



# **WATER IS LIFE**

**A  
CRITICAL PRESS MEDIA  
BENEFIT BOOK**

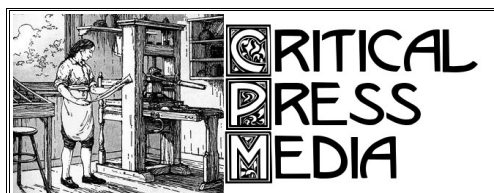
**edited and compiled by  
Winston Crutchfield**



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# INTRODUCTION

When Winston asked me to write an introduction for this book I really didn't know what to say. I've never written an introduction for a book. I've never had anyone inspired to write a book because of something I did or said. It's an odd and humbling feeling to know that you've so profoundly impacted someone that they felt the need to not only support you but come alongside you and help you.

In December 2008, my pastor mentioned the Advent Conspiracy (<http://www.adventconspiracy.com>) project in church. I went home that day, watched the videos and was immediately moved to do something about the water crisis in the world. If they could partner with Living Water International (<http://www.water.cc>) then so could I.

I cooked up a plan, set a goal and started sending emails to Living Water International and fellow podcasters. I have to admit, this little fund-raising project started off very slow and given the state of our economy then (and now) I would have been happy raising \$100 much less the \$2,200 raised by the end of November 2009. In fact, if things go the way I expect, we'll raise over \$3,000 by year-end not including the proceeds that come from this book.

Without water people cannot live, eat or have any kind of progressive culture. Throughout history, empires have been won and lost over water. All throughout the Gospels, Jesus was around water. He understood the significance of water in the lives of people. He preached near it, was baptized in it and even walked on it. Paul describes the Word of God as water that's able to cleanse our minds and souls. Water is life; I knew something had to be done about the crisis in our world.

The fact that 800 million people live without clean water is a tragedy. The fact that the problem could be so easily and economically solved and yet still there are people dying daily due to water-borne illnesses is a failure on the part of the Church to rise up and provide a cup of water to those who desperately need it. We spend billions of dollars a year on "Christian Entertainment" and yet people are dying. Where is our sense of urgency? I'm guilty of it too.

Podcasting for Water (<http://pfw.jesusgeek.info>) is a way for me to give back, to take a look at where I spend my hard-earned dollars and make a difference in the lives of others. Hopefully, the little I've been able to raise through this project will inspire and encourage others to seek out ways they can impact the world in a practical and spiritual way.

*John Wilkerson; December, 2009*

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# PURE WATER

*Floyd Davis*

Water is a chemical compound of hydrogen and oxygen, and is widely diffused in nature. As a solid, it exists as snow and ice; as a liquid, it constitutes streams, lakes, and seas, and in a state of minute sub-division, mist and clouds; while as a colorless vapor, it is always a constituent of the air. Natural waters are always impregnated with foreign constituents, which give to them their varying properties; and in the examination of water for sanitary and technical purposes, the water is analyzed to determine these constituents.

The palatability of water depends mostly upon its absorbed gases, which are principally oxygen, nitrogen, carbonic anhydride, and hydrogen sulphide. These gases give to the water not only an agreeable taste, but a sparkling brilliancy. The high degree of palatability and sparkle of spring-water is due mainly to its carbonic anhydride. Distilled water in its crystalline purity, or water deprived even of its gases by boiling, is insipid or "flat"; but by aeration and acidification it regains palatability. Water must be more or less impregnated with gases before it is suitable even to the dietetic needs of man; for when water deprived of its gases is used for purposes of experiment, it is found to be prejudicial to health, as the stomach can neither gratefully receive nor advantageously appropriate it.

The palatability of water is increased also by the presence of certain salts of the alkalies. In situations where distilled water is used for drinking, as on board of ships on long ocean voyages, mineral salts are sometimes added to the water to contribute taste and the needed piquancy. Mineral waters are now used in all civilized countries, not so much perhaps for their therapeutic properties, as for their "bouquet," or taste.

Taste for mineral waters frequently becomes a matter of education, and in every city there are many persons who use other than the natural water of the vicinity to gratify their palate. But some mineral salts, like those of iron, render water containing them unpalatable to many persons; and water that has stood for some time in iron service pipes generally has a disagreeable, chalybeate taste, due to the proto-salts of iron derived from the pipes.

Researches in etiology have shown that the health of an individual, or of a community, depends largely upon the purity of the water supply. Purity here means freedom from deleterious constituents. The terms *normal* and *abnormal* when applied to water refer only to mineral constituents, while the terms *pure* and *impure* refer to injurious mineral as well as to organic constituents. The salts found in all normal or wholesome natural waters are found in

abnormal waters, only in much greater quantity; and as some abnormal waters are injurious to health, they may be rightly called *impure*. Organic matter is also a constituent of all natural waters. Hence, pure and impure, as well as normal and abnormal, waters are distinguished only by the amount of certain constituents common to all. And it should be further stated that a water which is wholesome for some persons may be unwholesome for others, depending largely upon the condition of the system and the nature of the mineral salts in the water.

All sanitary authorities agree that the most dangerous constituents in water are the products of decomposition of organic matter, and the germs that feast upon them. It is therefore evident that a drinking-water should be practically free from organic constituents, especially if they are undergoing decomposition; and chemists uniformly condemn all waters that are contaminated with sewage. The contamination of water is shown by chemical and microscopical analyses, and by examinations of the sources of supply.

From a sanitary standpoint, *pure water* may be defined as water that is unobjectionable for general domestic use, and especially that which may be used with perfect safety for drinking.

Some waters are so unpotable that the appetite does not demand the amount required for the normal functions of the body. Such waters not only lessen bodily vigor and thus frequently produce disease, but an insufficient supply of any water to the system is manifested by great pain, relaxation of muscular strength and mental vigor, and diminution in the elimination of pulmonary carbonic anhydride and bodily excretions. So, when we consider that about seventy percent of the human body is water, which is being constantly eliminated, the need of maintaining a copious supply of pure water becomes apparent; but an abundance of water is no more necessary to the support of life than is its purity to the continuity of health. People may habitually drink impure water and still live, but its continued use unquestionably affects the human system, and tends to the degeneration of the race. Experience shows that water even slightly impure may be productive of a host of ailments for which the sufferer finds no apparent cause; for the results are often so slow and gradual as to evade ordinary observation, and the evil is borne with the indifference or apathy of custom. Until recently, it was only when striking and violent effects were produced that public attention was arrested. But so much attention is now being given to public and private water supplies, and so many investigations are being made by competent men, that the use of impure drinking-water is a fault rather than a misfortune, and arises more from carelessness and ignorance than from necessity. Diseases are now seldom produced by the agency of drinking-water where proper vigilance

would not avoid them.

Scientific investigation also reveals the fact that as a community is supplied with pure water, there is not only a decrease in the disease and death-rate, but often a most surprisingly rapid increase in thrift, morality, and degree of civilization.

One of the functions of water in the system is to cleanse the blood by dissolving the waste products that enter into it from the body, so they may be eliminated by the kidneys. Water can retain in solution only a certain amount of solids; and if it is already charged with salts when it enters the system, its capacity for dissolving and removing the waste material from the circulation is impaired. This adds extra work to the kidneys; and if already diseased, they are often incapable of performing satisfactorily the work required of them.

Aerated distilled water is the nearest perfect universal drinking-water, as it is wholesome for all classes of drinkers, and especially desirable for those afflicted with renal and bladder diseases. It acts upon the kidneys as a powerful therapeutic agent in the solution and removal of the waste products of the body.

Of the importance to such persons of a drinking-water free from salts. Professor Charles Mayr says : "Those who have never drunk pure water do not realize what an effect such water has upon the kidneys; its effect is better than that of acetates, nitrates, opiates, or alcohol, and for people with a tendency to kidney diseases or dropsy there is no better drug than pure water. Of the thousands of chemical compounds and waste products found in the human system, many require pure water for their solution and elimination; and water so overloaded with salts as average well-water is will not work satisfactorily."

It is not chemically pure water, however, that is needed for the renovation of *healthy* systems; for such water does not exist in nature, and the small amount of mineral salts found ordinarily in drinking-water is in no way prejudicial to it. As chemically pure water contains nothing injurious to the system, it likewise contains no foreign beneficial constituents; and, for healthy persons, such water is no more wholesome than that which contains some salts of the alkalies. The human system ordinarily requires mild cathartics and other mineral salts for the continuity of health. These, in part, may be furnished to the system as the mineral constituents of potable water, and a water that contains a small amount of them cannot, from a sanitary standpoint, be considered impure. The wholesomeness of water for healthy persons is, therefore, increased by the presence of certain mineral salts in solution, which act as laxatives, and which are essential to the development of animal tissue.

A water that is used constantly by healthy persons for domestic purposes, should have the following qualities:

1. It should be free from disagreeable odor and taste.
2. It should at all seasons of the year be well aerated, and uniform in temperature.
3. It may contain a small quantity of mineral matter in solution, but should be free from poisonous salts.
4. It should be free from suspended mineral and dead organic matter, and should contain only such living organisms as are purifying agents. Ω

*Van Nostrand's Engineering Magazine*, December, 1872.

*Contaminations of Drinking-Water*, Norton.

*Human Physiology*, Dalton, seventh edition.

For a consideration of the functions of water in the system, see *Food*, Smith.

Report of New Jersey State Board of Health, 1887.

*Water Supply*, Nichols.

# PRAYING FOR RAIN

*The American Sunday-School Union*

It was the first of July. There had been no rain for several weeks. Every one feared there would be a drought. The farmer looked anxiously upon his fields of corn, whose deep green leaves had not yet begun to turn yellow, and upon the potatoes, whose blossoms were still unwithered. They could not long remain thus beautiful and thriving, if the refreshing rain was withheld. The ground was so dry that, in hoeing the garden, no moisture could be observed.

Mrs. Dudley talked with her children about the need of rain, and the propriety of praying to our heavenly Father to water the earth, that it might "bring forth and bud," and "give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater." She told them how Elijah prayed for rain, after there had been none in the land of Canaan for three years and six months, and how God heard his prayer, "and the heaven gave rain, and the earth brought forth her fruit."

This great drought was a judgment upon the people of Israel for their sin in departing from God, and worshipping idols. There had been, in consequence of this want of rain, a "sore famine." We read in the book of Kings of one poor woman, who had only a handful of meal in a barrel, and a little oil in a cruse. When Elijah met her, and asked her for water, and a morsel of bread, she told him this was all she had, and that she was gathering two sticks, that she might bake it for herself and her son, that they might eat and die! She knew not where to find any more food for herself or her child, and expected to "pine away, stricken through for want of the fruits of the field," and to die with hunger.

Elijah bid her not to fear, but go and do what she had said. He asked her to make him a little cake first, and bring it to him, and afterward make one for herself and son. "For thus saith the Lord God of Israel, the barrel of meal shall not waste, neither shall the cruse of oil fail, until the day that the Lord sendeth rain upon the earth."

It would not have been strange, if this widow of Zarephath had been unwilling to divide her handful of meal with Elijah, or if she had doubted the promise which was made to her, but she did not. She baked the little cake for the stranger, and afterward one for herself and her boy, and there was plenty of meal and of oil left for another repast. "She, and he, and her house, did eat of it many days." The barrel of meal wasted not, neither did the cruse of oil fail, till the Lord sent rain upon the earth, and her wants could be supplied in the usual way. She did not lose the reward promised to those who give a cup of cold water to the friends of God.

God does not willingly afflict the creatures he has made. He is a

gracious God, merciful, and of great kindness, and has compassion even on the beasts of the field. When Jonah complained that he spared Nineveh, because its inhabitants humbled themselves before him, and turned from their evil way, after having sent him to prophesy to them that in forty days it should be overthrown, he said to Jonah, "Should I not spare Nineveh, that great city, wherein are more than six-score thousand persons that cannot discern between their right hand and their left; and also much cattle?"

In this long drought in the land of Canaan, the cattle must have suffered greatly, and many of them probably perished. Indeed, we read that Ahab, the king of Israel, and Obadiah, the governor of his house, searched the land for the fountains and brooks, to find grass to save, the horses and mules alive, that they might not be all lost.

God is a Father, and, like a tender, loving father, he removes his chastisements so soon as they have produced the effect designed. He was "grieved for the misery of Israel." He told Elijah he would send rain. The prophet went to Ahab, who, when he saw him, asked, "Art thou he that troubleth Israel?" Elijah answered, it was Ahab, and his father's house, who troubled Israel, because they had forsaken the commandments of the Lord, and worshipped Baalim.

Elijah went up to the top of Mount Carmel, and earnestly prayed for rain. God had promised that he would send it, and Elijah no doubt pleaded this promise, as he interceded with him. He directed his servant to go where he could look towards the sea. He went and looked, and said, "There is nothing." Elijah was not discouraged. He knew God would remember his promise, and he sent him seven times more. The seventh time the servant returned, and said, "Behold, there ariseth a little cloud out of the sea, like a man's hand." It grew rapidly larger and larger, till the sky was black with clouds and wind, and there was a great rain.

James, in his Epistle, says, "The effectual fervent prayer of the righteous man availeth much," and he mentions this instance of prevailing prayer in Elijah, as an encouragement to all Christians to ask for needed blessings. "Elijah was a man subject to like passions as we are," he tells us, and if he prevailed with God, so may others. God is the "same yesterday, today, and forever." He does not change. He is always a hearer of prayer.

Mrs. Dudley also told her children that God hears the cry of all who are in distress. She referred to one of the psalms of David, where he describes a storm at sea, and the great terror of the sailors. "Then they cry unto the Lord in their trouble, and he delivers them out of their distresses."

God does not forget any creature he has made. He provides the springs and the streams to give drink to the beasts of the field, and to the birds which sing among the branches. He causes the grass to

grow for the cattle, and herb for the service of man. He feeds the fowls, and clothes the flowers with beauty. He has taught us to ask for our daily bread, and as this must depend upon fruitful seasons it is proper we should ask for rain, whenever it is needed.

The children were quite interested in what their mother had told them. They knew that she earnestly desired rain, and that she often asked God to send it, before vegetation perished for want of it. They watched the sky with great anxiety, and when it became cloudy, and continued so from day to day, they thought surely a storm was near. After several days, there was a slight shower, but not enough to refresh the plants. Mary was greatly disappointed "I thought," (she said to her mother,) "it was going to rain in answer to your prayer."

"I thank God for that little rain," said Eddy, as he talked about it. Mrs. Dudley told him that was right, but they ought to pray for more, it was so much needed.

The next Sunday Mrs. Dudley was not well, and could not attend church. When her children returned she asked Mary if they prayed for rain. "No, mother!" she answered; "but I did." The sky continued cloudy for some time, and then the rain gently fell for a day and a night, and all nature was refreshed and cheered.

Soon afterward I left Mrs. Dudley's family. When I had been absent about a fortnight, I received a letter from Mary. She told me about the bantams, and the flowers, and many other things in which I was interested. She wrote that it had "rained on Sunday, and all day Monday. I cannot help thinking," she continued, "how good God is to send us rain when we most need it, and what cause we have for thanksgiving."

I hope Mrs. Dudley's children will never forget that God is the giver of every good gift, and that he likes to have people ask him for what they need. Children should think of God as their best friend, and should go to him in prayer, feeling as sure he can and does hear them, as they are that their mother does. In a season of drought they should ask him for rain, and when he sends it to make vegetation grow, they should thank him for that evidence of his loving-kindness.

Ω

# THE MISSIONARY

*Deborah Caligiuri*

The cool breeze felt refreshing after the stuffy airplane. Marina could hardly remember that it was summer back home in Pennsylvania; in Malawi, Africa, across the equator, it felt like fall.

The group of young people and their three leaders navigated through the small airport and climbed into vans to head to the church where they would be staying. Marina tried to see everything at once, drinking in landscape vaguely reminiscent of home. Gently bulging mountains rose from an otherwise flat terrain. What little grass she could see was brown, but for the most part the ground was covered in red dirt. Tall trees lent the only color to the very red-brown tones all around. The large, blue sky seemed the perfect canvas for the whole picture.

“Rina, look! She has a basket on her head. They really do that. It’s not just on TV.” A slim, blond girl with excited, blue eyes directed Marina to the sight.

“Look, Lilly, the houses. They look like something on TV too. They’re just little shacks. She’s got a basket on her head and a baby on her back.” Marina stopped talking at the sight of the dark-skinned mother, her seventeen-year-old heart pounding louder than the van’s noisy engine. Sitting back, Marina watched her teammates through exhausted eyes that refused to close for fear of missing something. Chatting amongst themselves, most of the other girls were quick to point out oddities or the primitive nature of the country. Marina’s heart saw only beauty and people whom God cherished. Saddened but not surprised, Marina focused solely on the surroundings slowly disappearing behind their van. A group of children huddled together, playing some game or other in the dirt.

With a quiet gasp, Marina instinctively turned to share the sight with someone, anyone. Two of the boys were asleep, and her eyes fell on Samson. Very tall and quiet, Samson held himself a little distant from everyone but was the first to offer service when needed. Samson held her gaze for a moment, and Marina knew his heart was in the same place as hers. They smiled wearily at each other.

“Hey, Ashley, when do we start building the orphanage?”

The youngest of the three leaders turned from the front seat with a tired smile for Marina. “It’s already been started, but we start our work on it on Monday. I know you probably feel a little lost from traveling for two days, but today is Saturday. Tomorrow we go to church and get over jet lag. Homesick yet, Rina?”

“I miss my family, but I’m not really homesick.”

“I’m already tired of wearing dresses,” moaned another girl on the



team.

Marina nearly made a snippy comment back, but she held her tongue. Wearing dresses showed respect for the country and its culture. For many years it had been a matter of local law and even now was the accepted practice of the people. Besides, Marina loved how girly she felt in dresses and skirts.

“What are they wearing?” A boy named Thomas wrinkled his forehead in curiosity.

“It looks like yards of fabric wrapped around and tucked in tight.”

“That is what it is.” The native translator confirmed with a friendly nod. She gave them the name of the clothing, but Marina knew it would take time for her to remember it. Marina had never been good at learning languages, including her own. Chichewa had a beautiful sound, but it was completely intimidating to try to imitate.

For two hours they traveled the empty, narrow road in Malawi until they reached their destination of Lilongwe, the capital city. Their hosting church had a facility large enough to bunk the six boys, one male leader, fourteen girls, and two female leaders.

The further away from the airport, the less Marina could see of the mountains that had greeted her. Now they were only visible as faded portraits against the flat, brown canvas. Buildings were beginning to look like buildings and not shacks. Marina easily recognized the church as a church. On the outside, it wasn't so terribly different from her church back home. Though everything was still very primitive for a group of teenagers accustomed to every possible convenience at their fingertips.

As soon as the van door opened after a very long day of travel, the primal nature of the country confronted them directly. Most of the group needed to find a bathroom. It didn't look like a normal bathroom, but the function was almost all there. “Even in the winter,” one of the adults advised them, “there is no hot water. It's cold showers all year round, if you care to shower with absolutely no privacy whatsoever under what might or might not be clean water – when it works at all.” Eyebrows up, Marina decided it would be bucket baths for her for the next six weeks. Shaving legs? Well, only time would tell on that one. Her three skirts and one dress were all long, so....

Her first glimpse of the long concrete room with two rows of bunk beds instantly brought to mind the old war movies she loved to watch with her father back home. Her heart raced a little more with excitement. There wasn't much settling in to do. Each member had a large, duffel bag, and that was it. Marina hung back a little while the other girls all chose bunks and bunkmates. She finally saw an open bunk above Suli and made her way there. The “mattress” was a very thin woven mat tied tightly to the sides of the bed, and Marina

silently prayed she wouldn't break the ropes and fall on Suli some night as she slept.

"Rina, you're not assigned to it, but will you help with KP tonight?"

"Of course, Glory. I'll be happy to. Do you need me right now? I'm ready." Marina loved her soft-spoken female leader from the moment she met the full-figured brunette.

Glory handed Marina a heavy bag and led her toward the door, stopping at another girl's bunk. "Dina, the kitchen is in the next room. Go out this door to your right and into the next room. You'll see us."

