relentless blue eyes, which seemed to have, at times, a yellow circle around the blue, and an unmoving steadiness of vision almost ophidian; and yet, they were beautiful. "Yes," she said, finally, with a long-drawn breath.

The cavalcade moved on through the deep, dark forest, laughter, songs, and busy talking in front; then, smoking Marmaduke, lost in a contented reverie; and last, these two who had fallen a little behind, the man's low voice murmuring on and on, and the spell-bound listener leaning toward him in rapt attention, paling and flushing, but never once turning her eyes away.

The sun began to sink in the west, and sent long slanting rays under the pines.

"Now, then," said Marmaduke, at last, putting up his pipe, "what are you two talking about there behind? I have heard a low murmur for the last hour."

"Come and listen for yourself, unless, indeed, you are too lazy to listen," said Victor, laughing. "I have been relating to Miss Fay some of my Oriental adventures, pomegranates, iced sherbet, and the like. And that reminds me that we must not forget our brook-trout.—Here, Jean, where is that trout-brook?"

"La-bas," answered the old man, pointing off to the right.

"And here is my rod all ready; I will take Jean, go across the ravine, catch trout enough for supper, and join you at the camp," said Victor, unfastening a fishing-rod so perfect in all its appointments that Marmaduke's eyes glistened with enthusiasm.

"What a beauty!" he exclaimed; "I never saw one like it. May I ask where you got it?"

"From Sir John Wentworth," answered Victor, carelessly, naming a celebrated English traveller who had crossed the ocean for the especial pleasure of shooting a buffalo; "I met him on his way West. Take the rod, if you like, Preston, and try your hand for a while."

"Oh, thank you," said the amateur sportsman, taking the coveted rod into his hand; then to Helen: "You do not object, do you?"

"I cannot be left—I must not be left," she said, hurriedly, with downcast eyes.

"I will stay with you until Preston returns," said Victor; "of course, we would not both leave you.—Go on, old fellow, and when you are tired I will take your place."

"If there is any thing I like, it is a chance at a trout; so, Helen, if you do not object, I will go for a little while," said Marmaduke, still looking at the rod.

Helen looked at her lover, and her lips opened, but Victor took the words from her mouth.

"She does not object, of course. We will ride on and join the rest of the party, and have a merry time. Go, Preston; Miss Fay wishes it," he said, with his eyes fixed upon Helen.

"Go, Duke; I wish it," repeated Helen, mechanically. But Marmaduke did not notice the constrained tone, and was off down the ravine in a minute, followed by Jean and his dog; Victor, with a touch of his switch, sent the two riderless horses on in advance to join the file in front, and then, resuming his place by Helen's side, he kept his hand on her bridle, and slackened the pace, until they, too, were virtually alone in the forest.

As the long twilight deepened into dusky evening, four persons came into the camp at the foot of the Iron Mountains.

"Well, well, good people," began Aunt Kane, "how did you happen to fall so far behind us? Helen, I relied upon you to keep near me."

"Behold, gracious lady, our excuse," interposed Victor, taking a long string of trout from the basket; "to-night we shall feast with the gods."

A cry of delight broke from the hungry chorus at this sight; there was a great clatter of dishes and bustle with blankets and branches going on around the fire, part of the novel and noisy pleasures of a camping-out. Helen Fay stood in the shadow; Victor had lifted her from her horse, and then turned away as Preston came up.

"Tired, dear?" he asked. Then, without waiting for her answer: "Such sport! Such grand sport, Helen!"

"Why did you leave me? Why did you not come back sooner?" she asked, almost sternly.

"It was too bad; forgive me, dear. But oh, such sport, Helen! I really believe that if Lee had not come just now and fairly dragged us away, we should have stayed there all night."

"I believe you would," began Helen; but here Victor's voice was heard calling Marmaduke to assist him in bringing branches for the leafy bed upon which the ladies were to sleep, and dream, as he expressed it, like Diana and her nymphs.

"Let us all be gods and goddesses," said one of the chorus; "I am sure this great Iron Mountain will do for Olympus."

"Who shall be Diana?" said Victor.