"Okay, Glory. I'm coming."

Marina stepped outside where the sun was considering going down for the evening. They walked a ways down the sidewalk to the next room. It was one long building with all the entrances and exits on the outside. To her left was a large open area, what she would have labeled a field at home, but it was all dirt. There were two lonely trees not even close to each other. A few local children were playing with a ball in the field. One boy looked curiously at the white people. He's never seen a white person before, Marina thought; she smiled and waved as she followed Glory.

The kitchen was really just an area with some counter space, a primitive sink, and something that looked like it might be a refrigerator, possibly. The only cooking appliance was an electric camping stove with two small burners that the team had brought with them. Its purpose was largely to heat the water so they could purify it with the tablets they had brought from the United States. Drinking the local water was dangerous enough for the natives and even more so for the pampered immune systems of Americans. Samson was already waiting for Glory when they stepped inside the room. Dina and Samson were assigned KP, but the leader felt they may need another hand since they were just settling in.

"Okay. Rina, unload this bag and give Samson the two big pots. Samson, please fill those with water, and we'll get them boiling as soon as we can."

The man leading the team entered the kitchen with a smile. "Glory, the fire is going strong for you to cook."

"Thanks, Daniel."

Samson and Marina looked at each other then began looking around the room for a fire or a place to cook. Glory smiled and walked to the far end of the kitchen to a half-wall made of brick at the end of the countertop. The teammates followed her out of sheer curiosity. The brick wall was open on top, and they looked down into an empty iron rectangle. Glory explained, "Outside, there is a hole in the wall where a fire heats this vat. This is where I will bake bread

and cook simple meals while we are here. We brought most of our food in cans or other sealed packages, but we will need to prepare a few things here.”

Excited, Marina wanted to help in every aspect of her journey. “May I help some time, Glory?”

“I’m sure you will.”

Dina joined them, and the four people worked hard setting up the meager kitchen for their stay and putting together food for twenty-one people. Samson had the heaviest work with the water. Many, many pots of water had to be purified for not only drinking but also cleaning the dishes after dinner and storing in the ‘fridge’ for use in the days to come. Marina thought briefly that Samson made it look easy lifting pot after pot of water, and these were no small pots. He was tall and lean and quiet.

Finally, the work was done for the moment, and the team sat on benches to eat in the large empty room at which one end was the kitchen. It was unusually quiet through dinner. Days of travel, anticipation, and weeks of training were finally exhausting the eager group of missionaries. After dinner, Marina helped Glory set up two bins of water, one with bleach and one without, for the team to clean their dishes. Once the dishes were clean and the team was settled again, Daniel brought out his guitar for a quiet time of worship before bed.

At long last, Marina lay on her thin mat in her familiar sleeping bag having only her Bible for a pillow. Night was the hardest time to be away from home, not because she missed the creature comforts of America, but because that’s when she longed for her family. She was living an entirely different life from theirs; it felt very strange. During her two weeks of training, God had given her a particular verse in answer to her pleas for peace at night. Zephaniah 3:17 *“The Lord your God is with you, he is mighty to save. He will take great delight in you, he will quiet you with his love, he will rejoice over you with singing.”* She fell asleep this first night in Africa hearing those words in her heart over and over again.

Just as the sun was beginning to appear, Marina woke with a start to the sound of a man wailing in a foreign language over a loud speaker somewhere in the city. Several girls woke to the sound. Glory was just finishing smoothing her sleeping bag in place and reaching for her dress when someone asked her about it. “It’s a Muslim call to prayer, girls. You’ll hear it every morning and evening.” Marina felt goose bumps on her arms. It was a positively eerie sound.

“They don’t have proper toilets, but they have the technology to make that sound all over the city?” quipped Suli groggily.

A few girls chuckled as they all rolled out of bed and started their day. It was still hours before the church service, but that gave time

for breakfast and quiet time. Quiet time was half an hour of pure silence when each person was required to spend time on personal Bible study. At first Marina found it challenging, but now she looked forward to the time to start her day with the energy found in the words of the Lord.

When the time was over, Marina joined everyone back in the big room and saw the translator and two more nationals with Daniel. All three would be translating and working with the team for the next six weeks. Quiet Samson made his way to the two male translators and began speaking with them when the group was given the freedom to do as they pleased until time to walk across the dirt to the church.

Marina looked through the window to see several children gathered on the dirt field, staring curiously into the big room. "Can we go outside, Glory?"

"Sure."

Marina and several others went outside to see the children. It was only when she drew closer that she realized she couldn't tell the difference between the boys and girls. Only some wore shirts, none had shoes, and all had hair that only barely covered their heads. It wasn't obvious without closer examination which were which. One child came to Marina with a hand stretched out, saying something in Chichewa. When the child was directly at Marina's feet she could see from the facial features that this was a girl, maybe five years old. The girl lifted her hand and kept saying something over and over. Marina knelt to eye level to try to communicate. When she did, the girl began to pet Marina's long, brown hair. She pulled on it then began stroking again.

The other children approached different members of the team and began doing the same thing. After only a few minutes, the number of children with their hands all over the team members became overwhelming, and the team retreated back into the safety of the big room. Marina stood at the window and watched the children as they excitedly talked with each other and peered into the big room. Her heart wanted to be with them, sharing God's salvation with them, but her common sense told her she was not equipped to accomplish that, yet.

"You want to bring them home and give them clothes and shoes?" One of the male translators approached Marina with a friendly smile and almost teasing question.

"No. My home would probably terrify them. I just want them to know how great God is and can be for them, McDuff."

McDuff was a Bible school college student, fully clothed and with proper shoes. "Then no matter what language you speak, you will be able to tell them this."

Marina smiled shyly, only praying that his words could be true of

her. "I hope."

That day was in every way a day of rest. After the service, which charmed Marina, the whole team took to their bunks and slept, trying to let their bodies catch up with the clock.

The next day they started working, and they worked with passion. After a brief lunch of peanut butter sandwiches, they continued working until the sun was so low they didn't have adequate light. Exhausted, they returned to the bunker for a dinner most were too tired to taste, then a time of worship which refreshed the weary, dirty teens. Afterwards, they had opportunity to wash in the dark bathhouse and fall into bed.

For three weeks they worked this way. The days were hard work, but the teens found ways to enjoy the time and get to know each other even better. Once a week, they would stop work at lunchtime and go into the heart of Lilongwe to do street ministry and have an opportunity to experience the culture. They explored the open markets and the closed shops. They had lunch in a garden in the center of the city. Marina loved every bit of it. She went into a shop along a busy street. It had shelves to the ceiling of fabric for their wraps and woven blankets. A light blue blanket with a darker pattern caught Marina's eye, and she knew she couldn't leave the shop without it.

They visited a school to do a puppet show and bring God's word, and Marina was enraptured by the way the people would just start singing. She had no idea what they were saying, but they would sing as if an organized choir rather than just people going about their business. And the harmonies were amazing. Everywhere they went, Marina noticed this phenomenon. The people would see them and listen, then sing in response. It was incredible.

It seemed like on those days when they didn't work a full day, they worked even harder than the physical labor at the orphanage project. So many places they ministered, and so many people thirsty for this gift of life. The more of the country she saw, the more Marina loved it and the stronger her desire to bring real life and real hope to its people.

At the end of the three weeks, Daniel stood amazed at the door of the orphanage. In his sixth year leading a missions team like this, it still touched him how much work a group of teenagers could accomplish when their hearts were focused. The Saturday after they finished the orphanage project found the teens doing laundry and packing to leave the concrete bunker for their next location. They knew only that they would be training nationals to continue in ministry once the team left. By evening, the vans were loaded again, and they were on their way out of the city. Marina could hardly contain her excitement.

McDuff approached the girl, “Rina, your eyes are going to explode with happiness. Why?”

“Because we’re going to really get to touch people’s lives now, McDuff.”

“But Rina, you’ve been doing that for the last three weeks.”

“Now it will be personal, McDuff.”

McDuff smiled softly at the pretty teen. “It will be very personal for the little girl who sleeps in the bed you prayed over yesterday. I saw you go to every bed and pray for just a moment for each child it would hold. That’s what you did, isn’t it?”

“Yes,” admitted Marina quietly.

“You are a good girl, Marina. Don’t take lightly any job God would ask you to do for Him. Somewhere, somehow, it touches people according to His design.”

Nodding slightly, Marina felt her cheeks heat, grateful for the darkness in the van. From the corner of her eye, she could see Samson watching her and knew he’d heard the conversation through the noise in the van. Samson leaned forward a little and spoke for her ears only. “I agree with McDuff about not overlooking any job God gives us.” Marina’s eyes slid closed as she nodded again. She took their words very deeply to heart and wanted to be thankful that God used her in any way. At the moment she felt selfish. Samson continued, “But I understand what you mean about wanting to personally reach people.”

His quiet words drew her eyes to his. “Thank you,” she mouthed silently. Samson covered her hand with his and wasn’t quick to remove it.

Exhausted but exhilarated, the team reached their destination, and the tired eyes hardly took in how much more primitive their dwelling was. Those who noticed weren’t bothered. It was life on the mission field, sort of. The small civility of the bathhouse was no more. Now the toilets were mere holes in the ground surrounded by four thin walls of whatever could be found. There was not even the option of a half-working, cold shower. The cabin didn’t look so different except that windows spread across one wall where the bunker had no source of natural light. The bunk beds looked identical to the ones they’d left behind, and that small familiarity helped the team to settle in quickly and find sleep. Tomorrow loomed uncertainly in front of them, but they were sure they were ready to face it.

The next morning, Marina woke to silence. She had grown accustomed to the sound of the Muslim call, and not hearing it was now startling. “Glory?” she called in a sleepy voice.

“What, Marina?”

“Where are we?”

"We are at a campground owned by our missions group. We won't be hearing the man on the loudspeaker anymore."

"That's nice."

Sunday morning was a time of refreshing. The team dressed and gathered in another building on the grounds, which was the meeting hall. Daniel led them in worship and a short service then spent a long time further explaining what they would be doing. The next three weeks would see them training about a hundred young men and women to reach out to their own country with God's word. Each team member received his or her teaching assignment.

Marina would be teaching puppets with the help of McDuff, and she would be helping prepare lunch for the camp. Those were her two main assignments, and there would be many more tasks for her to do in between those, depending on the need. With the camp resting on a lake, Marina felt quieted and awed by the simple beauty surrounding her. Once tasks and schedules were settled, the team played games and simply passed the time fellowshiping with each other. Monday morning would surely arrive with its workload.

Arrive it did with chilly breezes and clear blue skies. The camp nestled in a wooded area. The whole country seemed rural to Marina, so she could hardly classify these woods as a forest or any other label. Her "classroom" was just on the other side of the main structure, under a thin canopy of very tall trees. Maybe fifteen dark faces looked eagerly for her instruction, and Marina couldn't help but smile. She knew most of them understood English if she spoke clearly and did not use contractions or euphemisms. Marina didn't rush her forty-five minutes of puppets. She had time to teach them everything over the next weeks. While teaching, she spent a good deal of time in open discussion with the nationals and found some very good friends during the course of the camp.

Every day, she went to the "kitchen" which was little more than a small room with some rough wooden surfaces. Though it had two very large iron vats that sat down inside a brick frame. Outside there was a hole in the wall similar to the first kitchen where a fire would be burned to cook food for the camp in those deep vats. Marina couldn't help but smile as each day she chopped forty-eight tomatoes and eighteen onions. If only her mother could see her now. These would be cooked together with a few other ingredients and served on top of what Americans would call grits or polenta. It was a finely ground maize cooked until thick enough to be eaten with hands.

After her service in the kitchen one day, Marina stepped out of the hot, cramped room to give Glory as much space as possible. "Hi, Ruff, what are you doing?" She greeted one of the adult nationals in charge of the teens at the camp. He was bent next to the fire hole with a stick shoved part way inside. Marina knew better than to hope he was

roasting marshmallows.

"I found a treat, and I'm cooking it."

Marina knelt next to him. "What is it?"

Ruff pulled the stick from the fire with his eyes shining. Marina gasped and moved back quickly. He had three small mice on his skewer.

Laughing delightedly, Ruff had expected her reaction. He had been to America on a missionary trip of his own and was familiar enough with the culture to know that mice were not something Americans consumed.

Marina stood quickly with a wide smile. "Enjoy your treat, Ruff."

His laugh followed her as Marina headed to the bunkhouse to wash her laundry and her hair before her next class. She did her chores and still had time to listen to the music class for a few minutes before her next class. She loved the way these Africans would sing without inhibition. After listening for a moment, Marina spent the last five minutes of her free time walking at the edge of the lake and praying for this people and this country. Very quickly and very deeply, she was falling in love.

The days continued this way, and one afternoon Marina was gifted with a chance for an adventure. Glory needed to walk to the local market to purchase more vegetables. Marina, Samson, and McDuff accompanied her. It was a dirt path at best, and Marina had the vague sense of being in a village when they came across a semi-circle of homes with a sort of courtyard in the middle. Marina and Samson waited in the courtyard while McDuff and Glory approached one of the homes.

Marina smiled in delight at the white eyes that stared in wonder at her from very dark, beautiful faces. One little girl, maybe three years old, came up to Marina and tugged on her skirt. Marina sank to the ground and pulled the girl into her lap. The little girl stroked Marina's hair with awe in her beautiful, round eyes. The girl was quickly distracted by the plastic water bottle on a strap going across Marina's body. The team members carried their canteens when they went anywhere. It was the only safe thing for them to drink. "It's water, little one." Marina knew the girl couldn't understand, so she made a drinking motion. The girl's eyes grew wide, and she started speaking excitedly and touching the water bottle. It seemed like she was asking for a drink, but Marina wasn't sure.

"She wants some water, Marina."

Marina looked up in surprise to meet Samson's eyes. "You understand her?"

"Yes. I've been studying Chichewa before we came and since we've been here. I can speak it almost fluently. I pick up languages easily, and this one isn't that difficult."



"It is for me. I'm stupid when it comes to languages. I've taken Spanish for two years, and I still can't say more than hello or goodbye." While she spoke, Marina opened her bottle and helped the little girl drink. "I wish I could give you the Water you need the most, little one." With a gentle smile, she stroked the girl's round head. "I wish I could just tell you God loves you. This may be your only chance to hear it, and I'm too ignorant to be able to say it to you."

Samson went to his knees in the dirt next to her and smiled at the little girl. "You just told her by sharing your water with her, but I'll teach you how to say God loves you, if you'd like."

"Just tell her for me, please. Maybe you can try to teach me later, but I doubt it'll work."

Samson took the little girl's hand in his and spoke softly. They seemed to have a sort of conversation for a moment, and the girl climbed from Marina to Samson. The young man clearly had no idea what to do with that.

Marina laughed lightly. "Hold her, Samson. She just wants some love."

"I don't know how to do that. Maybe you should take her." His already quiet voice was gravelly.

"You can do it."

Samson met Marina's eyes, "You struggle with languages. I struggle with this."

Marina could see how deeply it bothered him. She understood that feeling. It was how she felt about talking to the little girl. Helpless. "I'm sorry. Just put your arms around her like you're hugging your mother or something."

The young man's arms slowly went around the little girl. "I don't have a mother."

Surprised, Marina couldn't take her eyes from his. Samson so obviously had an incredible heart, but he remained a mystery in many ways. To hear him confiding in her thrilled Marina. "I'm sorry. Do you... do you have other family?"

"No. I'm an orphan. Since I was seven."

"Where do you live? Where are you going home to when we leave?" Marina's compassion and concern for Samson overwhelmed her.

"Well, before I came on this trip, I was at a foster home. I turned eighteen during our training camp, so I'm not in the system anymore. My youth pastor and his wife want me to live with them, but I don't want to get in the way. I'll just be there until I go to college in the fall. I'll be fine, Marina."

"My head knows that, because I know God is going to care for you, but my heart wants to do it for Him. You're an amazing guy, Samson. You deserve every possible blessing."

"I'm a sinner saved by grace, Marina. Nothing more."

Marina smiled softly. "I'm sure that's why you've got such a heart for missions. Where are you going to school? What will you study?"

Still holding the little girl, the two young people shared a little of their lives with each other while waiting on Glory and McDuff.

The next day, Daniel asked Marina to help him with a project during her free time. He brought her close to the lake where a pile of roughly chopped poles lay.

"We need to build a shower house for the campers. It's going to be very basic. Just an enclosure for modesty, really," he added quickly at Marina's intimidated glance toward the logs.

"I'm here to help. Tell me what to do."

They started by marking the ground with indentations where they would dig holes for the poles. Daniel instructed Marina to dig a certain depth and pack the dirt back around the pole once it was in the ground. "I have to get Ruff going on a project, Rina. Are you okay by yourself?"

"Sure. I'll be fine. After I set all these poles, I tie them together with this twine then come find you because I don't know the next step."

"Sounds right. I'll try to send someone down to help."

"Thanks."

With a wave and a smile, Marina started digging the next hole. She worked steadily and had most of the poles standing when Samson arrived. "Hey. Daniel sent me down to help. Wow. You work fast." Samson eyed the poles and the spots dug for them. "Are you sure those holes are deep enough?"

"I think so. I've never done this before. You tell me."

"I've never done it either, but I know if they aren't in there deep enough the wind will blow the whole thing over. I guess it's okay. They seem steady."

Marina was glad to let Samson take charge and show her what to do. Just as they started to tie the poles together, a strong gust of wind nearly knocked Marina down and ripped all the poles Marina had planted, out of the ground. With a gasp, Marina looked up to Samson, and the two of them started laughing and re-dug the holes much deeper. They worked until it was time for their other obligations, and after dinner they returned to finish the project.

After their trip to the village, Samson seemed to seek Marina's company in the evenings. Marina's heart was growing in many ways, and by the last week of camp she knew that even though she would return to America, part of her heart would stay in Malawi.

The night before they were to leave, the team stood in two rows, facing each other, and the campers had a chance to walk through and give a final handshake. Marina was crying by the fifth national. Every

national who shook her hand also gently stroked her palm with a finger. She never asked for certain what that meant, but she knew it was some sign of fondness.

Her tears wouldn't stop. Long after the campers were in their own tents, Marina continued crying. She asked permission to walk to the lake, and Daniel let her go as long as Samson went with her. Samson stayed silent as they walked the short distance and stood by the lake. It was a beautiful night with the moon making a shimmering path across the water. Marina wanted to stay, but she knew her place was in America for now.

"I understand how you feel, Marina," said Samson quietly.

"I wish I could stay, but I know it wouldn't be like this if I did."

"I know. We're still just kids. We need to go home and grow up before we'd really be ready for a mission field, full time. But I want to stay too," he admitted.

"I'm sorry you got babysitting duty."

"I'm not. You're part of the reason I don't want to leave."

Marina's eyes went to his face quickly. "Really?"

Samson rubbed the back of his neck, looking like he wanted to take back the words. "Yeah. Really."

"I feel the same way, Samson. You're part of why I don't want to leave too. We can stay in touch."

"I'll be in Florida. You'll be in Pennsylvania."

"That doesn't matter."

"You'll forget about me soon enough, Marina."

"No, I won't!" Marina's passion surprised her. "Sorry. I didn't mean to yell."

Samson dropped his head for a moment. "This has been really cool, but I don't know that what we have can last in the real world."

"Why not? It's a really great friendship. Why would it change?"

With a shrug, Samson stared at the water. "That's life, Marina. No one is there forever."

"God is, Samson. Yesterday, today, and forever."

"Believe me. If I didn't have God, I'd have given up completely a long time ago."

Nodding her head with fresh tears, Marina kept her eyes on the water. "I won't push you to stay in touch with me, but can I give you my address or my email? I want hope, Samson. I want the possibility that one day you'll try to find me."

Crossing his arms in front of him, Samson nodded thoughtfully. "Let's plan to meet ten years from now."

"What?"

"In ten years, let's meet here again."

"I don't know the name of this place. Let's meet in Lilongwe. In the garden."

“Okay. I know I’m coming back. If you do too, I’ll know this is real.”

Marina looked up to see his profile. “Can I still give you my email? I can’t imagine not being able to talk to you. I’ll miss you too much.”

“I’ll miss you too,” said Samson, finally meeting her eyes. “Yes. Give me your email.”

“I will. Sit with me on the plane tomorrow.”

“Of course.”

They turned and slowly went to the bunkhouse for the night. The next day was a flurry of activity mixed with a lot of waiting. Marina didn’t feel like talking and laughing with the rest of her teammates. She was going home, and she felt very torn about it. At long last, they boarded the plane, and Samson found his way to the seat next to her. She let her head slowly fall against his shoulder, risking a reprimand from Glory or Daniel.

The next twenty-four hours were grueling and unkind in the most unkind way. It didn’t feel real when they finally settled in London at the place they would debrief for the next few days before flying into New York then on to their individual homes. It was supposed to be a readjustment period before returning home. Samson and Marina stayed together as much as allowed. Marina’s tears started fresh a week later when she stood in JFK airport watching Samson get on his plane home first. Her flight into Philly would be unforgivingly short.

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Seeing her family again was more comforting than she had expected. Exhausted and emotionally spent, that first hug from her dad made it wonderful to be home again. Modern society felt very strange. Readjusting to using a normal bathroom and having clean water available to wash her hands was almost irritating.

Marina stepped into her comfortable, middle class, home and felt as though she were in a foreign country, yet at the same time, it felt normal. In her room, Marina stood staring at the bed for a while. Even in London, the team had slept in sleeping bags in tents on the ground. It had been more than two months since she’d slept in a bed with a mattress and a pillow other than her Bible.

“Rina, I have something for you,” said her mother softly from the doorway.

Turning with a smile, Marina went to her mother’s arms for a hug before receiving the gift. “I have a gift for you too. For all of you.”

“Are you okay, honey? You haven’t said much since we picked you up.”

“It feels strange, Mom. I’m sure I’ll be fine in a few days.”

“Here. Your sister and I were shopping and found this. We both instantly thought of you.”

Marina opened the jewelry case her mother handed her and felt the tender expression of her mother's heart for her. It held a bracelet with three charms. A heart, a Bible, and praying hands. Still, at the moment, jewelry felt very extravagant.

"Thank you, Mom. It's beautiful."

Though she hadn't much room for things, Marina had bought gifts for her family. She had wood carvings for her brothers and father and woven gifts and hand crafted jewelry for her mother and sister.

Life presented a challenge for Marina for a while. Only a week after getting home, school started. She felt crowded and disappointed and covered it with cheerfulness.

Then she received an email from Samson. All it had was the date and place where they would meet in ten years. Smiling, Marina felt tears as she replied with, "I'll see you there." She moved his email address into her address book.

The days wore on, and Marina got involved in extra-curricular activities at school all the while feeling like she was somehow disappointing God by becoming part of this modern, pampered world again. She went out with her friends in a group but never dated. Only her family knew about Samson. Her sister Malinda thought it was very romantic, as any thirteen year old would. Her brothers didn't pay it much mind, but her parents waited, watched, and prayed. On the outside, Marina seemed okay. Her parents slowly let themselves feel safe about her heart and mind.

Then Marina graduated from high school.

She wanted nothing to do with graduation. She didn't want to go to any parties, and she didn't even want to buy a cap and gown. "I just don't want to," she would say over and over again. "It's all so superficial and selfish."

"It's a tradition, Rina. There's nothing wrong with participating," said her father gently.

Marina firmly shook her head. "Don't buy me anything, Dad. You can send money to McDuff to help the church he's planting. I got a letter from him yesterday, and I know he could use the support even though he didn't say it."

"If that's what you want, that's what I'll do, and you don't have to go to graduation. If you feel this strongly, I'm not going to force you."

Relieved, Marina hugged her father. "Thank you, daddy."

"You're still going to nursing school in the fall though, right?"

"Yes, Dad. More than ever, I know nursing is what God wants me to do. I'm going to go check my email."

It had been two weeks since she'd heard anything from Samson. They kept up rather regular, though very brief, emails. Her face split in a smile. She had an email.

"I miss you," was all it said, but it was enough.

“I miss you too. I’m praying for you,” was her reply.

Marina dove into her new studies with passion. Part of her heart never readjusted to the frivolity of American life, and she was in constant internal conflict which kept her on her face before God. The more maturity and life experience she gained, the more settled her mind became though her heart still always felt the difference.

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For about five years, Samson and Marina stayed in touch. Then emails became scarcer and eventually stopped all together. By this time, twenty-four year old Marina was an RN and established in the neo-natal intensive care unit at the hospital in Philadelphia.

In so many ways, it felt like she was once again on a mission field. What hope and peace she could share, she did. Her tongue was quick to give God praise for health and turn to Him in pain for peace.

Though it was painful when she could no longer reach Samson, she didn’t fall apart. His emails kept bouncing back with an incorrect address. She tried Facebook and other social networking sites, searching for him, but he was gone.

Oddly though, she still had contact with McDuff. He now had access to the Internet, and they were able to stay in touch much more regularly than the post would allow. In the doctor’s lounge with her laptop, Marina was stealing a break from her shift in the wee hours of the morning, and got an email from McDuff.

Hello Marina,

I hope you and your family are well this day. The work here continues with many blessings, but we still need your prayers. The number of orphaned children grows daily, and our ministry never seems enough.

Tell me more about your ministry in the hospital. I’m pleased to hear that you have grown into such a godly woman.

Send me a snap of yourself, and I will send snaps of the work here.

*McDuff Banda*

Marina couldn’t help but smile. She would get her sister to take a picture of her in her scrubs and email it to McDuff tomorrow. Marina and Malinda had moved into a shared apartment about a year earlier.

“Hey, Rina. How’s it going? Quiet night?”

“Not really. I escaped for a minute. How about you, Dr. Fred?” Marina smiled at the young resident working in the cardiac care wing.

“Okay, I guess. Haven’t lost anyone tonight. That’s a blessing.”

"I hear you," Marina agreed.

"Don't you get off at three?" Dr. Fred asked.

"I do, if nothing happens."

Chuckling, Dr. Fred leaned against a locker. "I understand that. I'm off at three also. Can I buy you a cup of coffee somewhere when we're off?"

Marina smiled widely. "What's open at three in the morning?"

Dr. Fred shrugged. "WaWa?"

Standing and stowing her laptop, Marina smiled at the young doctor. "Okay then. It's a date."

She often had conversation and coffee with Dr. Fred after their shifts. His job was heart-wrenching most of the time, and the daily contact with suffering wore heavily on the good-hearted man. Marina's job was no less agonizing or stressful, and she knew Dr. Fred could see the peace she carried through all of it. She had no doubt this was the thing urging him to seek her company. Just a few hours later the two of them left the cares of the hospital and stopped at the local convenient store for coffee.

It was fall in Philadelphia, and the air was crisp and fresh. If anything could be fresh in the concrete jungle that was her home. When they stepped outside with tall cups of hot coffee, a strong breeze caught Marina off guard and nearly blew her scarf from her neck. In a flash she remembered the primitive shower building being blown down and smiled. When she looked up, it was not to Samson's eyes, but to Dr. Fred's, and Marina knew a moment of disappointment.

"Can I walk you home, Rina?" asked Dr. Fred with twinkling eyes.

"Since you live on the floor above me, I think you should."

Most nights, this was their conversation. Marina never pushed God in Dr. Fred's face. She simply let him see the difference in her life. In America, she had quickly learned that most people had no desire to hear about her incredible, amazing, loving, and righteous God. Dr. Fred was different in some ways. His interest in God was subtle, and Marina knew he would ask when he was ready. Her friendship with him drove her mind to begin questioning the reality of the fairytale meeting with Samson.

"You seem tired or something tonight, Rina. Everything okay?"

Marina looked up to the doctor with a smile. "I'm okay. I was thinking about an old friend."

"A guy?" teased Dr. Fred.

"Actually, yes."

"Someone that broke your heart?" His teasing turned into concern.

"No. Well, not yet at least. I'm just feeling a little melancholy I guess."

Dr. Fred opened the door to their building. “That’s a first, Marina. I’ve never known you to be upset.”

“I’m a human being, Fred. My heart feels the same things yours does. When something is painful, I hurt. When something is funny, I laugh. When something touches me, I feel compassion.”

“I thought God prevented you from feeling all the mess we deal with. You’re always so calm.”

“He doesn’t prevent me from feeling, but He does comfort me.”

There came a day when Dr. Fred and Marina left the city by train to spend the weekend with her parents in a neighboring borough, Thanksgiving weekend. Marina’s parents lived in a house on a street lined with sixty-year-old oak, maple, and pine trees. It was quiet and lovely.

Marina sat on the floor in front of the massive brick fireplace she had enjoyed since she was a child. The warmth of the crackling fire felt good on her back. Dr. Fred pulled a poker from the flames and gingerly took the marshmallow from the end of it, popping the treat into his mouth. Instantly the image of Ruff with a skewer of mice came to Marina’s mind. She laughed softly.

“What’s so funny?”

“I remembered something that happened when I was in Africa years ago.” Marina stifled another giggle.

“You’ve been to Africa?”

Marina told him the tale of the mice and a little of her trip to Africa.

Dr. Fred listened with a wide smile and settled next to her on the brick hearth. “So you even had this relationship with God, as you say, when you were a kid?”

“Yes. I was only five or six when I asked Jesus to be my personal Savior, but of course it was years before I could fully comprehend that relationship.”

“I bet nothing bad ever happens to you.”

With a soft smile, Marina shook her head. “That’s not true, Fred. I’m just a sinner saved by grace. Life is hard. I just don’t have to deal with the hard stuff by myself. I make mistakes, lots of them, but I can be forgiven if I ask.”

Dr. Fred studied her quiet profile for a time. “That sounds ridiculously simplistic.”

“You expected something complicated?”

“I don’t know. I guess I did.”

They fell silent again, and Marina knew it wasn’t time to press the point.

Seeing his wrinkled forehead and knowing his mind raced with questions and arguments, Marina felt her heart warm in the places that had grown cold and doubting. Her soul came alive again at the



most rudimentary level as a vessel for God to use to pour His living water into the lives of others. It overwhelmed her.

“What’s that smile about?”

“I was thinking about my old friend again.”

“The one who hasn’t broken your heart yet,” clarified Dr. Fred.

“That’s the one.”

“Do you expect him to break your heart?”

“I don’t know. I’ll find out in about two years,” Marina said.

“What? Two years? Is he in the military? In Afghanistan or something?”

“I don’t know. I don’t have any idea where he is, but I have a day and a place to meet him again, in two years.”

Dr. Fred pressed on, “All right. Now that you’ve teased me with it, I have to hear the whole story.”

“God figures very prominently in it. Are you sure you want to hear it?”

“I’m dying with curiosity. Just tell me.”

Marina shared her story with Dr. Fred, and in the speaking of it, her faith was renewed and her purpose sure.

“So when’s the last time you heard from him?”

“Three years ago.” She knew it to the day but kept the details to herself.

“Wow. And you still think he’s going to meet you there?”

“I know that I will be there, and I believe Samson will be too.”

Dr. Fred pulled one leg up resting his forearm on his knee. “Now I understand why I could never get a romantic vibe from you. You’re taken.”

“Yes, I am. You can be too. It’s an absolutely giddy feeling.”

“I meant by Samson, not by God,” quipped the doctor wryly.

“God’s claim on me is much stronger than Samson’s.”

After that, Marina’s peace and joy were stronger and brighter than they had ever been. She had opportunity upon opportunity of offering hope and peace in the hospital, and even the angry, bitter responses couldn’t discourage her.

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In their apartment, Malinda sat on the couch with her sister talking about the impending meeting with Samson. “So what happens after you meet him?”

Marina didn’t answer right away. “What do you mean?”

“You go to Malawi. Best-case scenario, you meet Samson in the park. Then what? You move to Malawi and live happily ever after?”

“I don’t know. I guess I’ll have to wait and see what’s next. God will direct my path. I’m sure of that. He has been faithful every step of my life. He’ll be faithful in this one as well.”

"That's more faith than I have," admitted Malinda quietly.

"Come with me, Malinda."

"Where?"

"To Malawi. When I go to meet Samson."

"That's two years away, Rina. I'll keep it in mind."

Six months later, she received an email from McDuff.

Lovely Marina,

I have some very exciting news. Today, we have finalized plans for a small medical facility near our orphanage. Will you pray with your heart about being part of our ministry? It will not happen for about two years, and God will need to provide much funding and workers first.

These little ones have many needs, and we have not always been able to provide medical care in time to save their bodies. This facility will be a blessing, and I know your heart here would be a gift as well.

Please prayerfully consider this request but know that you will have my devotion whether you say yes or no.

*McDuff Banda*

Wide-eyed, Marina read it again then forwarded it to her parents. Then Marina started praying and planning; a month later, she responded to McDuff's email. She started off telling with very scant detail of her future meeting with Samson, then continued telling him of the plans she and her parents had made.

In two years I will be a physician's assistant and hopefully even a more valuable asset to your ministry. My family and I all believe this is what God wants for me. So no matter what happens with Samson I will be part of this orphanage ministry.

I can't tell you how excited I am to have this opportunity. My heart has always lived partly in Malawi, and I'm looking forward to returning for however long a time it may be.

Love, *Marina*

What followed was a series of communications with great rejoicing from McDuff, then a barrage of information and things Marina would have to do before coming to join the ministry. She worked diligently at her studies and completing her residency. Her parents helped financially so that she would be debt free – one of the requirements for entering the ministry.

It was a long and tiring two years.

Her family was reluctant to say goodbye, but it would be different this time. Instead of infrequent postal communication, they would have Internet and satellite communication. Still it was hard to approach the separation with joy.

One evening at dinner, Marina took her mother's hands in hers and with shining eyes made this passionate suggestion. "You and daddy have always had a heart for missions. Why don't you come work with us? Even if it's just for a little while."

"That's something for us to pray about," responded her father quietly.

In her apartment later that evening, Malinda approached her sister. "Rina, I want to go with you. I don't teach in the summer anyway. I know you're excited about the orphanage, but I'm worried about what could happen with Samson. If nothing else, I'll have the fun of helping you take care of the children and get to see you settled."

Marina put her arms around her younger sister. Malinda was in her first year of teaching kindergarten, and loving it. "I know you really just want to see the babies," she teased, "but I'll be glad for your company. I admit, I'm a little worried about how I'll handle it if he isn't there."

"Well, I'll be there, and you'll be fine."

With the day swiftly approaching, they worked double-speed to get a passport and immunizations for Malinda. They arrived a week before her long-planned meeting with Samson, to have a chance to settle into the ministry and recover from jet lag.

It already felt different as Marina unloaded her suitcases from her parents' car at JFK. They had driven their daughters to New York to say goodbye as long as possible. With tears and smiles, Mom and Dad stood watching their daughters go through security and stayed as long as they could see a glimpse of the girls. Marina and Malinda settled on the airplane with excited anticipation. Marina remembered, though dimly now, the hard days of travel involved. This time, she was the one in charge instead of having leaders to trust. After almost twenty-four hours of travel, the women arrived weary and aching, yet ready to work. They went through customs and retrieved their bags before heading to the place McDuff had told them to meet him.

It wouldn't be hard for McDuff to find them; they were the only white faces in the airport. Marina, however, wasn't so confident that she would recognize McDuff, even holding the picture she'd printed. And then he was there. Her eyes scanned the room and found him instantly. He had matured and grown, as she had, but she would've known him anywhere. "McDuff!"

He turned with a wide smile and greeted the women warmly with his eyes lingering on Malinda. "You look much like your sister."

"Thank you."

"I'm sure you're tired and hungry. We have to drive a ways, so one of the workers made food for you to eat in the van. Come, let's go."

Marina had a hundred questions she wanted to ask, but when she stepped outside such a feeling of *home* struck her that she couldn't speak. It was clear and cool and brown, just as she remembered, but there were definite changes as well. As they drove, Marina strove to remember Lilongwe. It seemed much more developed to her now, ten years later. Malinda sat in the front with McDuff asking the questions that Marina had intended to ask.

"No, I am not actually running the orphanage ministry myself. It is part of the larger ministry that I oversee, but my main ministry is the church. Another man runs the orphanage and can give it his whole heart. You will meet him tonight."

"Is it, Ruff?" asked Marina somewhat hopefully.

McDuff laughed. "No, Marina. Ruff is a businessman in town now. He helps support our ministry financially."

The idea of immediately working with a stranger was a little unsettling. For some reason, she had understood that McDuff's ministry was the orphanage, not an orphanage as part of a larger ministry.

Still, she knew this was where God wanted her to be. As they drove, Marina fancied that some things were familiar, but it had been ten years since she'd seen any of it, and she had been a child at the time. When McDuff finally pulled off the dirt path they had traveled for some time now, Marina felt that this was definitely a familiar place. There were several buildings. The older ones looked oddly familiar, and Marina could tell by the construction that some of them were only built in the last few years.

Her eyes landed on one small, brick, structure and awareness struck her like lightning. She gasped and zipped her eyes to McDuff's. "This is the camp, McDuff. I remember the kitchen, and there's the meetinghouse. Is this where the orphanage is?"

In answer to her question, the sound of children singing floated to her from the other side of the meetinghouse. Tears filled her eyes as she slowly rounded the building to get a glimpse of the lake.

"Marina, wait. Don't let the children see you yet. It will be very distracting. Though they have seen white skin before, they have never seen a white woman. Do you remember that from years ago?"

Marina nodded. "I do. They were fascinated with my hair."

"Yes, it would be quite distracting. Let us introduce you in the proper way. You will have plenty of time to see the land later."

McDuff led them to a small building, one of the newer ones, at the

far end of the property. "This is where you will live. This is your home. The medical facility is connected to it by this path. Do you see that building there?"

Marina looked through the window at the building he indicated. It was modest, smaller than her parents' home. Her "house" was smaller than the apartment she had shared with her sister in Philadelphia, but she didn't mind.

Malinda was already snapping pictures on her cell phone and texting them home to her parents. It was expensive for sure, but she knew it would ease their minds. She could email them more later.

"That very large building is where the children live. We'll take a tour of it in a little while when we go to meet the director. He's also our only teacher, so he's quite busy right now."

"How old are the children?" asked Malinda curiously.

"We have infants all the way to young teenagers."

"So he is having to teach all of them?"

"Yes, it is a struggle for sure."

"I'm a teacher. Can you use my help?"

McDuff smiled gently, very drawn to this young woman. "You are an American teacher. You would need to learn some things first."

Malinda couldn't take her eyes from his. "I would like to learn. I would like to stay here and help teach the children."

Marina stared wide-eyed at her sister, then felt her heart exploding with the possibility.

"We will talk again of this, Malinda. Right now, we will pray about it. Meet me in the meetinghouse in about fifteen minutes, and we will go meet the director. Is this okay?"

The women agreed, and McDuff left them in the small house. Marina looked around her home. It was one large room with a small bed, a table and chair, and that was all. It was beautiful. "Malinda, are you serious about staying here and teaching?"

"I-I think so."

Marina backed off, hearing the hesitation. "Well, as McDuff said. We'll pray about it for now. Come with me to check out the medical facility. We have a few minutes."

The women went next door to the place Marina would spend most of her time. It was small but adequate. Marina's knowledgeable eyes already saw some needs. They met McDuff in the meetinghouse from the windows of which Marina could see the lake. It looked just the same. "I'm home," she breathed softly against the cold glass.

"Come, Marina. You need to meet the director."

Marina and her sister followed McDuff to the large two-story building. The first floor had a kitchen, a classroom, a room full of cribs, and a closed door. "This is where the director lives. He wants to be with the children at all times. We have several workers who come

every day, and two who sleep here as well in a small room near the nursery. At three years old, the children move upstairs. You will have a lot to learn in the next few weeks, but we are thankful to have you, Marina."

"This is where I belong, McDuff."

"Ah. Our wonderful director is returning."

Marina was startled at the glimpse of white skin she saw through the window just before the director opened the front door. When he did, he filled the doorway. He was tall and broad and lean and very familiar. His eyes focused on her face, and he started walking toward them never breaking his hold on her eyes. Marina felt herself start trembling all over and felt tears in her eyes.