"Helen Fay, of course," answered the chorus, "and Julia Carr shall be Venus."

Instantly all was excitement, and names and characters were thrown backward and forward like foot-balls among the merry group.

"You must be Clytie, Miss Eunice," said Victor to the pretty school-girl; "your head has the exact outline of that little statuette. You remember it?"

"Oh, yes," said the young girl, fresh from mythology; "she loved Apollo and turned into a flower."

"Yes," said the chorus; "and, by-the-way, who shall be Apollo?"

"To my mind, Mr. Preston is an ideal Apollo," said Victor.

"He is, he is," chimed the others, enthusiastically; and, in truth, Marmaduke's tall, erect form and handsome head, with close-cut curling golden hair, blue eyes, and Greek features, gave him a strong claim to the sun-god's beauty.

"Go then, Apollo, to your Clytie," said Victor, waving him away.

The school-girl laughed and blushed, as Marmaduke, entering into the play, bowed his lofty head before her; she admired Miss Fay with girlish intensity, but to be her rival even for a few short minutes was rapture.

"Mrs. Kane shall be Juno," pursued Victor; "I know of no one else among us who has the requisite dignity and commanding presence."

Aunt Kane shook her head; but none the less did she adjust her bonnet-strings with a lofty air.

Mars, Ceres, Mercury, Pluto, Proserpina, Minerva, with many lesser deities, were ap-

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pointed by the quick-witted Virginian, and sylvan tasks set for each. Gayly the company dispersed to their several duties, going off here and there into the forest, making a picturesque scene in the ruddy light of the camp-fire.

"Old Jean shall be Pan," concluded Victor.—"Pan, go cook the trout." Then, as for the moment he was left alone with Helen, "Do you know whom I have chosen to be Diana?" he said.

She did not reply, but stood in the shadow, pale, cold, and silent.

"I have chosen to be not a god, but Endymion, made more than god by Diana's love."

A flush came into Helen's face; she turned from the speaker, and her eyes wandered through the dusky forest.

"Apollo is there with his Clytie," said Victor, mockingly; "why disturb them, goddess, when you have Endymion?"

Helen clasped her hands over her heart as if shielding herself. "Go," she said, with repressed emotion; "leave me, Mr. Lee. I cannot understand you."

"Nor do I intend that you should, goddess," answered the stranger, moving nearer until a ray from the blazing camp-fire shone full in his face, and lighted up his singular eyes with a red gleam, like a stage effect. Helen met the gaze, turned away, turned back again like some fascinated bird, and, at length, with a scream, she fled away into the forest, feeling behind her the step, almost the very breath, of her pursuer as she ran. He might easily have caught her, but he did not; he only kept so closely behind that every instant she seemed to feel his hand on her shoulder. Her breath came in gasps; she felt that she must fall, when, on one side, she distinguished two forms dragging forward a pile of freshly-gathered branches.

"Duke," she cried, springing toward them, "Duke, save me, save me!" and fell into her lover's arms.

"Why, Helen, is it you? What is the matter?" said bewildered Marmaduke, as she clung to him, trembling.

"Part of the play," answered Victor, coming forward with a smile. "Diana has turned nervous; she felt timid in the darkness, and longed for the sun."

"Are you really timid, Miss Fay?" said Clytie to Diana, with curiosity in her glance.

"Nonsense," said Marmaduke, "she is not timid in the least; I have known her face dangers before which I myself quailed."

"There are dangers—and dangers," observed Victor, as the four retraced their steps toward the camp-fire; "mental danger is quite different from physical."

"There you go with your fine-drawn theories, Lee," said Marmaduke, impatiently; "I have no taste for such subtleties.—Here! is supper ready, ye gods and goddesses? Apollo is hungry."

During the gay feast that followed, Helen Fay sat silently by Marmaduke's side, eating nothing, although her plate was filled with forest dainties. At length weariness came over the travellers, and, led by Aunt Kane, the ladies took possession of the little log-house, whose floor, covered with branches and blankets, was to be their bed; while the men disposed themselves around the fire outside, to sleep or meditate as they pleased. At midnight all was quiet. Helen, preternaturally wide awake, had tried in vain to sleep. She seemed to be all pulse; pulses throbbed in her throat, and the blood leaped through her veins. She heard the rush of Niagara in her ears, and circles of fire formed themselves within her closed eyelids, and grew large and small with vivid regularity. She pressed her hands upon her eyes, but they would not go away. She tried to say over verses, but she could remember nothing; even the multiplication-table failed her. Her heart palpitated, and a nervous tremor shook her from head to foot. If she stayed a moment longer in that small, close room, she felt that she must shriek aloud. Her bed, or rather her portion of the general couch, was near the open door; softly she rose and slipped out into the night. The camp-fire in front of the house lighted up the forest on either side; but, behind where she stood, in the shadow of the little cabin, it was quite dark; the stars were shining overhead, and a wild bird, with a strange, sweet cry—three quick notes, in a minor key—sang his chant at irregular intervals. The strong aromatic odor of the pine-forest acted upon her nerves like incense; she moved some steps away into the darkness, and stood motionless; and, when a voice breathed her name, and a hand touched hers, she did not turn or stir, so accordant were they with the spirit of the night. The voice said no more, the form came no nearer, but an overpowering presence held her being captive.

Three times the bird sang his chant; then, from the front, they heard the voice of Marmaduke Preston.

"That bird has fairly awakened me with its cry. What bird is it, Jean?"

"C'est le tocsin, Monsieur le Duc," for thus had the voyageur translated Duke's name.

"Tocsin? That means alarm. I trust we are in no danger here," said Marmaduke, with a laugh, as he prepared to lie down again.

"Duke, Duke!" cried a voice, as if in sore distress; and, the next instant, Helen Fay ran through the cabin, and, throwing herself down by his side, hid her face on his arm.

"Helen! You again? What is it?" exclaimed the young man, in alarm.

The awakened sleepers trooped out of the cottage, echoing the same question.

"Only nervousness, I presume," said Victor Lee, coming out of the crowd by the fire. "Miss Fay is so timid, you know—camping out is too much for her."

"Yes, too much for her—too much for her," said the chorus, like a flock of sheep.

"I think I can quiet her if you will give me permission, Mr. Preston," continued Victor.

"I wish you would," said Marmaduke, half alarmed, half annoyed, by Helen's continuous trembling and hidden face.

"It is simply an attack of hysterics, brought on by the close air of the cabin," explained Victor to the huddled chorus. "Make a couch of those blankets, Preston, and I will show you what magnetism can do in such cases."

"Magnetism! How interesting!" exclaimed the chorus, drawing near. But Miss Fay no sooner felt the light, waving touch of the Virginian's hands, than she opened her eyes. "Duke," she said, wildly; "Duke—Duke!"

"I am here, Helen. What is it, dear?" said puzzled Marmaduke, bending over her.

"Do not leave me; stay with me," she murmured, closing her eyes again.

"Take her up in your arms, Mr. Preston; she will rest more easily in that way," said Victor; "and my experiment will be all the more triumphant," he added in a low tone, as he bent over his patient.

The lurid glare of the fire lighted up the group, with the curious chorus behind; Aunt Kane, wrapped in a Mackinac blanket, added the comic element to the scene, for not even as Juno could she go without her nightcap, and its ruffle peeped out around her majestic features.

Victor, bending over his patient, continued the waving motion of his hands over her pale face; she did not open her eyes again, and the silence around her was breathless, save for the sudden cry of the tocsin-bird, sending every now and then a thrill through the watching spectators behind. At last the magnetizer drew back. "She is asleep," he said; "she will not wake before morning. You can go back, ladies, and rest in peace."

"But she cannot stay here in the open air," objected Aunt Kane from her blanket.

"It was the air of the cabin, no doubt, that affected her in the beginning; and, besides, if she leaves me, she will waken. Why should she not stay where she is with Mr. Preston? Or why should you not stay with her, Mrs. Kane?" said Victor, looking up with a lurking smile.

But that sacred nightcap could not be exposed to the gaze of the public, and Aunt Kane withdrew hastily into the shadow.