"Samson," she breathed as he stopped in front of her.

Samson smiled his gentle smile. "You're early. Our date isn't until next week."

McDuff put a hand on Malinda's back and gently led her from the building to give the two hearts privacy.

Marina hesitantly touched his face. "It's really you." She moved her hand away quickly. "I'm sorry. I should ask if you're married or engaged or something."

Samson's answer was to pull her into his arms and kiss her mouth hungrily. "I'm not, but I hope to be very soon."

Laughing and crying at the same time, Marina threw her arms around his neck. "That was a lousy proposal, but the answer is still yes!"

"You are even more beautiful than I remember, Marina. I was afraid you'd given up on me. McDuff told me to keep waiting and praying, and next thing I know, you're making plans to work with me here."

"Samson, why didn't you email me if you knew where I was?"

"I had to know you wanted this as much as I want it."

"How long have you been here?"

"Five years."

Marina laid her head on Samson's broad chest. "The Lord is gracious and compassionate. Slow to anger and rich, so very rich, in love. At this moment, I'm not sure I can put into words how very strongly I feel God's love for me."

"I know exactly what you mean," said Samson quietly. He lifted Marina's face to his for another kiss. "Should we give this time to find out if it's really love?"

"You aren't sure?" asked Marina, suddenly anxious.

"I'm very sure, but I've been keeping track of you through McDuff. Are you sure?"

Marina's eyes twinkled. "I don't know. Why don't you meet me next week in Lilong..."

Her smart reply was cut off with a kiss, and she didn't mind.

It took two weeks to get her parents and brothers to Malawi for the wedding, but two weeks of waiting was nothing compared with ten years. Ω

*For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord,  
plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give  
you a hope and a future. Jeremiah 29:11*

# ADINAH'S STORY

Laura D. Thompson

The hour was early. It was still dark, the perfect time to draw water, before the town of Samaria woke up for the day.

I looked over at Avram. He lay on the ground sound asleep. The poor thing must have been exhausted. Who could really blame him after the night that we just had? I stroked some of his brown, wavy tendrils affectionately. He didn't wake, just sighed and moved his head slightly.

I crept over to go get my water jar. I grabbed it, hoisted up, and planted it on my hip. Before leaving to go draw water, I took another glance at Avram and my lips formed a tiny frown. *Why do we do this?*

I shut the door behind me quietly, so as to not wake him and then walked the mile to the well. The night air felt nice and cool. It left me plenty of time to think about life, about God. About sin. Mostly I thought about the men in my life. I loved Avram and I think he loved me. Avram and I were living together, unmarried; it was eating me up inside, like wandering the desert, desperate and thirsty.

As I walked down the path, I quietly sang my sad little song to God. *"Deliver Adinah, oh Lord, show me how. / Deliver Adinah, how to love more now. / Deliver Adinah, can't you hear my plea? / Deliver Adinah, do you even care for me? / Deliver Adinah, oh I know you are there. / Deliver Adinah, please hear my crying prayer. / Please, deliver me. Deliver me. Deliver..."*

"Adinah!" The voice broke my thoughts and prayers, followed by the sound of women's laughter. The well had to be near; the women were discussing the day's gossip. I hurried to join them.

"Adinah?" one of them, Zara, said. "The harlot?"

I stopped in my tracks, shocked. *Surely they're not talking about me.* I crept closer and hid behind the wall of a house to hear them better.

Their conversation continued. "Who else?" said Pomona.

"What about her?" asked Tabitha.

"I heard she has a new man," Pomona said.

"She married again?!" Zara asked. I could hear shock and derision in her voice.

"Oh no, she's not married this time." I could hear the young women tittering; Pomona continued. "Well surely you've seen him. No? Last week with the brown, wavy hair and olive-green cloak? He just met her a few months ago, and now they're living together!"

"Pomona!" Tabitha exclaimed.

"What? It's not *my* fault."



Rachel interrupted. "Perhaps we shouldn't talk about her behind her back."

"It's not like she can hear us," Pomona bit back.

*Little do they know*, I thought.

"Really?" Rachel said. "What if she all of a sudden appeared right around that corner? Then what?"

"Not likely," Zara said. "She doesn't like showing her face in public."

*Well not anymore.* Droplets streamed down my face and into my water pot, as if to fill it with my tears.

"Well I wouldn't either," Pomona added.

"Maybe it's not what you think," Tabitha said.

"Maybe it's exactly what I think!" Pomona exclaimed.

"Maybe she just wants to have children," Rachel said. "Remember Tamar's sin? Her children were our fathers' fathers."

"Oh, Rachel, please!" Pomona said. "You can't be serious. Are you comparing Adinah to Tamar? You *must* mean Jezebel."

"Pomona! Jezebel killed people! Adinah doesn't kill people!" Tabitha said.

"But she left every one of her husbands." Zara spoke up.

"She's not faithful, Tabitha," Pomona snapped back sharply. "Adinah grows tired of them and changes husbands as often as she changes clothes!"

My eyes widened and my mouth dropped. *That's not true; I loved them all, every one.*

I heard Pomona pick up her jar of water. The sun was rising.

"Five ex-husbands and a live-in lover? A harlot by any other name." With that, Pomona headed for her house.

Zara picked up her jar to leave the well, "I have to agree with her this time. Adinah has made some horrible choices in life. She's such a naive little girl."

That left Rachel and Tabitha alone at the well. I heard them both sigh. Tabitha turned to Rachel. "I think you were really brave to defend Adinah like that."

"Pomona needs to get her own life and stay out of everyone else's," Rachel said, before leaving the well.

Tabitha stood there for a minute, bit her lip, and hurried along to catch up with Rachel.

When all went quiet, I peeked at the well to make sure nobody was there. Seeing no one, I rushed to draw water, trying to fill my jar as though nothing had happened. Tears welled up in my eyes and my face turned as red as the sun when it rises in the hot desert. My fingernails dug in to the palms of my hands, and I shook uncontrollably. The water I had gathered splashed heedlessly back into the well. I leaned over the edge and let out a little gasp of sorrow

and grief. I cried and didn't stop until the sun was up.

Back at the house, I opened the door to an empty home. Avram was not in; he had gone to work for the day. Placing the water jar back where it belonged, I leaned against the wall, and then slid down to a sitting position, covering my face with my hands. I tried to cry but my eyes had dried up, so I pulled my knees up to my chest. Folding my arms and placing them on my knees, I rested my head on them. *"Deliver Adinah, can't you hear my plea? / Deliver Adinah, do you even care for me? / Deliver Adinah, oh I know you are there. / Deliver Adinah, please hear my crying prayer. / Please, deliver me... Deliver me... Deliver..."*

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I looked out my window. The sun hung in the middle of the sky. No one appeared to be in the street. I quickly grabbed my jar and ran out the door. The sun's scorching heat beat down on my skin. Beads of sweat formed on my forehead and the back of my neck. A throbbing pain formed in my legs and feet as I ran the mile to the well in the middle of the day.

As the well drew nearer, I hoped that no one was around, that the place would be empty. No one came to draw water during the day.

There was a man at the well. He was sitting down right next to well and leaning against it. He wore a white robe and cloak in the Jewish Galilean fashion. He looked tired. I tried to ignore him and just fill up my water jar. "Excuse me," he said. "But would you please give me a drink of water?"

I glanced behind me, but we were alone. I tried to pretend like I hadn't heard. "Please," he said again, turning to face me, "May I have a drink?"

I stared at him. "Sir, do you where you are? How could you ask me for a drink of water? You are a Jewish man and I am a Samaritan woman."

He smiled gently, "If you only knew who asked you for a drink, you would not hesitate. In fact, you would ask me for a drink of water and I would give it to you freely. I would give you living water."

I giggled just a little. "Living water? Is that a fountain of youth that makes you live forever?"

"Yes," he answered.

"Really? Sir, you have no jar or anything. Nothing to draw water with. Where are you going to get this living water?" I continue to draw my water and fill my jar with it, no longer giggling. "Do you know who Jacob was? He was our ancestor. He himself dug this well and gave it to us. He himself drank water from this well. His many sons and sheep and anyone else in his family did so as well."

"Yes he did," the man agreed as he stood up. "But after some time,

Jacob and his sons and herds grew thirsty again. Everyone who drinks the water from this well, will eventually be thirsty again. But whoever drinks the water that I freely give them will never become thirsty again. My water will be like a spring inside of them. The spring will produce endless life, and they will never thirst again."

I stared at him. "Are you serious? This living water exists?" I asked him.

"Yes, I am. And not only does it exist but, I give it out freely, without payment."

I set down my jar and hurried over to him, dropping to my knees and looking up at him. "Sir, please give me this water. I will do whatever you want of me. Please! I hate coming to this well everyday. Please give me this living water so I will never thirst."

He motioned for me to rise to my feet, smiling gently. "Go," he told me. "Go back in to the village and get your husband. Then come back and I will give both you and your husband living water."

"Oh," I said and looked down. I started to pick at my fingers. *Can I possibly bring Avram to him?* I turned away, ashamed. "Well, I don't really have a husband."

"The truth of the matter is that you have had five husbands, and the man who you live with now is not one of them."

"How did..." I could not finish the question.

He said, "Come and sit down with me and we can talk some more."

We sat in the dirt next to the well. I spoke quietly, "You must be a prophet." Some time passed before I spoke again. "May I ask you a question?"

"Yes." He sounded like he already knew the answer.

"Our ancestors worshiped here on this mountain. You Jews say we can't worship at this mountain, you say we may only worship in Jerusalem, the Holy City. Where should I worship the Lord?"

The man just smiled and said, "Woman, trust me. A time is coming when you will worship God on neither this mountain nor in Jerusalem. You Samaritans worship something you do not know; something you do not understand fully. We Jews worship what we do know and understand. You see, salvation comes from the Jews."

Not surprised, I let my head fall. "I suppose that means salvation is only for the Jews as well."

He shook his head and said, "No, that's not what it means at all."

I lifted my head and looked back up at him perplexed.

He continued, "A time is coming when it will not matter whether you worship here on this mountain, or in Jerusalem, or in your own home. It will not matter whether the worshipers are Jews or Samaritans. It will not matter whether they are men or women. The true and genuine worshipers will worship the Lord God with all their

heart and spirits. They will worship the Lord God by who they are and how they live their lives. They will not only worship the Lord God with their voices or minds, but with their spirits as well. For this is the type of worship that our Father God finds pleasing and holy. These are the types of worshipers that our Father God wants and seeks for. Since the Lord is a spiritual being, it only makes sense that he would want worshipers who worship him with all their soul."

I sat there dumbfounded. "I never knew that," I replied. "I know the Messiah is coming. I suppose He will make it clear to us, that He will bring that time of worship."

"That time is now. I am He."

I covered my mouth with both hands. *The Messiah is speaking to me.*

I heard a group of men coming near the well talking with each other and laughing. When they saw me, they stopped in their tracks, dead silent.

*I have to tell someone!* I stood up, stepped back from him slowly, not letting him out of my sight. I finally turned and ran, forgetting my water jar.

I ran as fast as my legs could take me. I had to run; these people had to hear Him for themselves.

I met Rachel and Tabitha first. They were working in their little garden in front of their house. "Girls!" I shouted to them.

They both looked up from their work. Tabitha smiled a little, and replied, "Hello Adinah. What's wrong? You looked flushed."

I started babbling. "He's here, girls. He's here and He has come to save us! All of us! He's come to save us at last!"

Rachel stood up from her gardening, wiped dirt from her hands with her apron. "Who has? Adinah, you are not making any sense."

"The Messiah!"

"Who?" They both asked.

"The Messiah, He has come to us at last! He has come to save us and He has offered us a gift, living water! Living water that will never make us thirsty again! You must come and meet Him!"

"Wait, Adinah stop," Rachel said. "How do you know he is the Messiah?"

"He told me everything I have ever done! I did not know Him, but He knew me!" *They believe me.* "Quick, get your mother and father, your brothers as well! Then go to the well! He is by the well! Go now, hurry!" They scurried off.

I caught Avram, just coming home. "Avram!"

He smiled, tired. "Hello, Adinah. I have had a hard day today."

"The Messiah! He is here, Avram! He is here at the well!"

He just laughed. "The Messiah? You have met the Messiah today? Really Adinah? What did He look like?"

"I am not crazy, Avram!" I shouted. "He is the Messiah! I know it!" I calmed down, but only a bit. "He knew about us."

He turned bright red, "You told him about us? Why?"

"No, no, He knew about me too, Avram. He knew about my husbands, and I never said anything."

"That's impossible," he said, disbelieving, and turned in the direction of the well. "How would he know?"

"How else?" I whispered to him. "He must be the Savior. He is going to give us a gift, living water. Living water that brings eternal life."

"Is He still here? Where is He?"

"He is by the well. Go! Hurry! Tell the rest of the men in the village and then run to Him!"

Avram ran.

Soon after I saw Pomona and Zara. Zara was inside her house, Pomona conversing with her through window. *Will they believe me?*

"Oh, Adinah!" Pomona said. "Hello."

"We weren't talking about you," Zara spoke quickly. Pomona shot her a mean, silencing look, and hastily turned back to me and tried to smile.

"It's alright, just listen."

Zara tried to act interested. "What is it Adinah?"

"I met someone today..."

"I'll bet you did," Pomona interrupted.

"It's not what you think," I answered. "The Messiah. I met the Messiah today!"

They just stared at me. Finally, Zara said, "Have you been out in the sun too long?"

"Why won't you believe me?"

"Adinah," Zara said. "I'm sure we all want to believe you."

"Think clearly, Adinah," Pomona added. "How do you know *this* one is the Messiah?"

"He knew everything I've ever done! He knew me!"

Something in their faces changed. "What do you mean?" Pomona asked.

"He knew about my husbands. He knew about Avram. He knew all of this and still offered me a gift. He wanted to give me living water. Living water which will make you thirst no longer!"

"He offered that to you?" Zara asked. "Would He give it to us?"

"He will give it to anyone who asks."

"Where is He?" Zara asked.

"He's by the well! Get your husbands and come to the well!"

Zara immediately went back inside to call her husband. Pomona stood where she was; I came up closer to her. "Go Pomona. Get your husband and go to the well. You will want to meet Him; I am sure of

it.”

After a moment, Pomona replied, “Alright. I’ll find Nathan and meet you there.”

I smiled and ran towards the well. “Adinah!” I turned back to see her. She smiled back at me. “Thank you for telling me.”

“You’re welcome,” I replied.

When I finally reached the well, I could not believe how many people were there. The Messiah stood in front of the large crowd teaching them and blessing them. He told us who He was and called us to repentance. Many believed Him and came to receive salvation, myself included. He blessed me, and all I could think was, *He only asked me for a drink of water.*

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I shut the door as I went out. The Messiah was moving on to the next village and I wanted to catch Him before He went. Had He really been with us for two whole days? It seemed He had just come yesterday. I had a cup of water in my hands and I wanted to give it to Him before He left.

I caught Him at the edge of the village. “Wait!” I called out to Him. They all turned around and He came forward to me. I handed Him the cup of water. “In all the excitement, I forgot.”

He smiled. “Thank you.”

“You helped so many people and showed them love. No one can repay you for that. Must you really go so soon? We have lodging for you here. Anyone would give you and your disciples a place to stay and food to eat.”

“That’s very kind of you, but I must go. I must complete the Father’s will for me.”

“What is the Father’s will for you?”

“When my time comes you will know.”

“I don’t want you to go.”

“Adinah, don’t let anyone tell you that you don’t matter, that you aren’t good enough. All of Samaria has come to know me because of your faith. I am your living water.” He said goodbye and departed with His disciples. I waved goodbye and watched them leave. When they all were finally out of sight, I sighed, and sang.

*“Deliver Adinah from dry desert air. / Deliver Adinah to your loving care. / Deliver Adinah with water so pure. / Deliver Adinah and she’ll thirst no more. / Please, deliver me! Deliver me! Deliver...”*

Ω

# WATER SUPPLIES

Floyd Davis

**Rain-water.** There is a popular idea that rain-water, as it falls, is perfectly free from impurities; but, in fact, the first fall of rain after a drouth is swarming with living organisms, which multiply and perish, polluting the water with themselves and the products of their decomposition; but fortunately the living organisms are generally harmless. Even the purest unfiltered air contains myriads of these motes which can be seen in the sun-beam with the naked eye, but they are washed from it by the descending rain. Two hundred thousand micro-organisms are often found in a litre of water that falls at the beginning of a storm, the number being usually greater in summer than in winter. The principal genus of *Bacteria* found in rain-water is the *Micrococcus*, but other genera are also found, nearly all of which are in the stage of *spores* instead of *adults*. Besides *Bacteria*, spores of *Fungi* and other microscopic plants, together with the pollen of flowers and grasses, are found in rain-water.

The exhalations that rise from decomposing organic matter, and float in the atmosphere, are also carried down by the rain, so that the first rain that falls during a storm is always more or less impure, and unfit for drinking; but the air becomes purified in a short time, and the rain that falls thereafter is approximately pure water. The British Rivers Pollution Commissioners concluded that "half a pint of rain-water often condenses out of about three thousand three hundred and seventy-three cubic feet of air, and thus in drinking a tumbler of such water, impurities which would only gain access to the lungs in about eight days, are swallowed at once." These impurities consist of ammoniacal salts, nitrous and nitric acids, sodium chloride, calcium compounds, and organic matter; and when the water has drained from the roofs of buildings, after a dry season, additional impurities are dust, dead insects, excreta of birds, and probably dried disease germs. The total solids from rain-water usually amount to two or three grains per gallon. As the rain falls, it becomes thoroughly aerated; but rain-water has usually a flat, smoky taste, owing to the small amount of carbonic anhydride and alkaline salts in it.

In Iowa the average annual rainfall is thirty-one inches. Consequently, on one hundred square feet of surface, about nineteen hundred and thirty-two gallons of rain-water will fall annually. The average evaporation from the roofs of buildings is about twenty percent of the rain that falls upon them, so that the eighty percent of water that may flow into cisterns from each one hundred square feet of surface is about fifteen hundred and forty-six gallons per year, or four and two-tenths gallons per day, on an average.

In the rural districts of our northern latitude, where the ground-water is generally quite pure, rain-water is not usually collected for general domestic purposes. When the ordinary source of water is excessively hard or impure, rain-water is, however, sometimes used for drinking; but it is usually collected for bathing and laundry use only, on account of its softness.

But in some of the southern cities, near the Gulf of Mexico, where it is impossible to secure a supply of pure well- or spring-water, rain-water is used extensively for all domestic purposes, and many of these cities derive their entire domestic water supply from rain. "In Galveston, Texas, where the island is so low that the use of well-water is entirely out of the question, each dwelling-house is furnished with one, two, or more large cisterns constructed of cypress wood, whose capacity varies from one thousand to forty thousand gallons; the cistern is generally elevated about two to three feet from the ground, is covered with a lid which is lifted a short distance from the top, and which allows proper ventilation.

"In some cases the cistern is placed in an independent enclosure made for the purpose, in others they are placed in the wood-shed, but far the greater majority are placed in a balcony or on the shady ground near the low oleander trees, and have but little protection, if any, from the sun. Some are made of cement and sunk underground, within a very few feet of the cesspool, which is naturally very shallow, as it is impossible to dig more than two or at the most three feet in the sand and avoid water, These underground cisterns are oft-times saturated with the emanations from the unclean cesspools in close proximity."

It is very important in the construction of cisterns for storage of drinking-water that great care should be exercised in preparing the walls against any leakage from cesspools and privies. The water should have a supply of fresh air, but should not be exposed to sunlight, or even diffused light. Rain-water collected near the end of storms, and thoroughly filtered through sand and charcoal, is wholesome, and can be kept suitable for drinking by storage in properly constructed cisterns.