"Are you not mistaken about her waking so easily, Lee?" said Marmaduke; "she seems to be sleeping very soundly." Victor stepped back a few paces. Helen stirred and turned her head toward him.

"You see," he said, quietly.

"How remarkable!" said the chorus; "just like books!" "Mesmer and the Salem witches, you know!" "Yes; and the Bible, too; there was Saul himself." "I am going to sit up all night, and watch!" But, after a time, even curiosity faded before the advance of sleep, and, one by one, the feminine part of the chorus straggled back to bed, and left the outsiders to themselves; gradually, too, the circle around the fire fell asleep, and even Marmaduke slumbered, leaning back against a mossy rock. Only the Virginian remained awake, and kept a quiet watch over the unconscious face on Marmaduke's breast,

The next morning a bright sun dispersed the shadowy events of the night, and the Iron Mountain, towering above, filled all minds. Every one ate heartily, save Miss Fay, who, pale and worn, took only a cup of coffee, and listlessly put her plate away untouched. The horses were left behind, for this was to be a pedestrian excursion. Gayly the company began to climb, now stopping to exhaust their adjectives over a high rock of solid ore, and

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now rushing on to some higher bank of the outcropping iron, with many a laugh and jest. Helen Fay kept closely by Marmaduke's side. Now this way, now that way, she turned; now she stopped, and now she went on, apparently without purpose.

"Well, Helen," said Marmaduke, at last, "do you know where you want to go?—Don't try to follow us, Lee," turning to the Virginian, close behind them; "we are to be like will-o'-the-wisp this morning, I see."

But Victor kept his place.

Suddenly Helen sank down on the ground. "I can go no farther," she said, helplessly.

"Why, dear, you used to be the strongest of all," said Duke, casting a disappointed glance toward the party in advance.

"Miss Fay has eaten nothing for twenty-four hours; no wonder she is tired," said Victor. "Fortunately, it is lunch-time. I will call the party together here."

So he summoned in all the stragglers, and the baskets were opened. But again Helen turned faintly away from the food.

"If you can eat nothing, Miss Fay, take some of this cordial," said Victor; "a tablespoonful will revive you."

"No; I do not wish it."

"Take it, Helen; it will do you good," urged Marmaduke, adding his voice to Victor's.

Still she would not.

"Take it," said Victor again, moving so that his back was toward the rest of the party; and, under the power of those eyes, Helen took the flask and swallowed the cordial.

After lunch the party separated.

"There up above is the highest point," said Victor; "from there you can see the unbroken wilderness of Northern Michigan extending back for miles."

"Northern Michigan! Extending back for miles! How interesting!" exclaimed the chorus, immediately starting for the summit, staff in hand. Even Aunt Kane climbed briskly, and wondered at her own joints. Helen walked on a few steps, then she sat down on a fallen tree. "I cannot go," she said, in the same helpless tone.

"Of course I shall stay with you," said Marmaduke; but his eyes followed the climbers.

"That is not necessary, Mr. Preston," interposed Victor. "I have seen the view several times, and, if you wish to go with the others, I will remain with Miss Fay until you return.—You wish him to go, do you not?" he added, looking at Helen.

"Yes," she answered, faintly; then, with a flush of color, "yes," she repeated quickly, "go, Duke. I wish it."

And Duke went.

That night they camped again at the foot of the Iron Mountain. "Mr. Preston," said Victor Lee, as for a moment they happened to be together away from the rest of the party, "I wish to speak to you alone. Slip away and come up the mountain at midnight as far as the iron rock."

"Well, but is it something worth the trouble, Lee?" began Marmaduke, rather weary of the gods and goddesses, and the endless pranks of the camping-party.

"Come, as I say, or you will repent it all your life," answered Victor, sternly; then he joined the merry group around the fire, leaving his companion somewhat perplexed, although inclined to consider the answer as a joke. That night Miss Fay made no commotion in the camp; whether she slept or not she was quiet, and the others were soon asleep. Marmaduke made a desperate effort to keep awake, but failed. Suddenly he awoke with a start; it was the tocsin-bird which had roused him with its cry. He held his watch up in the light of the fire; it was a superb watch, and, together with his sealring, a genuine antique, betrayed a somewhat boyish taste for splendor. The hands pointed to midnight, and, with a sigh, the sleepy Apollo lifted up his long length and started up the mountain, inwardly anathematizing the vagaries of the Virginian in appointing such a rendezvous. "I don't believe it is any thing important," he thought as he climbed; but the tocsin sounded close at his ear, and he felt the whir of wings as the bird flew by to take up his station in a neighboring tree. At length he reached the iron rock, and, looking up, saw the gleam of a cigar on the summit. "Well, old fellow, why have you brought me up here in the middle of the night," began Marmaduke, not in the best of tempers.

"To show you what a fool you are," answered the Virginian, calmly. Duke looked up, doubtful whether he had heard aright; Victor stood above him on the edge of the iron rock, just beyond the reach of his arms. "What?" he asked.

"To show you what a fool you are," repeated the voice above.

"What do you mean?" cried the young Hercules below, with a threatening gesture.

"What I say. I suppose, nay, I know, that you love Helen Fay. Well, she has promised to run away with me to-night."

"Liar!" thundered Marmaduke, making a spring toward the mocking voice.

"You'll only cut your hands on the rock," replied Victor. "Look, do you see this? Stand, and listen to what I have to say." And Marmaduke, looking up, saw a pistol pointed at his head.

"Are you mad, Lee?" he cried, turning to find a way by which he could climb up behind his enemy's iron fortress, for the front was smooth as a granite wall. The pistol followed the movement.

"Stand," cried the voice; "another step and you are a dead man!"

Unarmed, Marmaduke hesitated; no man likes to be shot down like a dog.

"Do you suppose, if I intended to carry off the girl, I should take you into my confidence?" continued the voice. "I would not harm her, lovely, delicate flower that she is! I have only been making an experiment. The moment I saw her high-wrought emotional face, and her eyes betraying a tremulous susceptibility to magnetic influences, I knew she was a subject for me, poor, unappreciated, misunderstood soul! Wandering vagabond that I am, I yet could make her happier than you can, you slow ox! As soon as I saw her I began to work upon her with the strange uncomprehended power of a fixed gaze, seen and understood by the serpent, but unseen and scorned by stupid man. Then, when I had reduced her, with all her pride, and fierce though silent opposition, to a state of nervous weakness, I used mesmerism, another power most potent in such an organization as hers. She is, in effect, mesmerized at this moment. She will do as I say, she will follow me to the ends of the earth if I so will, and yet in reality she loves you. Now, having finished the experiment, I am willing to restore her to you, although your stupidity has more than once tempted me to take her for myself. But life with me would be hard, and besides she would be a hinderance to my movements. Entirely out of tenderness for her I tell you all this, in order that your blind eyes may be opened, and your deaf ears unstopped, to know the delicacy of the treasure in your clumsy hands. In reality, Helen Fay loves you. Her promise to go with me to-night is but the result of my power over her."

"She did not promise," foamed Marmaduke below. "You are a liar and a coward!" and, glaring at his tormentor, he shook his fists fiercely.

"Wait and see," pursued the voice. "Lie down just where you are. I see her coming. Move or speak, and I will shoot her through the heart! Lie down instantly, or I shoot! One—two—" Marmaduke dropped, and the next moment Helen Fay appeared. Victor had distinguished her gray dress in the shadow below. As she reached the base of the rock, he swung himself lightly down and stood by her side, holding the pistol in his right hand, plainly visible to Marmaduke crouching in the bushes, but concealed from her eyes as she glanced toward him.

"You have come, Helen," he said.

"I have come," she repeated.

"And you will go with me to-night?"

"I will go with you to-night."

"And you do not love Marmaduke Preston, after all?"

"I do not love Marmaduke Preston, after all."

Here there was a faint stir in the bushes. Victor instantly raised the pistol and held it within an inch of the girl's side. She could not see it, but Marmaduke trembled and became motionless again.