**Well-water.** The purity of well-water depends mainly upon the depth and situation of the well, and the nature of the surrounding soil. The water in *deep wells* is separated from the surface by an impervious stratum. The water in artesian wells is nearly free from organic impurities, but it is usually highly mineralized, and the temperature is oftentimes objectionably high. Deep wells, when properly made, are also nearly free from organic impurities, but their waters are impregnated with hardening salts. Such waters are not best suited to the digestive powers of man; and every intelligent groom and herdsman knows that such waters are also more



prejudicial to horses and cattle than even the water of a muddy stream. Although the water from deep wells and springs is generally sparkling and pure at first, it soon gives rise to a growth of *Algae* if exposed to sunlight and heat in ponds or open reservoirs; but if stored in covered reservoirs, where sunlight cannot enter, it remains pure for a long time. A growth of *Algae* is also often seen in the orifices of pipes discharging artesian and other deep well-water.

Surface wells depend for their main supply of water upon the area immediately surrounding them, no matter what their depth, and these are the wells most frequently used. The abundance of filth in densely populated cities renders the soil unfit for the filtration and storage of water; and surface wells in such soil furnish only a polluted and dangerous supply, as the water is not sufficiently aerated for the oxidation of its organic matter. *These wells are frequently situated in too close proximity to dwellings, stables, cesspools, privy-vaults, and other sources of pollution, and they are therefore sometimes important factors in disseminating disease.*

Rain-water, as it passes into the earth, extracts from the soil quantities of impurities, like the products of decaying vegetation and the filth and excrement of animals, which it carries down into the circulating currents, and it occasionally happens that the drainage of cesspools and privies finds a direct channel into the well. *The germs from diseased persons thus find their way to the water supply, and some surface wells are nothing more than receptacles for diluted excrementitious matter.*

"The common practice in villages, and even in many small towns, is to dispose of the sewage and to provide for the water supply of each cottage, or pair of cottages upon the premises. In the little yard, or garden, attached to each tenement, or pair of tenements, two holes are dug in the porous soil; into one of them, usually the shallower of the two, all the filthy liquids of the house are discharged; from the other, which is sunk below the water-line of the porous stratum, the water for drinking, and other domestic purposes, is pumped.

"These two holes are not infrequently within twelve feet of each other, and sometimes even closer. The contents of the filth hole, or cesspool, gradually soak away through the surrounding soil and mingle with the water below. As the contents of the water hole, or well, are pumped out, they are immediately replenished from the surrounding disgusting mixture, and it is not, therefore, very surprising to be assured that such a well does not become dry even in summer. Unfortunately, excrementitious liquids, especially after they have soaked through a few feet of porous soil, do not impair the palatability of water; and this polluted liquid is consumed from year to year without a suspicion of its character, until an outbreak of epidemic disease compels attention to the polluted water. Indeed,

our acquaintance with a very large proportion of this class of potable waters has been made in consequence of the occurrence of several outbreaks of typhoid fever amongst the persons using them."

"The well-waters of New Orleans are unfit for use. They are but little less impure than the sewage water carried off by the drainage canals, yet they are reported as being employed for family use, in bakeries, and for stock, especially in summer, when the cistern supply fails. The site of the city is waterlogged to within a few feet of the surface. One well, on Chestnut Street, the least impure of those examined, is only ten feet deep, and contains seven feet of water. The saturated soil is of great depth, and the ground-water is practically stagnant. The filtration into the wells is insufficient even to free the water from turbidity. Organic matter is unaffected by the process."

The drainage section of a surface well may be likened to the contents of an inverted cone, the base of which is the surface of the drained ground, and the apex the bottom of the well. In a porous soil the drainage area is sometimes quite large and the water impure. It is said that the circulation of water is sometimes so thorough in the earth that if a barrel of kerosene oil be placed ten feet under ground, every well within a quarter of a mile will be contaminated, and the oil will be apparent to the taste. It has been demonstrated that in compact soils, the level of the ground-water is influenced by pumping, for a distance of two hundred feet in all directions around a well, while in loose, gravelly soils, the circle of influence may have a radius of more than two thousand feet. This produces a circulation of water toward the centre, and consequently a washing of the filth of the soil into the well. *No stable, cesspool, privy-vault, or other source of contamination, should be within this radius.*

Many severe outbreaks of epidemic diseases have been traced to the use of surface well-water in cities, and there is strong reason to believe that sporadic attacks of typhoid fever often occur in isolated country homes from the same cause. When scientific views concerning the pollution of well-waters are disseminated, surface wells will be rapidly abandoned by the intelligent classes. It is often difficult to persuade the owner of a polluted well to abandon it, since the water may have an agreeable taste, and may have been used for years with impunity. The ignorant cannot often be convinced by the results of scientific investigation; they require the "test of experience," and to some there is no test convincing of the pollution of water, except the actual production of sickness and death.

Drinking-water should be well aerated. The well should be exposed to fresh, circulating air, if possible, and situated where there is no flow of water into it from contaminating sources. Well-water sometimes becomes impure from the absorption of floating matter from a stagnant atmosphere. Wells should never be situated in

cellars, on account of the stagnant, impure air which is generally in them. Wells situated near a house, from necessity, are generally closed, but in all cases there should be some means of ventilation. Even some methods of agitating the water have been advocated by sanitarians. The "old oaken bucket," chain pumps, and similar agencies for lifting, may assist purification and aeration, by agitating the water.

In the ordinary method of bricking or walling a well, no protection is offered against surface drainage, and a deep well thus constructed is no better than a surface well. Open wells should always be walled with hydraulic cement above the water-line, to prevent the admission of filth. Surface contamination is also prevented by the use of deep "driven wells"; with these the only pollution comes from the downward circulating currents. These are also known as "Tube", "American", "Abyssinian", and "Norton" wells. Wooden curbing for wells is a serious source of danger, as the wood soon becomes rotten, contaminates the water, and promotes the growth of *Fungi*. It also affords lodging for myriads of insects which fall into the water and die.

**Spring-water.** Springs are fountains of water which flow from subterranean channels. This term is sometimes incorrectly applied to mere shallow pits, filled with water oozing from marshy surroundings, and with little or no visible outflow. Water which finds its way into a porous rock, between impervious strata, generally issues in springs along the outcroppings of the pervious stratum. The direction of dip generally determines the direction of the ground current, the water seeking its lowest level; and a sudden change in dip often gives rise to springs, or the water may flow from the lowest outcroppings of the pervious stratum. Springs are, therefore, similar in purity to deep wells, for these wells derive their supply from the subterranean channels.

The water which gathers into these channels descends from the earth's surface; and if the surface water is polluted, the springs which receive their supplies from it are liable to be impure. The organic constituents, in filtering through the earth, may, however, oxidize to harmless inorganic products if the filtering bed is sufficiently deep; but disease germs are not thus destroyed.

Average porous soil contains about two hundred and fifty times as much carbonic anhydride as does the air, under ordinary conditions, and this is taken into the percolating water as it filters into the subterranean channels, rendering it especially palatable. It is this carbonic anhydride in water which dissolves limestone, converting it into a soluble bicarbonate.

Spring-water which flows from hill or mountain sides is generally cold, and has a uniform temperature the year around. Springs may

furnish the best water for drinking, as they are often nearly free from organic impurities, and their waters are very palatable from the gases and salts held in solution, but they are generally unsuitable for technical purposes, on account of hardness. They are superior to wells having water of the same nature, on account of their freedom from the accumulated matter which is always found on the surface of well-waters. A perfectly pure spring-water is certainly our healthiest natural beverage.

Such waters are abundant, and can often be easily obtained. Country residences should be located near perennial springs, if possible, and their waters adopted generally or universally for drinking. Spring-water is so much superior to surface well-water for domestic purposes that some cities have incurred considerable expense to introduce it. The city of Vienna uses water brought from springs sixty miles distant, and has freed itself of much sickness, such as prevailed there when filthy river and surface well-water only was used.

**River-water.** Owing to available water power, means of transportation by boats, and easy drainage, streams are the natural localities on whose banks manufactories and cities are generally located. From these enterprises pollution is added to the water courses. Nearly all improvements in the soil also tend to contaminate streams, for "the surface waters which formerly ran from the mountains and forest lands, now run off from cultivated and enriched fields, or from the roads and streets of towns and villages."

Rivers are the natural drains of the territory through which they flow, being fed by rains, small streams, springs, and surface drainage. "They are the receptacles of all the waste products of the inhabitants of the district; they receive the contents of sewers, cesspools, and privies; the offal of distilleries, slaughter-houses, and tanneries, and the refuse of factories. Into them are thrown carcasses of dead animals, as the most expeditious method of burial. From swamps they receive the matter of vegetable decomposition, and are discolored by flowing over beds of peat."

The factories that are especially objectionable are sugar refineries, and starch, glucose, and dye works. Rivers are also sometimes polluted by the filth from stock-yards. Many of the organic substances which are washed into rivers from cities situated on their banks undergo decomposition, giving rise to products, some of which have the power to produce disturbances in the human system, and others to propagate the germs of disease.

The Prussian government protects its public water supplies by forbidding the discharge of sewage into its rivers. Some of our states also have laws protecting the water courses, making it a criminal offence to throw any polluting substance into water which shall

afterward be used for drinking. Some of our state and local boards of health are empowered to prohibit any nuisance which may tend to produce disease, but as a nation our sanitary laws are unsatisfactory. The pollution of streams can only be prevented by stringent regulations, and so at present it is absolutely impossible to prevent the pollution of many water courses.

One of the sanitary problems now needing solution, is how to get rid of sewage and protect our rivers. It has been suggested that the larger streams which furnish water for city supplies should be kept pure, while the smaller ones might be used for carrying off sewage, when they are not used for domestic supplies. "It is evident that nothing is more unphilosophical than that one town should be allowed to discharge its sewage into a water course that is the most available source of water supply for a town lower down on the stream.

"Each river-basin should be under the control of some central authority by which conflicting interests should be harmonized. An accurate survey should be made of the whole area, and no town should be allowed to introduce a water supply without due consideration being given to the future of the supply, and to the question of disposing of the sewage of the town supplied. Moreover, while sanitary conditions are of the highest importance, manufacturing interests must also be considered, and no undue burden laid upon legitimate industries."

River-water below the discharge of city sewage, is a filthy and dangerous beverage, and notwithstanding its natural purification by sunlight, by oxidation, and by living organisms, it may never be free from disease germs. A stream which has received much filth in its course is unfit for domestic use, unless the volume-ratio of the filth to the water is inappreciably small. The amount of impurities of streams in rural districts from the decay of vegetation is always greatest in the fall, and that from suspended matter is always greatest in the spring.

River-water originating in mountainous districts is unquestionably the best for city supplies, as under ordinary conditions it is softer than well- or spring-water, and is freer from organic and living matter than surface wells and stagnant ponds and lakes. The objections offered against the use of river-water are on account of its high temperature, frequent turbidity, and its liability to contamination; and it is true that some rivers furnish water only fit for hydrant and manufacturing purposes. But by the use of ice, efficient systems of purification, and proper precautions against pollution, river-waters are generally excellent supplies for cities and towns, where an abundance of pure water is needed.

In the ground-water system for central filtration, the wells receive only a part of their water from rivers on banks of which they are

situated, as the ground-water is constantly flowing toward the river-channel.

**Lake- and Pond-Water.** Lakes are the reservoirs into which rivers and other streams empty, and when small their waters are not widely different from their sources. They are not often entirely free from suspended matter, but their waters can be easily rendered clear by filtration. Lakes are natural settling basins, and they are much less liable to be rendered turbid than streams. The water is somewhat purified by the sedimentation of its suspended matter, and it remains cold during the summer. The water of the Great Lakes is, however, rendered impure near the shores by the discharge of sewage from the cities situated near them. Cities like Chicago, which use a lake-water supply, are compelled to extend their receiving mains into the lake, beyond the limit of impurification.

Pond-water often becomes unfit for domestic use, from the growth of *Algae* and fresh-water *Sponges*.

**Water for Public Schools.** The water supply for public schools, asylums, hotels, and all other places where people are gathered together, should be exceedingly pure. One of the most potent factors in originating and spreading diphtheria, and scarlet and typhoid fever in schools, is the water used by the children, from surface wells and stagnant streams. The mere presence of these infectious diseases is all that is needed to inaugurate a general epidemic. There is scarcely a well supplying a public school in Iowa that is not suspicious. If not actually polluted, many of the wells are surrounded with dangerous agencies, such as privies, stables, and filthy streets and alleys. Dr. Chancellor, secretary of the Maryland State Board of Health, says there is not a well-water in the whole state of Maryland fit for domestic use.

City schools should in all cases be supplied with water from water-works, when there are works in operation, and analyses show that their water is pure and safely potable. "Village and country schools should have the well at least one hundred feet from any privy or stable, and the topography of the contiguous surface should be such as to secure rapid and free drainage in every direction from the well for the farthest possible distance. It should be free from the shade of trees and accessible to uninterrupted air-currents." Ω

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# THE TROLL IN THE CHURCH FOUNTAIN

*Fanny Barry*

## I

It was a village of fountains. They poured from the sides of houses, bubbled up at street corners, sprang from stone troughs by the roadside, and one even gushed from the very walls of the old Church itself, and fell with a monotonous tinkle into a carved stone basin beneath.

The old Church stood on a high plateau overlooking the lake. It jutted out so far, on its great rock, that it seemed to overhang the precipice; and as the neighbours walked upon the terrace on Sundays, and enjoyed the shade of the row of plane trees, they could look down over the low walls of the Churchyard almost into the chimneys of the wooden houses clustering below.

There were wide stone seats on the terrace, grey and worn by the weather, and by the generations of children who had played round them; and here the mothers and grandmothers, with their distaffs in their hands, loved to collect on summer evenings.

Often Terli had seen them from his home by the mountain torrent, for he was so high up, he looked down upon the whole village; and he had often longed to join them and hear what they were saying; but as he was nothing but a River-Troll, he was not able to venture within sight or sound of the water of the holy Church Fountain.

Anywhere else he was free to roam; teasing the children, worrying the women as they washed their clothes at the open stone basins, even putting his lean fingers into the fountain spout to stop the water, while the people remained staring open-mouthed, or ran off to fetch a neighbour to find out what was the matter.

This was all very pleasant to Terli, and at night he would hurry back to his relations in their cave under the stones of the torrent, and enjoy a good laugh at the day's adventures.

There was only one thing that worried him. Several of the cleverest old women of the village, who had on several occasions seen Terli dancing about the country, agreed to hang a little pot of the Church water in the doors of their houses; and once or twice the Troll, on attempting to enter in order to tease the inhabitants, had suddenly caught sight of the water, and rushed away with a scream of rage and disappointment.

"Never River-Troll can stand the sight of the Church Fountain!" said the old women, and rubbed their hands gleefully.



In the early summer there was to be a great wedding at the old Church, the Bridegroom the son of a rich farmer, the Bride one of the young girls of the village; and Terli, who had known them both from childhood, determined that for once in his life he would enter the unknown region of the Church Terrace.

"Elena has often annoyed me in the past," laughed Terli, "so it is only fair I should try and annoy her in the future"—and he sat down cross-legged at the bottom of a water trough to arrange his plans quietly in seclusion.

An old horse came by, dragging a creaking waggon, and the driver stopped to allow the animal to drink.

The Troll raised himself leisurely, and as the horse put in his head, Terli seized it in both hands, and hung on so firmly that it was impossible for the poor creature to get away.

"Let go!" said the horse, angrily—for he understood the Troll language. "Let me go! What are you doing?" "I shan't let you go till you make me a promise. You get the Wood-Troll to cork up the Church Fountain at daybreak on Friday morning, and I'll let you drink as much as you like now, and go without hindrance afterward."

"I shan't promise," said the horse, crossly. "I don't see why I should."

"Well, I shall hang on till you *do*," said the Troll with a disagreeable laugh; and he gripped the old horse more tightly than ever.

"Oh, leave off! I'm being suffocated. I'll promise anything," cried the horse.

Terli withdrew his hands immediately, sinking down to the bottom of the trough with a chuckle that made the water bubble furiously; and the old horse, without waiting to drink, trotted off with an activity that surprised his master.

"Remember your promise!" called the Troll, putting his head suddenly over the edge of the trough, and pointing a thin finger. "On Friday at daybreak the Church Fountain stopped, or you don't drink comfortably for a twelve-month!"

## II

Early on Friday morning the bridal procession started gaily, and all the village folks were so occupied they never noticed that the Church Fountain had ceased to bubble.

The bells rang out; while the Troll, hidden in the branches of a tree close to the entrance door, glanced first at the procession and then at a wedge of wood sticking out of the stone mouth of the Fountain, and he laughed elfishly.

"Ha, ha! The old horse has kept his promise. This is seeing the



**“LET GO!” SAID THE HORSE, ANGRILY. “LET ME GO!  
WHAT ARE YOU DOING?”**

world,” he whispered triumphantly.

The marriage ceremony was soon over, and as the newly-wedded pair stepped out upon the terrace again, Terli drew from his pocket a little jar of water, and *splash!* Fell some drops from it right in the eyes of the Bride and Bridegroom.

“It is beginning to rain! I saw the clouds gathering! Run, run, for the nearest shelter!” cried everyone confusedly, and off dashed the crowd, panting and breathless.

Now it was an unfortunate thing, that after the wedding everything in the new household seemed to go wrong.

“The young people have had their heads turned,” whispered the old women, and the poor Bride looked pale and disconsolate.

“It is a wretched house to have married into,” she said to her mother. “Nothing but these poor boards for furniture, no good fields or garden—all so dull and disagreeable;[Pg 6] and then my husband—he seems always discontented. I think I was happier at home;” and she tapped her foot impatiently.

Her mother argued and remonstrated, and at last began to weep bitterly.

"You must be bewitched, Elena, to complain like this! You have everything a reasonable girl can wish for."

"Everything? Why I have *nothing!*" cried Elena angrily, and ran from the room; leaving Terli, who was hiding in a water-bucket, to stamp his feet with delight.

"Ha! Ha! It is going on excellently," he shouted in his little cracked voice. "Once let them have the water from the Trolls' well in their eyes, they'll never be contented again!" and he upset the bucket in which he was standing over the feet of the Bride's mother, who had to run home hastily to change her wet shoes.

"This is the work of the River-Trolls, I believe," she said to herself, as she held up her soaked skirts carefully. "I'll find out all about it on St. John's Eve, if I can't do so before"—and she nodded angrily towards the mountain torrent.

Days passed, and the sad temper of the newly-married couple did not improve.

They scarcely attempted to speak to each other, and groaned so much over the hardships of their life, that all their friends became tired of trying to comfort them.

"They're bewitched," said the Bride's mother, "bewitched, and nothing else. But wait till St. John's Eve, and you'll see I shall cure them." She spoke mysteriously, but as she was a sensible woman everyone believed her.

On St. John's Eve—as I daresay you know—all animals have the power of talking together like human beings, and punctually as the clock struck twelve the Bride's mother put on her thick shoes, and taking the stable lantern from its nail, she went off to the stable, refusing to allow either her husband or son to accompany her.

As she entered the door of the outhouse, she heard the oxen already whispering to each other, and the old horse, with his head over the division, addressing friendly remarks to a family of goats close by.

"Do you know anything of Terli or the Wood-Trolls?" enquired the old woman, looking at the oxen severely.

"No, no, no!" and they shook their heads slowly.

The Bride's mother then repeated her question to the goat family, who denied any knowledge of the Trolls with a series of terrified bleats.

"There is only *you*, then," said the Bride's mother to the old horse. "You have served us faithfully, and we have been kind masters to you. Tell me: do you know anything of Terli or the Wood-Trolls?"

"I do," said the old horse with dignity. "I can tell you more than anyone else dreams of;" and he stepped from his stall with an air of the greatest importance.

The old woman sat down upon an upturned stable-bucket, and

prepared to listen.

"Just before the wedding," commenced the horse, "I was passing through the village with old master, when we stopped to drink. No sooner had I got my nose into the Fountain than, *heuw!* Terli had hold of me, and not an inch would he loosen his grip till I promised to let him see the wedding by getting the Wood-Trolls to stop up the Church Fountain. What was I to do? I was forced to agree, and from that promise comes all the misery of the Bride and Bridegroom."

The old horse then went on to explain what Terli had done on the wedding day, while the Bride's mother jumped up from the water-bucket with a cry of delight.

"All will be well now. You have done us the greatest possible service, and shall live in leisure for the rest of your life," she said; and ran out of the stables towards the house, before the astonished animals could recover themselves.

"I've found it all out," she cried to her husband. "Now all we have to do is to catch Terli."

"Not so easy, wife," said the Bride's father, but the old woman smiled in a mysterious manner.

"Leave it to me, husband, *I* shall manage it. Our children will be happy again tomorrow, you will see."

### III

The next day at sunrise, the Bride's mother crept off secretly to the Church Fountain and brought back a large pailful of the water. This she emptied into a wash-tub and covered with some green pine branches, and on the top of all she placed a wooden bowl half filled with butter-milk.

"Terli likes it so much—he will do anything for butter-milk," she said to herself, as she propped open the kitchen door, and went off with a light heart to see her daughter.

She carried with her a jug of the Church water, and when she arrived at the farm house, she gave it to her daughter and son-in-law, and begged them to bathe their eyes with it immediately.

With much grumbling they obeyed her; but what a change occurred directly they had done so!

The day, which had seemed cloudy and threatening rain, now appeared bright and hopeful. The Bride ran over her new house with exclamations of delight at all the comfortable arrangements, and the Bridegroom declared he was a lucky man to have married a good wife, and have a farm that anyone might reasonably be proud of!

"How could we ever have troubled over anything?" said the young Bride, "I can't understand it! We are young, and we are happy." The old woman smiled wisely. "It was only the Troll's well-water," she

said, and went home as fast as her feet would carry her.

As she neared her own door, she heard sounds of splashing and screaming in a shrill piping voice; and on entering, saw Terli struggling violently in the tub of Church water, the little bowl of butter-milk lying spilt upon the floor.

"Take me out! Take me out! It gives me the toothache!" wailed the Troll, but the Bride's mother was a wise woman, and determined that now she had caught their tormentor she would keep him safely.



**"TAKE ME OUT! TAKE ME OUT! IT GIVES ME THE  
TOOTH-ACHE!"**

"I've got the toothache in every joint!" shouted Terli. "Let me out, and I'll *never* tease you any more."

"It serves you very well right," said the old woman, and she poured the contents of the tub—including Terli—into a large bucket, and carried it off in triumph to the Church Fountain.

Here she emptied the bucket into the carved stone basin, and left

Terli kicking and screaming, while she went home to the farmhouse to breakfast.

“That’s a good morning’s work, wife; if you never do another:” said the Bride’s father, who had come into the kitchen just as Terli upset the bowl of butter-milk, and fell through the pine branches headlong into the tub beneath. “We shall live in peace and quietness now, for Terli was the most mischievous of the whole of the Troll-folk.”

The words of the Bride’s father proved to be quite true, for after the capture of the Water-Troll the village enjoyed many years of quietness and contentment.

As to Terli, he lived in great unhappiness in the Church Fountain; enduring a terrible series of tooth-aches, but unable to escape from the magic power of the water.

At the end of that time, however, a falling tree split the sides of the carved stone basin into fragments, and the Troll, escaping with the water which flowed out, darted from the Churchyard and safely reached his old home in the bed of the mountain torrent.

“The Church Fountain is broken, and Terli has escaped,” said the good folks the next morning—and the old people shook their heads gravely, in alarm—but I suppose Terli had had a good lesson, for he never troubled the village any more. Ω



# WILLY THE FISH

*Justin Lowmaster*



Willy longed to be a real fish. He hung on the wall and flopped while singing a really silly song. He yearned to be a real fish, to swim in the rivers, leap out of the water to pluck an insect from the sky, to fight the rage of rapids to go upstream during that special season.

Only Willy's boy, Bobby, seemed to understand. Willy sang to him until the light dimmed and the world faded to black.

When he awoke, things that were had changed, or were no more. The house did not look the same. He sang and flopped.

"Remember this? Still funny after all this time."

That voice, Bobby. Not a child anymore, but not yet a man.

Willy rested for some time longer without being asked to sing.

A storm raged outside one day. The family boarded up the windows and packed their bags in a hurry and left him on the wall. Only Bobby remembered him, had almost come back for him, but instead stopped short.

"Time to learn to swim, Willy."

The torrent of rain came. Winds smashed into the house. A branch rammed into a boarded window, cracking the board and shattering the glass. A gust tore away the broken board, ripping it and tossing it aside. Rains and spray poured into the window. The waters rose. The floor filled with liquid. A wave smashed into the house, the side with the broken window taking much of the blow. Water rushed in and swirled chairs about. Willy fell from the wall when the table, tipped over when struck by another wave, crashed into the wall. He plummeted straight down. When he hit an end table, he stopped. The water lapped at him. Something inside him tingled in a new way. The water rose, and he sang. He swayed as the waters rose and rose. Another wave tore at the wall of the house, smashing it away. A wild rapids of water filled the house. Willy swam and swam against it; his special season had come. He fought the rapids and sang, and swam. Ω

# MY WELL AND WHAT CAME OUT OF IT

*Frank Stockton*

Early in my married life I bought a small country estate which my wife and I looked upon as a paradise. After enjoying its delight for a little more than a year our souls were saddened by the discovery that our Eden contained a serpent. This was an insufficient water-supply.

It had been a rainy season when we first went there, and for a long time our cisterns gave us full aqueous satisfaction, but early this year a drought had set in, and we were obliged to be exceedingly careful of our water.

It was quite natural that the scarcity of water for domestic purposes should affect my wife much more than it did me, and perceiving the discontent which was growing in her mind, I determined to dig a well. The very next day I began to look for a well-digger. Such an individual was not easy to find, for in the region in which I lived wells had become unfashionable; but I determined to persevere in my search, and in about a week I found a well-digger.

He was a man of somewhat rough exterior, but of an ingratiating turn of mind. It was easy to see that it was his earnest desire to serve me.

"And now, then," said he, when we had had a little conversation about terms, "the first thing to do is to find out where there is water. Have you a peach-tree on the place?" We walked to such a tree, and he cut therefrom a forked twig.

"I thought," said I, "that divining-rods were always of hazel wood."

"A peach twig will do quite as well," said he, and I have since found that he was right. Divining-rods of peach will turn and find water quite as well as those of hazel or any other kind of wood.

He took an end of the twig in each hand, and, with the point projecting in front of him, he slowly walked along over the grass in my little orchard. Presently the point of the twig seemed to bend itself downward toward the ground.

"There," said he, stopping, "you will find water here."

"I do not want a well here," said I. "This is at the bottom of a hill, and my barn-yard is at the top. Besides, it is too far from the house."

"Very good," said he. "We will try somewhere else."

His rod turned at several other places, but I had objections to all of them. A sanitary engineer had once visited me, and he had given me a great deal of advice about drainage, and I knew what to avoid.

We crossed the ridge of the hill into the low ground on the other



side. Here were no buildings, nothing which would interfere with the purity of a well. My well-digger walked slowly over the ground with his divining-rod. Very soon he exclaimed: "Here is water!" And picking up a stick, he sharpened one end of it and drove it into the ground. Then he took a string from his pocket, and making a loop in one end, he put it over the stick.

"What are you going to do?" I asked.

"I am going to make a circle four feet in diameter," he said. "We have to dig the well as wide as that, you know." "But I do not want a well here," said I. "It's too close to the wall. I could not build a house over it. It would not do at all." He stood up and looked at me. "Well, sir," said he, "will you tell me where you would like to have a well?"

"Yes," said I. "I would like to have it over there in the corner of the hedge. It would be near enough to the house; it would have a warm exposure, which will be desirable in winter; and the little house which I intend to build over it would look better there than anywhere else." He took his divining-rod and went to the spot I had indicated. "Is this the place?" he asked wishing to be sure he had understood me.

"Yes," I replied.

He put his twig in position, and in a few seconds it turned in the direction of the ground. Then he drove down a stick, marked out a circle, and the next day he came with two men and a derrick, and began to dig my well.

When they had gone down twenty-five feet they found water, and when they had progressed a few feet deeper they began to be afraid of drowning. I thought they ought to go deeper, but the well-digger said that they could not dig without first taking out the water, and that the water came in as fast as they bailed it out, and he asked me to put it to myself and tell him how they could dig it deeper. I put the question to myself, but could find no answer. I also laid the matter before some specialists, and it was generally agreed that if water came in as fast as it was taken out, nothing more could be desired. The well was, therefore, pronounced deep enough. It was lined with great tiles, nearly a yard in diameter, and my well-digger, after congratulating me on finding water so easily, bade me good-bye and departed with his men and his derrick.

On the other side of the wall which bounded my grounds, and near which my well had been dug, there ran a country lane, leading nowhere in particular, which seemed to be there for the purpose of allowing people to pass my house, who might otherwise be obliged to stop.

Along this lane my neighbors would pass, and often strangers drove by, and as my well could easily be seen over the low stone wall, its construction had excited a great deal of interest. Some of the

people who drove by were summer folks from the city, and I am sure, from remarks I overheard, that it was thought a very queer thing to dig for water. Of course they must have known that people used to do this in the olden times, even as far back as the time of Jacob and Rebecca, but the expressions of some of their faces indicated that they remembered that this was the nineteenth century.

My neighbors, however, were all rural people, and much more intelligent in regard to water-supplies. One of them, Phineas Colwell by name, took a more lively interest in my operations than did any one else. He was a man of about fifty years of age, who had been a soldier. This fact was kept alive in the minds of his associates by his dress, a part of which was always military. If he did not wear an old fatigue-jacket with brass buttons, he wore his blue trousers, or, perhaps, a waistcoat that belonged to his uniform, and if he wore none of these, his military hat would appear upon his head. I think he must also have been a sailor, judging from the little gold rings in his ears. But when I first knew him he was a carpenter, who did mason-work whenever any of the neighbors had any jobs of the sort. He also worked in gardens by the day, and had told me that he understood the care of horses and was a very good driver. He sometimes worked on farms, especially at harvest-time, and I know he could paint, for he once showed me a fence which he said he had painted. I frequently saw him, because he always seemed to be either going to his work or coming from it. In fact, he appeared to consider actual labor in the light of a bad habit which he wished to conceal, and which he was continually endeavoring to reform.

Phineas walked along our lane at least once a day, and whenever he saw me he told me something about the well. He did not approve of the place I had selected for it. If he had been digging a well he would have put it in a very different place. When I had talked with him for some time and explained why I had chosen this spot, he would say that perhaps I was right, and begin to talk of something else. But the next time I saw him he would again assert that if he had been digging that well he would not have put it there.

About a quarter of a mile from my house, at a turn of the lane, lived Mrs. Betty Perch. She was a widow with about twelve children. A few of these were her own, and the others she had inherited from two sisters who had married and died, and whose husbands, having proved their disloyalty by marrying again, were not allowed by the indignant Mrs. Perch to resume possession of their offspring. The casual observer might have supposed the number of these children to be very great,—fifteen or perhaps even twenty,—for if he happened to see a group of them on the door-step, he would see a lot more if he looked into the little garden; and under some cedar-trees at the back of the house there were always some of them on fine days. But

perhaps they sought to increase their apparent number, and ran from one place to another to be ready to meet observation, like the famous clown Grimaldi, who used to go through his performances at one London theatre, and then dash off in his paint and motley to another, so that perambulating theatre-going men might imagine that there were two greatest clowns in the world.

When Mrs. Perch had time she sewed for the neighbors, and, whether she had time or not, she was always ready to supply them with news. From the moment she heard I was going to dig a well she took a vital interest in it. Her own water-supply was unsatisfactory, as she depended upon a little spring which sometimes dried up in summer, and should my well turn out to be a good one, she knew I would not object to her sending the children for pails of water on occasions.

"It will be fun for them," she said, "and if your water really is good it will often come in very well for me. Mr. Colwell tells me," she continued, "that you put your well in the wrong place. He is a practical man and knows all about wells, and I do hope that for your sake he may be wrong."

My neighbors were generally pessimists. Country people are proverbially prudent, and pessimism is prudence. We feel safe when we doubt the success of another, because if he should succeed we can say we were glad we were mistaken, and so step from a position of good judgment to one of generous disposition without feeling that we have changed our plane of merit. But the optimist often gets himself into terrible scrapes, for if he is wrong he cannot say he is glad of it.

But, whatever else he may be, a pessimist is depressing, and it was, therefore, a great pleasure to me to have a friend who was an out-and-out optimist. In fact, he might be called a working optimist. He lived about six miles from my house, and had a hobby, which was natural phenomena. He was always on the lookout for that sort of thing, and when he found it he would study its nature and effect. He was a man in the maturity of youth, and if the estate on which he lived had not belonged to his mother, he would have spent much time and money in investigating its natural phenomena. He often drove over to see me, and always told me how glad he would be if he had an opportunity of digging a well.

"I have the wildest desire," he said, "to know what is in the earth under our place, and if it should so happen in the course of time that the limits of earthly existence should be reached by—I mean if the estate should come into my hands—I would go down, down, down, until I had found out all that could be discovered. To own a plug of earth four thousand miles long and only to know what is on the surface of the upper end of it is unmanly. We might as well be grazing beasts."

He was sorry that I was digging only for water, because water is a very commonplace thing, but he was quite sure I would get it, and when my well was finished he was one of the first to congratulate me.

"But if I had been in your place," said he, "with full right to do as I pleased, I would not have let those men go away. I would have set them to work in some place where there would be no danger of getting water,—at least, for a long time,—and then you would have found out what are the deeper treasures of your land."

Having finished my well, I now set about getting the water into my residence near by. I built a house over the well and put in it a little engine, and by means of a system of pipes, like the arteries and veins of the human body, I proposed to distribute the water to the various desirable points in my house.

The engine was the heart, which should start the circulation, which should keep it going, and which should send throbbing through every pipe the water which, if it were not our life, was very necessary to it.

When all was ready we started the engine, and in a very short time we discovered that something was wrong. For fifteen or twenty minutes water flowed into the tank at the top of the house, with a sound that was grander in the ears of my wife and myself than the roar of Niagara, and then it stopped. Investigation proved that the flow had stopped because there was no more water in the well.

It is needless to detail the examinations, investigations, and the multitude of counsels and opinions with which our minds were filled for the next few days. It was plain to see that although this well was fully able to meet the demands of a hand-pump or of bailing buckets, the water did not flow into it as fast as it could be pumped out by an engine. Therefore, for the purposes of supplying the circulation of my domestic water system, the well was declared a failure.

My non-success was much talked about in the neighborhood, and we received a great deal of sympathy and condolence. Phineas Colwell was not surprised at the outcome of the affair. He had said that the well had been put in the wrong place. Mrs. Betty was not only surprised, but disgusted.

"It is all very well for you," she said, "who could afford to buy water if it was necessary, but it is very different with the widow and the orphan. If I had not supposed you were going to have a real well, I would have had my spring cleaned out and deepened. I could have had it done in the early summer, but it is of no use now. The spring has dried up."

She told a neighbor that she believed the digging of my well had dried up her spring, and that that was the way of this world, where the widow and the orphan were sure to come out at the little end.

Of course I did not submit to defeat—at least, not without a

struggle. I had a well, and if anything could be done to make that well supply me with water, I was going to do it. I consulted specialists, and, after careful consideration of the matter, they agreed that it would be unadvisable for me to attempt to deepen my present well, as there was reason to suppose there was very little water in the place where I had dug it, and that the very best thing I could do would be to try a driven well. As I had already excavated about thirty feet, that was so much gain to me, and if I should have a six-inch pipe put into my present well and then driven down and down until it came to a place where there was plenty of water, I would have all I wanted.

How far down the pipe would have to be driven, of course they did not know, but they all agreed that if I drove deep enough I would get all the water I wanted. This was the only kind of a well, they said, which one could sink as deep as he pleased without being interfered with by the water at the bottom. My wife and I then considered the matter, and ultimately decided that it would be a waste of the money which we had already spent upon the engine, the pipes, and the little house, and, as there was nothing else to be done but to drive a well, we would have a well driven.

Of course we were both very sorry that the work must be begun again, but I was especially dissatisfied, for the weather was getting cold, there was already snow upon the ground, and I was told that work could not be carried on in winter weather. I lost no time, however, in making a contract with a well-driver, who assured me that as soon as the working season should open, which probably would be very early in the spring, he would come to my place and begin to drive my well.

The season did open, and so did the pea-blossoms, and the pods actually began to fill before I saw that well-driver again. I had had a good deal of correspondence with him in the meantime, urging him to prompt action, but he always had some good reason for delay. (I found out afterward that he was busy fulfilling a contract made before mine, in which he promised to drive a well as soon as the season should open.)

At last—it was early in the summer—he came with his derricks, a steam-engine, a trip-hammer, and a lot of men. They took off the roof of my house, removed the engine, and set to work.

For many a long day, and I am sorry to say for many a longer night, that trip-hammer hammered and banged. On the next day after the night-work began, one of my neighbors came to me to know what they did that for. I told him they were anxious to get through.

“Get through what?” said he. “The earth? If they do that, and your six-inch pipe comes out in a Chinaman’s back yard, he will sue you for damages.” When the pipe had been driven through the soft stratum under the old well, and began to reach firmer ground, the

pounding and shaking of the earth became worse and worse. My wife was obliged to leave home with our child.

"If he is to do without both water and sleep," said she, "he cannot long survive." And I agreed with her.

She departed for a pleasant summer resort where her married sister with her child was staying, and from week to week I received very pleasant letters from her, telling me of the charms of the place, and dwelling particularly upon the abundance of cool spring water with which the house was supplied.

While this terrible pounding was going on I heard various reports of its effect upon my neighbors. One of them, an agriculturist, with whom I had always been on the best of terms, came with a clouded brow.

"When I first felt those shakes," he said, "I thought they were the effects of seismic disturbances, and I did not mind, but when I found it was your well I thought I ought to come over to speak about it. I do not object to the shaking of my barn, because my man tells me the continual jolting is thrashing out the oats and wheat, but I do not like to have all my apples and pears shaken off my trees. And then," said he, "I have a late brood of chickens, and they cannot walk, because every time they try to make a step they are jolted into the air about a foot. And again, we have had to give up having soup. We like soup, but we do not care to have it spout up like a fountain whenever that hammer comes down."

I was grieved to trouble this friend, and I asked him what I should do. "Do you want me to stop the work on the well?" said I.

"Oh, no," said he, heartily. "Go on with the work. You must have water, and we will try to stand the bumping. I dare say it is good for dyspepsia, and the cows are getting used to having the grass jammed up against their noses. Go ahead; we can stand it in the daytime, but if you could stop the night-work we would be very glad. Some people may think it a well-spring of pleasure to be bounced out of bed, but I don't."

Mrs. Perch came to me with a face like a squeezed lemon, and asked me if I could lend her five nails.

"What sort?" said I.

"The kind you nail clapboards on with," said she. "There is one of them been shook entirely off my house by your well. I am in hopes that before the rest are all shook off I shall get in some money that is owing me and can afford to buy nails for myself."

I stopped the night-work, but this was all I could do for these neighbors.

My optimist friend was delighted when he heard of my driven well. He lived so far away that he and his mother were not disturbed by the jarring of the ground. Now he was sure that some of the

internal secrets of the earth would be laid bare, and he rode or drove over every day to see what we were getting out of the well. I know that he was afraid we would soon get water, but was too kind-hearted to say so.

One day the pipe refused to go deeper. No matter how hard it was struck, it bounced up again. When some of the substance it had struck was brought up it looked like French chalk, and my optimist eagerly examined it.

"A French-chalk mine," said he, "would not be a bad thing, but I hoped that you had struck a bed of mineral gutta-percha. That would be a grand find." But the chalk-bed was at last passed, and we began again to bring up nothing but common earth.

"I suppose," said my optimist to me, one morning, "that you must soon come to water, and if you do I hope it will be hot water."

"Hot water!" I exclaimed. "I do not want that."