"Helen," said Victor, "give me one kiss." And as Helen Fay lifted her proud head to comply, he glanced aside and caught Marmaduke's face lifted above the bushes, its eyes glaring like some infuriated wild beast's. Victor paused an instant and smiled at his rival. This was his triumph.

Then he turned to Helen, and, waving off the offered face, "Never mind now," he said, "Give me your rings, watch, and purse. I will take care of them for you. Go down and wait for me beside the brook beyond the camp; I will come for you with the horses."

Without a word, Helen turned away and descended the hill-side, and in silence the two men watched her gray outline until it passed beyond the light of the camp-fire and was lost in the forest below.

"Now," resumed Victor, with the pistol pointed at Marmaduke, "I have proved my words, young man. I might have carried her off, and, rest assured, you would never have

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seen Helen Fay again on earth. As it is, I restore her to you. Go back to her, try to understand her, and don't go blundering through life as you have blundered through the last two weeks. Another time I might not be so merciful. Go back, for Helen loves you, and you alone; I have read her innermost heart."

"Who and what are you?" cried Marmaduke, rage and angry pride contending with the revulsion of joy produced by the stranger's last words.

"I am well known," answered the man, with a laugh. "You will find my marks in all the great Eastern cities, and, when you know who I am, you will wonder that I treated you so kindly. But your Helen charmed me, and I have kept with you in order to complete my experiment upon her. Now, however, I must be off. Give me your watch and ring, I have taken a fancy to them."

"Are you then a thief?" said Marmaduke, scornfully.

"Yes, at your service. And that is not all I am. Trust me, young sir, I advise you well when I tell you not to oppose me."

"I am not afraid of you, murderer," said Marmaduke, with flashing eyes fixed on the pistol pointed at his breast.

"Never try to spring. It will be useless," said the man, quietly. "Why do you hesitate? Have I not given your Helen safely back into your arms when she was entirely in my power?"

The two stood eying each other like two wild beasts before the death-spring. Every possible chance and contingency whirled through Marmaduke Preston's brain with that pistol pointing at his heart and those inflexible eyes behind it. If he had doubted the eyes and the hand! But he felt that the first were pitiless and the last sure. There was no way save the one proposed by the bandit.

"If I give them to you—" he began.

"Yes, yes, I understand," interrupted the stranger; "you are no coward, I know that. If you were, I should have shot you long ago. I have the advantage of you; you are unarmed, and must yield or die. But, in generosity, you ought to give me the trinkets voluntarily, in place of Helen."

"Is she worth no more than these?" said Marmaduke, laying the watch and ring on the ground between them.

"Not to me!" answered the man, smiling. "Go, now, Marmaduke Preston. If you see Sir John Wentworth when he comes back from the plains, ask him how he lost his fishing-rod. I bequeath it to you. And, as for Victor Lee, of Leesburg, you may tell him I borrowed his name for a while. Perhaps I shall take yours next, who knows? Farewell, Apollo! I will stand here and watch you down the path. You can give the alarm, when you are out of the range of my pistol, if you choose, but I advise you not to do it. It will be useless, and might throw scandal upon Helen, who is out there in the forest waiting for me. Go, now! My time is short."

Marmaduke stood a moment, but Fate was too strong for him; he went down the side of the mountain. When he reached the bottom, he turned and looked back, and, as he did so, the bandit waved his hand and disappeared into the thick forest behind. The young New-Yorker hesitated; he could see the camp-fire and the sleeping figures around it. Should he give the alarm? But the image of Helen rose before him, he made a *détour*, reached the brook-side, and found her cold and half insensible on its bank. "My darling," he cried, and clasped her in his arms.

The next morning there was great commotion in the camp at the foot of the Iron Mountain. "Wake up! wake up!" shrieked Aunt Kane, shaking her niece, who seemed to be unusually sound asleep on her leafy couch by the door; "my watch is gone, and my rings, and my purse!"

"And mine!" cried another.

"And mine! and mine! and mine!" screamed the chorus.

Dire confusion reigned, all voices talking at once, all counting their losses. The camp had been plundered, no one had escaped, both outside and inside there was not a valuable left.