"Oh, yes, you would, if you had thought about it as much as I have," he replied. "I lay awake for hours last night, thinking what would happen if you struck hot water. In the first place, it would be absolutely pure, because, even if it were possible for germs and bacilli to get down so deep, they would be boiled before you got them, and then you could cool that water for drinking. When fresh it would be already heated for cooking and hot baths. And then—just think of it!—you could introduce the hot-water system of heating into your house, and there would be the hot water always ready. But the great thing would be your garden. Think of the refuse hot water circulating in pipes up and down and under all your beds! That garden would bloom in the winter as others do in the summer; at least, you could begin to have Lima-beans and tomatoes as soon as the frost was out of the air."

I laughed. "It would take a lot of pumping," I said, "to do all that with the hot water."

"Oh, I forgot to say," he cried, with sparkling eyes, "that I do not believe you would ever have any more pumping to do. You have now gone down so far that I am sure whatever you find will force itself up. It will spout high into the air or through all your pipes, and run always."

Phineas Colwell was by when this was said, and he must have gone down to Mrs. Betty Perch's house to talk it over with her, for in the afternoon she came to see me.

"I understand," said she, "that you are trying to get hot water out of your well, and that there is likely to be a lot more than you need, so that it will run down by the side of the road. I just want to say that if a stream of hot water comes down past my house some of the children will be bound to get into it and be scalded to death, and I came to say that if that well is going to squirt b'iling water I'd like to have notice

so that I can move, though where a widow with so many orphans is going to move to nobody knows. Mr. Colwell says that if you had got him to tell you where to put that well there would have been no danger of this sort of thing."

The next day the optimist came to me, his face fairly blazing with a new idea. "I rode over on purpose to urge you," he cried, "if you should strike hot water, not to stop there. Go on, and, by George! You may strike fire."

"Heavens!" I cried.

"Oh, quite the opposite," said he. "But do not let us joke. I think that would be the grandest thing of this age. Think of a fire well, with the flames shooting up perhaps a hundred feet into the air!" I wish Phineas Colwell had not been there. As it was, he turned pale and sat down on the wall.

"You look astonished!" exclaimed the optimist, "but listen to me. You have not thought of this thing as I have. If you should strike fire your fortune would be made. By a system of reflectors you could light up the whole country. By means of tiles and pipes this region could be made tropical. You could warm all the houses in the neighborhood with hot air. And then the power you could generate—just think of it! Heat is power; the cost of power is the fuel. You could furnish power to all who wanted it. You could fill this region with industries. My dear sir, you must excuse my agitation, but if you should strike fire there is no limit to the possibilities of achievement."

"But I want water," said I. "Fire would not take the place of that."

"Oh, water is a trifle," said he. "You could have pipes laid from town; it is only about two miles. But fire! Nobody has yet gone down deep enough for that. You have your future in your hands." As I did not care to connect my future with fire, this idea did not strike me very forcibly, but it struck Phineas Colwell. He did not say anything to me, but after I had gone he went to the well-drivers.

"If you feel them pipes getting hot," he said to them, "I warn you to stop. I have been in countries where there are volcanoes, and I know what they are. There's enough of them in this world, and there's no need of making new ones."

In the afternoon a wagoner, who happened to be passing, brought me a note from Mrs. Perch, very badly spelled, asking if I would let one of my men bring her a pail of water, for she could not think of coming herself or letting any of the children come near my place if spouting fires were expected.

The well-driving had gone on and on, with intermissions on account of sickness in the families of the various workmen, until it had reached the limit which I had fixed, and we had not found water in sufficient quantity, hot or cold, nor had we struck fire, or anything else worth having.



The well-drivers and some specialists were of the opinion that if I were to go ten, twenty, or perhaps a hundred feet deeper, I would be very likely to get all the water I wanted. But, of course, they could not tell how deep they must go, for some wells were over a thousand feet deep. I shook my head at this. There seemed to be only one thing certain about this drilling business, and that was the expense. I declined to go any deeper.

"I think," a facetious neighbor said to me, "it would be cheaper for you to buy a lot of Apollinaris water,—at wholesale rates, of course,—and let your men open so many bottles a day and empty them into your tank. You would find that would pay better in the long run."

Phineas Colwell told me that when he had informed Mrs. Perch that I was going to stop operations, she was in a dreadful state of mind. After all she had undergone, she said, it was simply cruel to think of my stopping before I got water, and that after having dried up her spring!

This is what Phineas said she said, but when next I met her she told me that he had declared that if I had put the well where he thought it ought to be, I should have been having all the water I wanted before now.

My optimist was dreadfully cast down when he heard that I would drive no deeper.

"I have been afraid of this," he said. "I have, been afraid of it. And if circumstances had so arranged themselves that I should have command of money, I should have been glad to assume the expense of deeper explorations. I have been thinking a great deal about the matter, and I feel quite sure that even if you did not get water or anything else that might prove of value to you, it would be a great advantage to have a pipe sunk into the earth to the depth of, say, one thousand feet."

"What possible advantage could that be?" I asked.

"I will tell you," he said. "You would then have one of the grandest opportunities ever offered to man of constructing a gravity-engine. This would be an engine which would be of no expense at all to run. It would need no fuel. Gravity would be the power. It would work a pump splendidly. You could start it when you liked and stop it when you liked."

"Pump!" said I. "What is the good of a pump without water?"

"Oh, of course you would have to have water," he answered. "But, no matter how you get it, you will have to pump it up to your tank so as to make it circulate over your house. Now, my gravity-pump would do this beautifully. You see, the pump would be arranged with cog-wheels and all that sort of thing, and the power would be supplied by a weight, which would be a cylinder of lead or iron, fastened to a rope and run down inside your pipe. Just think of it! It would run down a

thousand feet, and where is there anything worked by weight that has such a fall as that?"

I laughed. "That is all very well," said I. "But how about the power required to wind that weight up again when it got to the bottom? I should have to have an engine to do that." "Oh, no," said he. "I have planned the thing better than that. You see, the greater the weight the greater the power and the velocity. Now, if you take a solid cylinder of lead about four inches in diameter, so that it would slip easily down your pipe,—you might grease it, for that matter,—and twenty feet in length, it would be an enormous weight, and in slowly descending for about an hour a day—for that would be long enough for your pumping—and going down a thousand feet, it would run your engine for a year. Now, then, at the end of the year you could not expect to haul that weight up again. You would have a trigger arrangement which would detach it from the rope when it got to the bottom. Then you would wind up your rope,—a man could do that in a short time,—and you would attach another cylinder of lead, and that would run your engine for another year, minus a few days, because it would only go down nine hundred and eighty feet. The next year you would put on another cylinder, and so on. I have not worked out the figures exactly, but I think that in this way your engine would run for thirty years before the pipe became entirely filled with cylinders. That would be probably as long as you would care to have water forced into the house."

"Yes" said I, "I think that is likely."

He saw that his scheme did not strike me favorably. Suddenly a light flashed across his face.

"I tell you what you can do with your pipe," he said, "just as it is. You can set up a clock over it which would run for forty years without winding." I smiled, and he turned sadly away to his horse; but he had not ridden ten yards before he came back and called to me over the wall.

"If the earth at the bottom of your pipe should ever yield to pressure and give way, and if water or gas, or—anything, should be squirted out of it, I beg you will let me know as soon as possible." I promised to do so.

When the pounding was at an end my wife and child came home. But the season continued dry, and even their presence could not counteract the feeling of aridity which seemed to permeate everything which belonged to us, material or immaterial. We had a great deal of commiseration from our neighbors. I think even Mrs. Betty Perch began to pity us a little, for her spring had begun to trickle again in a small way, and she sent word to me that if we were really in need of water she would be willing to divide with us. Phineas Colwell was sorry for us, of course, but he could not help feeling and

saying that if I had consulted him the misfortune would have been prevented.

It was late in the summer when my wife returned, and when she made her first visit of inspection to the grounds and gardens, her eyes, of course, fell upon the unfinished well. She was shocked.

"I never saw such a scene of wreckage," she said. "It looks like a Western town after a cyclone. I think the best thing you can do is to have this dreadful litter cleared up, the ground smoothed and raked, the wall mended, and the roof put back on that little house, and then if we can make anybody believe it is an ice-house, so much the better."

This was good advice, and I sent for a man to put the vicinity of the well in order and give it the air of neatness which characterizes the rest of our home.

The man who came was named Mr. Barnet. He was a contemplative fellow with a pipe in his mouth. After having worked at the place for half a day he sent for me and said: "I'll tell you what I would do if I was in your place. I'd put that pump-house in order, and I'd set up the engine, and put the pump down into that thirty-foot well you first dug, and I'd pump water into my house." I looked at him in amazement.

"There's lots of water in that well," he continued, "and if there's that much now in this drought, you will surely have ever so much more when the weather isn't so dry. I have measured the water, and I know." I could not understand him. It seemed to me that he was talking wildly. He filled his pipe and lighted it and sat upon the wall.

"Now," said he, after he had taken a few puffs, "I'll tell you where the trouble's been with your well. People are always in too big a hurry in this world about all sorts of things as well as wells. I am a well-digger and I know all about them. We know if there is any water in the ground it will always find its way to the deepest hole there is, and we dig a well so as to give it a deep hole to go to in the place where we want it. But you can't expect the water to come to that hole just the very day it's finished. Of course you will get some, because it's right there in the neighborhood, but there is always a lot more that will come if you give it time. It's got to make little channels and passages for itself, and of course it takes time to do that. It's like settling up a new country. Only a few pioneers come at first, and you have to wait for the population to flow in. This being a dry season, and the water in the ground a little sluggish on that account, it was a good while finding out where your well was. If I had happened along when you was talking about a well, I think I should have said to you that I knew a proverb which would about fit your case, and that is: 'Let well enough alone.'"

I felt like taking this good man by the hand, but I did not. I only

told him to go ahead and do everything that was proper.

The next morning, as I was going to the well, I saw Phineas Colwell coming down the lane and Mrs. Betty Perch coming up it. I did not wish them to question me, so I stepped behind some bushes. When they met they stopped.

"Upon my word!" exclaimed Mrs. Betty, "if he isn't going to work again on that everlasting well! If he's got so much money he don't know what to do with it, I could tell him that there's people in this world, and not far away either, who would be the better for some of it. It's a sin and a shame and an abomination. Do you believe, Mr. Colwell, that there is the least chance in the world of his ever getting water enough out of that well to shave himself with?"

"Mrs. Perch," said Phineas, "it ain't no use talking about that well. It ain't no use, and it never can be no use, because it's in the wrong place. If he ever pumps water out of that well into his house I'll do—" "What will you do?" asked Mr. Barnet, who just then appeared from the recesses of the engine-house.

"I'll do anything on this earth that you choose to name," said Phineas. "I am safe, whatever it is."

"Well, then," said Mr. Barnet, knocking the ashes from his pipe preparatory to filling it again, "will you marry Mrs. Perch?" Phineas laughed. "Yes," he said. "I promised I would do anything, and I'll promise that."

"A slim chance for me," said Mrs. Betty, "even if I'd have you." And she marched on with her nose in the air.

When Mr. Barnet got fairly to work with his derrick, his men, and his buckets, he found that there was a good deal more to do than he had expected. The well-drivers had injured the original well by breaking some of the tiles which lined it, and these had to be taken out and others put in, and in the course of this work other improvements suggested themselves and were made. Several times operations were delayed by sickness in the family of Mr. Barnet, and also in the families of his workmen, but still the work went on in a very fair manner, although much more slowly than had been supposed by any one. But in the course of time—I will not say how much time—the work was finished, the engine was in its place, and it pumped water into my house, and every day since then it has pumped all the water we need, pure, cold, and delicious.

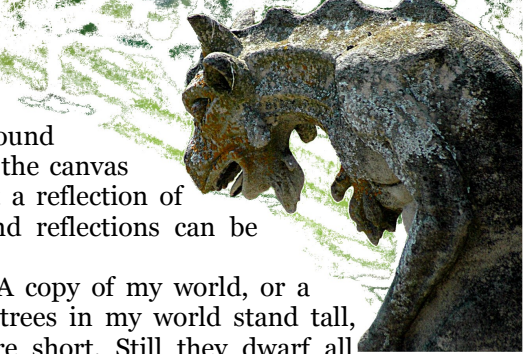
Knowing the promise Phineas Colwell had made, and feeling desirous of having everything which concerned my well settled and finished, I went to look for him to remind him of his duty toward Mrs. Perch, but I could not find that naval and military mechanical agriculturist. He had gone away to take a job or a contract,—I could not discover which,—and he has not since appeared in our neighborhood. Mrs. Perch is very severe on me about this.

“There’s plenty of bad things come out of that well,” she said, “but I never thought anything bad enough would come out of it to make Mr. Colwell go away and leave me to keep on being a widow with all them orphans.” Ω

# THE GARGOYLE: REFLECTIONS

*David Crutchfield*

So long have I stared at the waters of this pool, I wonder now what it is I see. An image of the world around me, a picture as real as the canvas it's painted on. It is but a reflection of the world around it, and reflections can be distorted or lost.



So what is it I see? A copy of my world, or a distortion thereof? The trees in my world stand tall, but in the pool they are short. Still they dwarf all around them. The sky is vast, piercing the forest that surrounds this place; but in the pool it is small, fighting to break the green canopy. There is a monster in the pool, bound by vines unmoving on his post, a distorted reflection of my own reality. Vines entangle me and the square stone on which I sit, but I am no captive to the vines. They will not release me because their life depends on me. My world is full of life, breathing and moving on its own. The image in the pool reflects my world, but it shows a world that is without life, a world that is not mine.

A seed falling to the pool brings life to the lifeless world. The trees move as though shaken by a great wind, and the monster comes to life and struggles against its bonds. The stones that keep the water's edge shake tumultuously, the violence threatening to shatter them. Yet there is no wind in my trees, I have not moved, and the stones hold fast. Soon the waters calm and the mirrored world is lifeless once more.

The acorn is such a small seed, but changed greatly the reflection of the water. So I shift my gaze from the image itself to the seed floating upon it. It drifts among the trees and bobs above the treetops, suspended by the reflecting surface. This tiny seed is now larger than the tree it fell from. Here is the power in the pool, to make small things great and great things small.

I turn back to my monster to consider what I see. It is ferocious and strong, hard and cruel, bound by nature. It is my reflection, but the pool has made me small, nothing more than what can be seen. Staring at my monster staring back at me I know he floats only on the surface, trapped in a reflection no more real than the canvas it is on.

# DEVELOPMENT OF WATER PURIFICATION IN AMERICA

*Allen Hazen*

The filtration of river waters to remove sediment and turbidity and other impurities has been practised in Europe for many years. The first serious American effort in this direction was made by the city of St. Louis in 1866, when the late J. P. Kirkwood, a civil engineer, was sent to Europe with instructions to study the art and apply it to St. Louis.

Mr. Kirkwood made a report upon this subject, and a general plan for works for St. Louis based upon this study. This report was most remarkable for the insight shown into the conditions of success with European waters, and it will always remain as a singularly accurate statement of the conditions of the art as they existed at that time.

Kirkwood's plan for filtering the St. Louis water was not adopted. Possibly the cost was too great and the benefits of purification too little understood at that time; but there is some reason for supposing that tests made on a small scale, the results of which were not made public, served to show the inadequacy of the proposed plan. However that may be, we now know that the plan would not have given success, and that no plan based on European experience could have done so.

For among the niters of Europe there was not one that received water resembling even remotely the Mississippi River at St. Louis, or that was capable of treating such water.

Although Kirkwood's design for St. Louis was never carried out, several niters were built by other cities as a result of his work and report. From his plans a filter was built for Poughkeepsie, N. Y. There the conditions were sufficiently like those of European filters; and the plant was the first, and by far the most successful, of the early water purification plants in this country. After- ward a number of small but successful plants were built upon similar lines. Among them were the filters at Hudson and at West Point, N. Y. (both near Poughkeepsie), and at St. Johnsbury, V.T.

In other cases success was not attained. Lowell, Columbus, Toledo, and other cities also copied the Poughkeepsie filters more or less closely but without corresponding success. These failures were no doubt due in some cases to the failure to provide adequate filtering area, and to modifications of the design which did not prove to be beneficial. And in other cases they were due, or partly due, to

the fact that the water carried more suspended matter, and this affected the process to such an extent that the general method was not applicable.

Soon after this the late Professor William Ripley Nichols of Boston became interested in filtration. He made experiments with it, talked of its application to the particular problems with which he had to do, and wrote an uncommonly interesting report upon the subject of water purification based, like Kirkwood's, upon European experience.

This report led to an experimental trial by the late A. Fteley, then engineer of the Boston water works. Other trials were made at Louisville and elsewhere. These trials, on the whole, were not encouraging, and did not lead to practical applications of the method.

About 1884 the beginnings of a new method of filtration, destined to play a large part in water purification, made their appearance. The process was patented by the late J. W. Hyatt, and the late Professor Albert R. Leeds was largely interested in the early development of the invention.

The essential and characteristic features of this method were the addition of a coagulant or chemical precipitant to the water, and afterward passing it through a sand layer so arranged that it could be mechanically washed by a reverse current of water, aided sometimes by other appliances. These features are characteristic, and have been the distinctive features of mechanical filtration, as it is called, to the present day.

This method met with some successes, and in the decade that followed quite a number of plants were installed. These were divided between supplies for small cities, and supplies for paper mills. Paper mills require large quantities of clean water, and they have been among the earliest and best patrons of those who had methods of purifying water.

The Massachusetts State Board of Health commenced to investigate the purification of sewage and water in 1887. At first the purification of sewage received most attention, but about 1890 the study of water purification was taken up energetically. And this experimental work did a great deal to develop the art of water purification in America.

In carrying out these investigations Merrimack River water only was used. This water, which was used by the city of Lawrence at the time, contained a great deal of sewage, and caused much typhoid fever among those who used it. It was also somewhat colored, but was not subject to much turbidity. It was in a general way much the same kind of water that had been successfully filtered in Europe for the supply of such cities as London, Berlin, etc.

These experiments were carried out at Lawrence, under the



direction of Mr. Hiram F. Mills, with at first the writer, and afterward Mr. George W. Fuller, and still later Mr. H. W. Clark, in direct charge, and with the advice of the late Professor Thomas M. Drown, and of Professor William T. Sedgwick. They served to determine in a practical way the nature of the processes that were investigated, and to show the conditions of success with them as far as they could be determined by small experiments; and the results obtained, which were most promising and were duly published, served to interest many people in water purification.

As a result of these experiments the city of Lawrence built a sand filter to purify its water supply. This was designed by Mr. Mills, following in a general way, but not in detail, European precedent, for it was based largely upon the results of the tests made, and in many ways it was quite different from any previous construction. This filter was put in service in 1893.

The Lawrence filter was the first filter built in America for the express purpose of reducing the death rate of the population supplied, and it accomplished this purpose in a most striking manner. Comparing the five years after it was in service, with five years before it was in use, there was a reduction of 79 per cent in the typhoid fever death rate, which had been excessive for many years. No less remarkable than this was the reduction in the general death rate from all causes of 10 per cent, namely from 22.4 to 19.9 per thousand living.

Following directly the success of the Lawrence filter, a number of other filters were constructed more or less like it, but none of them supplying as large a city as Lawrence.

Up to the year 1893 but little progress had been made in understanding the process of mechanical filtration, although many plants had been installed, mostly in the smaller cities and towns and in paper mills. The details of construction and operation had been developed to a considerable extent, but there was no adequate knowledge of what could be done in securing pure water, or how it could best be accomplished.

In that year Mr. Edmund B. Weston made some tests for the city of Providence, which indicated that very good work could be done by mechanical filters in purifying a sewage-polluted water. These tests were by no means all that could be desired, but they were important as being the first carefully conducted tests with that kind of filtration.

Meanwhile, the mechanical filters installed, though often giving relatively good service, were not by any means doing so uniformly. The conditions of success with them certainly were not understood. While excellent results were occasionally reached, the average work was at best mediocre, and there were conspicuous cases of failure to accomplish the desired results.

The practical and scientific basis for mechanical filtration may be said to date from the Louisville experiments of 1895-97. These were made under the direction of Mr. Charles Hermany, assisted by Mr. George W. Fuller, acting for the Louisville Water Company, and by several companies interested in the construction of mechanical filters.