"Where is Victor Lee?" said one of the gentlemen. "Could he have been the thief?" suggested another; "after all, we know very little about him."

But the ladies vehemently derided this idea. The camp had been plundered by some marauder, who had evidently followed them from Marquette, and possibly even from Detroit; such outlaws were only too common in the wilds of the West. But, to connect such a deed with Mr. Lee! Absurd! Outrageous! He had his own reasons, probably, for leaving them so suddenly, but the idea that such a man could be a common thief!

"Not common, but most uncommon, I should say," commented the original suggester of the libel. But the ladies laughed him to scorn.

"The Lees of Leesburg!" said Aunt Kane. "Impossible!"

"Helen," said Marmaduke Preston, several years later, "Maryland Victor is taken at last—out beyond the Rocky Mountains."

The fair wife turned pale. "Oh, I hope they will not—they will not—" She could not finish.

"Hang him, do you mean? He richly deserved it, the scoundrel!" said Marmaduke, clinching his teeth, as he thought of the scene on the Iron Mountain. "But they had no opportunity. It was in one of those cañons, he was surrounded by United States troops, and, when he found that escape was impossible, he shot himself through the heart."

CONSTANCE FENIMORE WOOLSON.

WINTER IN QUEBEC.

WINTER comes very punctually at Quebec. In August the days are often intensely hot, but at night the temperature is low enough to make blankets comfortable. Toward the close of the month there is frost at night, though it is hardly perceptible except by the slight rime that lies upon grass-plots at early morn. September and October are the pleasantest months of the year; October especially being marked by the best characteristics of Indian summer. Early in November the days grow chilly, and flurries of snow fall, some of it lying for a day or two on the hill-tops; but that is only a reminder of what is to come. As nearly as possible on the 25th of November, the regular snow-fall begins, coming generally from the east. This is winter; and people know that they have nearly five months of it, with accumulations and aggravations ahead of them.

The snow has come, and it falls very steadily, to begin with, for a couple of days, by which time there is a depth of some two or three feet on the ground. If accompanied by wind, as it often is, drifts of from ten to twenty feet deep are formed. Another fall comes early in December, and then the face of the country becomes one level plain, all fences and boundary-marks being completely obliterated. In the city the road-ways are so heaped up with accumulated snow, that the sleighs are running on a level with the heads of people on the sidewalks. By Christmas and New-Year the weather has become crisp and cold. Zero is considered to be a very gentle hint from the thermometer; and, a week or two later, people are not surprised to find that the mercury has fallen from twelve to twenty degrees lower during the night. When the temperature is very low, the air is always calm, and this, with its dryness, makes a low degree much more endurable than a higher one with wind.

Every house in Quebec is comfortable, and that with a much smaller expenditure of fuel than one might suppose. There is hardly a house in or about Quebec, from the solid mansion to the wooden cottage, that is not fortified with double window-sashes and doors. These are put on in November, and never removed until May. A sliding pane in each window, called a *tirette*, suffices for the occasional admission of fresh air.

And now, winter being regularly established, all the staple business of Quebec, which centres in the great timber interest, rolls itself up like a bear, and goes to sleep for five months, beginning in November and ending in April. The last ship has gone out from port—often in a snow-storm—her spars and rigging mailed in treacherous ice. The long lines of coves in which the timber lies are blocked with ice. Looking down from Durham Terrace on the river some three hundred feet below, it is seen to be covered with fields of floating ice, which drift to and fro with the tide. Until the ice settles so as to form a bridge—and in some winters the bridge is not formed at all—it is a trying time for travellers coming to the city—a trying time for the carriage of the mails. Point Levi (now called Levis), opposite Quebec, is the station of the Grand Trunk Railway, and, until the ice-bridge sets, travel across the river is by canoes. It is a regular arctic business, this crossing the St. Lawrence by canoe in winter. The canoes are large wooden ones of the "dug-out" sort, each of them manned by experienced and adroit *voyageurs*. The passengers are packed in buffalo-robes, and stowed away like bales. There is more ice than water visible; and, when the canoe gets entangled among the drifting floes, the *voyageurs* leap out, drag

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