These experiments were made upon the Ohio River water, and this water was radically different in quality from the Merrimack River water which had been experimented upon at Lawrence, as well as from all the waters with which practical experience had been had in Europe.

The difference was principally in the matters carried in suspension, or in the turbidity. The Ohio River water carried varying amounts, and at times very large amounts, of clay in suspension. Some of the clay particles are much smaller in size than the bacteria, the smallest organisms, the removal of which has been regarded as important. So finely divided is some of this clay that it will hardly settle from the water at all.

The removal of this clay is important and necessary on its own account, for no water can be considered adequately purified and satisfactory for a public water supply while it contains any appreciable turbidity of this kind.

Clay is also most important because when it is not removed its presence exerts an influence on many other things. Substances which would be readily removed by a given treatment in the absence of clay particles, may fail to respond to the treatment in the presence of such particles, and a treatment otherwise successful may fail when applied to a water containing them.

Now the Louisville experiments were the first to deal with this question of clay particles in a comprehensive way. The filtration proposed for St. Louis by Kirkwood, the filtration practiced in Europe, and the filtration studied at Lawrence were hopelessly inadequate for this business. The mechanical filters then in use in the United States, and those selected and designed for these tests were also inadequate, although they did embody to a large extent the ideas that were to prove successful, and were able, even at the outset, to accomplish a great deal.

As the tests progressed and the weaknesses of the various devices became apparent, modifications were made, and in this way at Louisville the first thoroughly successful method of treatment for this kind of water was reached.

The Louisville experiments brought mechanical filtration to a point where it was able to deal in an efficient and practical manner with many of the most difficult of American waters.

While the experiments were in progress at Louisville, others were

undertaken by the city of Pittsburgh, and Cincinnati soon followed. Experiments were also made at Washington, at Superior, and at New Orleans, and elsewhere. And as a result of these, and the practical experiences with other waters by the men having to do with them, and by a free exchange of the results of this experience between the different workers, data were rapidly collected as to the characters of different waters, and as to the ways in which they responded to different treatments; and in this way a basis was reached for laying out methods of treatment capable of purifying a great range of waters.

Now the range in the qualities of American waters is much greater than the range in the qualities of European waters. The excess of clay which has already been mentioned is a controlling element in a considerable portion of American river supplies.

With impounding reservoir supplies also there is a difference almost as important, due to the higher summer temperatures and the growth of organisms, giving rise to more seriously objectionable tastes and odors. Such growths are not often troublesome under European conditions.

Although the purification of water for the purpose of removing tastes and odors is highly important, it has received less study than the removal of clay. Nevertheless, something has been done with it. More study has been given to preventive measures than to corrective ones, although there are strong reasons for believing at this time that the latter are more effective.

The city of Reading, P.A., made some experiments in 1897, in this direction, and since that time plants based on the experimental results have been put in successful operation for cleaning the water from two impounding reservoirs, which were subject to algae growths, and objectionable tastes and odors resulting therefrom.

The Ludlow Reservoir at Springfield, Mass., was one of the most notorious reservoirs for its tastes and odors.

The city of Springfield and the State Board of Health made continued and elaborate experiments upon the treatment of this water, from 1900 to 1903. These experiments showed that the water could be successfully treated, though with rather elaborate appliances and at considerable cost.

Afterward, in 1906, works for the purification of this water were installed. These works differed somewhat from anything that had been tested during the previous experiments, being simpler and cheaper. Only a partial purification was predicted and expected, but thus far the results have exceeded expectations.

One of the most important of recent developments in water purification has been the consideration of a partial softening of river waters in' connection with the other processes necessary for their

purification. The idea of the possibility of doing this is very old. Wanklyn's "Water Analysis," published in London in 1868, spoke at length of the possibility of doing this; but there were practical difficulties, and the process was not actually used at any place, and it has only been since about 1903 that the process has been taken up in a way to remove the difficulties.

The development seems to have come about in this way. The coagulant most commonly used in mechanical filtration is sulphate of alumina or crude alum. Now, sulphate of iron, or copperas, is cheaper, and under some conditions fully as efficient as sulphate of alumina as a coagulant. With the iron it is necessary to use lime, as without it precipitation is not sufficiently rapid and complete. Only a little lime, comparatively, is needed to throw down the iron. A considerably larger quantity will also throw down some of the lime naturally present in the water, together with the lime that is added. This is the old and well known Clark process for softening water, which is the basis of all water-softening methods.

In 1903, the iron and lime process of treating water was applied to the Mississippi River water supplied to St. Louis. In this case the water, after the chemical treatment, passed through settling basins but was not filtered. At Quincy, Ill., Lorain, Ohio, and other places it was applied as a preliminary to nitration. And it was soon found that when the amount of lime was increased, accidentally or otherwise, the resulting effluent was often softer than the river water. And when this was found it naturally led to the regular use of more lime and perhaps of less iron. In this way a substantial amount of softening was effected, at St. Louis and elsewhere, by the iron and lime process.

The matter was investigated by an exhaustive series of experiments at Columbus, Ohio, and the process was developed with a view to a combined coagulation and softening treatment prior to nitration. Works are now being built on this basis to treat the Columbus water with every prospect of success.

The indications are that the use of partial softening brought about in this way will not greatly increase the cost over that of the treatments otherwise necessary for purification. It is even possible that with some river waters the process may be actually cheapened. If this result is secured it will be by making use of the magnesia of the water to do a part of the work otherwise accomplished by alumina or iron. This will not always be possible, but even when it is not, the advantage of soft water to a city is so great that large expenditures can well be made to secure it where the natural supply is hard.

While these advances have been made in the knowledge of the processes of purification, and of the means of carrying them out with success, an almost equal advance has been made in the materials of construction of mechanical filters and in their detailed arrangements.

The Hyatt patent, the underlying patent on mechanical filters, expired in February, 1901. After that the field was open. All other patents related to details; and no one of them, nor even any combination of them, could serve to control the field of filter construction.

From that day rapid advances were made. The designs for the Louisville filters, which appeared in 1900, were important as marking the beginning of a rapid advance. Reinforced concrete was substituted for the wood and iron constructions previously used. The Little Falls filters, treating the supply of the East Jersey Water Company, were put in service in September, 1902, and were the first filters to be actually used on the newer lines. These filters were also equipped with appliances for the better and more certain control of coagulants and were far better in other ways than any before constructed.

The use of larger coagulating basins to allow the chemical changes to become complete before the water passed to the filters was early introduced at a number of Missouri River points, especially at the works owned by the American Water Works and Guarantee Company, at East St. Louis, 111., and at St. Joseph, M.O.

The use of cement blocks for the bottoms of the filters, containing the necessary channels for the effluent and wash water, in place of the metal structures previously used, was introduced at the filters of the Hackensack Water Company, built in 1904, and is also used with modifications at Columbus, New Orleans, and elsewhere.

While these rapid and revolutionary developments in mechanical filters have been taking place, sand filters, following European precedent, have been installed in many places where the conditions have been suitable and in a few places where they were not, and developments with them also have taken place.

Following the Lawrence filter, the first large installation was at Albany, put in service in 1899. These filters were covered by masonry vaulting as a protection from frost, which had interfered more or less with the winter operation at Poughkeepsie and at Lawrence. Such covers had long been used in Germany for the same purpose, and also at a few small American plants.

The Albany filters received water from the Hudson River a few miles below the outlets of the Troy sewers. The death rate in Albany was reduced by the use of the filters as much as it has been at Lawrence.

At Philadelphia the construction of covered sand filters was started in 1900, but the work has gone so slowly that only parts of the works are in service at the present time. At Washington the construction of covered sand filters was authorized in 1902, and the plant was put in service in 1905. In this case there has been no

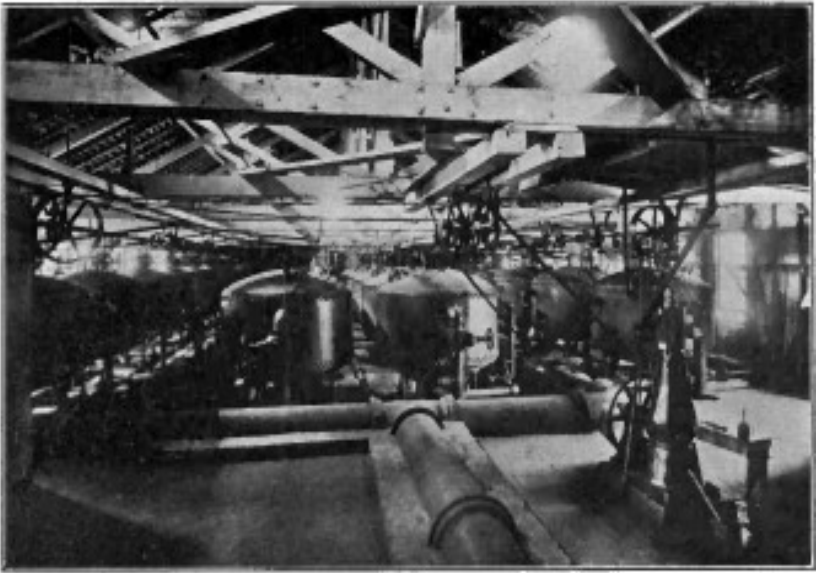
marked reduction in the death rate. The reason for this has been made clear by extended investigations. The Potomac River water used for supplying the city, after passing through the settling basins, which held a week's supply, and in which much bacterial purification took place, was not the principal source of typhoid fever in Washington nor an important cause of other water-borne diseases.

The amount of sewage entering the Potomac above the intake is only a small fraction of the amounts entering the Merrimack above Lawrence and the Hudson above Albany.

Providence installed a sand filtration plant, which was put in service in 1905. Denver is mainly supplied by water from sand filters, in service since 1902. Pittsburgh is now building an extensive plant with covered filters which will soon be in service.

Among the improvements in sand filters are the developments of methods of washing and preparing filter sand, and of cheaply removing and cleaning it after it has become dirty from use, and of replacing it.

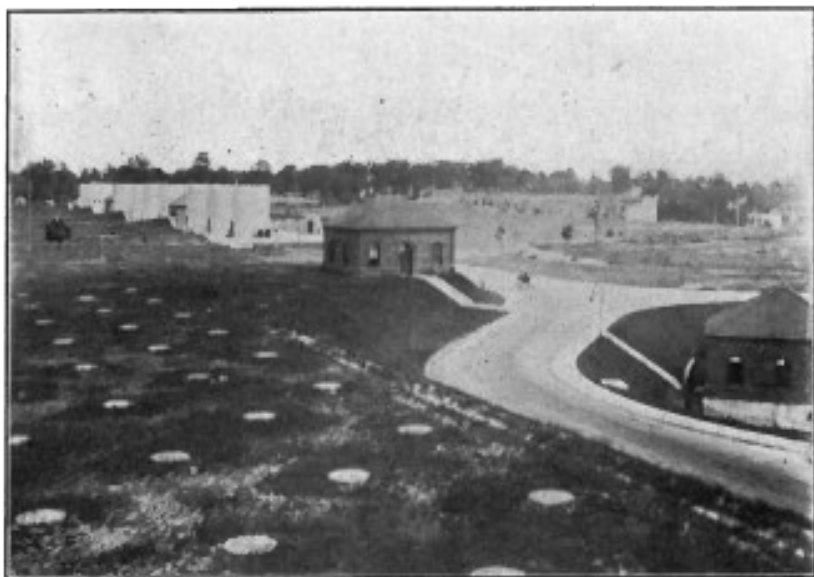
The first of these improvements has made it possible to secure at moderate expense a filter sand of the best quality in places where otherwise the use of filters of this type would have been difficult. The second has resulted in a great reduction in the cost of filtration. For example, the cost of labor for removing, washing, and replacing sand at Washington is about \$0.60 per million gallons, as compared with about \$6.00 at Lawrence in the early days before labor-saving devices were installed. Ω



An early type of Mechanical Filter at Chattanooga, Tenn. Courtesy of American Water Works and Guarantee Company.



The Little Falls Filters of the East Jersey Water Company. Courtesy of Mr. G. W. Fuller.



General View of Washington Filters. The filters are covered and the top is grassed over and used as a park.



Interior view of a filter at Washington, showing the hydraulic removal of the surface layer of dirty sand.



# THE FIVE SPRINGS

*Kelsey Felder*

“Hey Trey. You know, I don’t think that I can remember the last time it decided to rain in the Western Lands.” My friend said, rubbing sweat off his forehead.

“Yeah, well, I remember when it didn’t take so long to get a bucket of water from the wells.” I gave one last tug on the rope and finally brought the bucket full of Twera’s most precious resource into the late afternoon light. My best friend Brax, my senior by two years, and I hauled water from the community well near my house, which was really my parent’s inn, for the last half hour.

On a regular day it would take us only ten minutes and we would be off playing hogball. Then again, “normally” The City-Realm of Twera had an abundance of water. The city-realm had been built over five massive, underground springs of water and tunnels transported the life source to community wells throughout both the city and the surrounding realm, allowing it to grow into the biggest city-realm in the Western Lands.

Drought after drought dried up the land and yet after four years they barely felt like drops in a bucket to us. The most recent drought though, scourged us the most and left Twera’s water levels drastically lower than before. Everyone blamed the drought for the Twera’s rapidly dropping water level but it was not entirely to blame.

As Brax and I hauled the last four buckets to the kitchen, I tried to think back to when this trouble started. How we began to lose what was keeping us from the death that awaited those without water. Like the No-Realms, dried up, cracked ground littered with dead and dying plants.

A year ago, the news of another drought ravaging the Western Lands hadn’t bothered Twera. We had the five springs.

Unlike Twera, many other city-realms in the Western Lands were not built on top of springs. This new threat appeared before they had a chance to recover from the previous scorplings. We heard troubling news from travelers staying at the inn. Entire towns and small city-realms simply disappeared.

Brax snapped me out of my own world when he clomped up the steps leading to the kitchen door and kicked it open with a bang. “Here you are, Mrs. Chapman. The last of the water you wanted.” I gave a satisfied grunt of agreement as I lifted the heavy buckets onto the table and released my aching fingers from the handles. “Is there anything else you need, mom?” I asked as I blew lightly on the reddened skin. I hoped not. The two of us were already late to

practice as it was.

My mother kneaded flour-dusted bread dough. She knew that I hated being patient so she would make me wait for her answer nearly every time I wanted to go someplace. Finally she answered, "No, Trey, I guess not. Lauren will be back soon to help with the guests' dinners. She had to run a quick errand for me. Go have some fun playing hogball."

By the time she got out the last part both of us ran down the street, our legs carrying us quickly down the stone paved roads to the grass lot where we played our favorite game. When we got there our other friends started the game and Brax and I separated. I positioned myself on the defensive and he took the offensive side.

Two exhausting hours later, the ten of us lay out on the grass, panting and sweaty after that last hard and fast stint. Each of us gulped down water as a water skin came around.

My friend Aaron sat down next to me "Nice blocking out there Trey."

"Thanks." I muttered. I could already feel the bruise on my shin making its home under my skin.

While we recovered, a caravan of wagons passed by on the road. Large barrels packed as tightly as possible weighed them down. I could hear a faint chorus swishing sounds every time the wheels hit a dip or bump. My rough total came to couple thousand barrels of water.

At the sight of the water caravan all ten of us fell silent. Another shipment of "our" water went to Medi Dano. Feeling that the City-Realm of Medi Dano steadily taxed the springs, draining our water supply, indignation grew evident on a few faces.

That last drought hit everyone the hardest. City-realms from the surrounding areas heard of our abundance of water; several months into the latest drought, Twera received visitors from several other surrounding city-realms. Their leaders, hearing of our wealth, came to bargain with Twera's Five Officials in hopes of obtaining water for their citizens.

The Five said that they would debate this and come back to them with their answer as soon as possible. We held our own debates in the markets and around the dinner tables; not that it mattered what we thought.

From what I heard, the Official's were not keen on selling. Until City-Realm Medi Dano offered diamonds. It was then argued that the five springs had always supplied an abundance of water. Why not pass some of it on to Medi Dano? The decision came quickly.

Soon after, the first water and diamonds exchanged hands. The Officials threw extravagant town parties celebrating our prosperity. They bought supplies from businesses across the city-

realm.

I had to admit, the parties were fun. There were so many people and the tables were piled high with expensive foods. However, the richer Twera became, the more the gardens that were once lush, even in drought, withered. The smaller trees died as well. Water that formerly went to watering the plants now went to the people.

Despite the creeping signs of death, Twera's water trade for Medi Dano's diamonds continued.

After the last of the convoy rounded a corner, we came back to life. None of us talked about the water with each other, though I nursed a suspicion that the Five were becoming more concerned with Medi Dano's diamonds than their own people's water.

By now the sun made its way towards the western horizon, signaling that it was time to get home. Dusting ourselves off we said our goodbyes and promised to meet early the next morning for a quick hogball game before chores.

Brax and I walked together until we parted ways at the inn.

When I arrived home, instead of parents the smell of fresh bread and stew, a combination of meat and vegetables swimming in seasoned, hearty broth and heat-ripened wheat greeted me. I couldn't wait to get some of into my growling stomach.

Lauren came bursting through the door to the common room. Setting down a serving tray she sat herself down with a sigh of relief on a chair across from me. She smiled in greeting, "Finally! Everyone has their dinner who wants it. How are you doing, Trey? Out having fun again while I'm stuck here picking up your slack?"

I smiled back at her. She had worked for my parents since we were both ten.

"As a matter of fact," I replied "I was busy getting the feeling kicked out of my left shin while playing hogball. Thank you very much."

Lauren shook her head. "You're so violent."

I knew she would say something like that. Once Brax and I tried to teach her how to play and to give the short version of that long hour we unanimously decided that Lauren was not a contact sport person. The first time I ran at her to teach her how to block a steal she promptly took off in the opposite direction screaming murder.

"Hey, just because you don't have the backbone to play the game" I stopped when Lauren threatened me with a bucket full of water. I jumped up and scrambled for the door, but took it full in the face anyway. Through soaking wet bangs I saw her laughing at me. The light-hearted sound spread throughout the room.

I grabbed my own bucket, ready to douse her back when my parents walked in, putting a stop to my revenge. One look at me and they ordered to clean myself up before I could eat. My stomach

growled in protest, causing Lauren to giggle even more.

As quickly as I could, I changed and sat down at the table, digging in to the hot stew and bread. I wanted to get Lauren back but the opportunity never presented itself. I went to bed sore, bruised, and nursing a playful vendetta.

Waking up extra early, I met my friends before work as planned. In the middle of the first stint, Calex passed to Waren who kicked the ball wide, bouncing it off a post and straight into a nearby well. Instead of a splash we heard a muffled smack of the ball hitting rock.

Confused and knowing that something was terribly wrong, we all crowded the well's edge to take a look. It felt like the time when I was little and my parents told me that my grandfather had died. The well shaft was devoid of water. Nearly one hundred feet down and we only saw black. Our life-sustaining resource had vanished during the night.

We took off for my house around the corner. Questions barraged my father and mother as we burst through the door.

"Sir, is it true?" "Are we all going to live?" "Why is this happening?" "What about the drought?" and other questions like them came one on top of the other. We all knew what happened to things that couldn't get water. The No-Realm's present state was proof enough.

Once we quieted down the point where we could hear my father shouting "What's wrong with you boys?" I explained what exactly was wrong.

At first he quietly listened to what I said. Once I recounted what we saw he calmly asked us to show him the well, and afterward sent me home to help my mother and he went to check on some of the other wells.

For the next hour I tried to focus on washing the dishes, but that failed miserably.

"Trey, would you please stop staring out the window. Those need to be washed today."

"Yes mother. Sorry about that."

"Maybe it will help you to concentrate if I closed the shutters."

That made things worse. Now I couldn't see father coming down the street when he came back. I started to think about the catastrophe that loomed over Twera.

Lauren entered the kitchen. "Have you heard about the wells? They say we are out of water."

"Yeah, I was one of the ones who first discovered it. Can you believe this is happening?" I stopped washing the dishes and turned to face her. "Have you heard anything new?"

"Not more than what you know, most likely," she said. "Just that the levels are too low for comfort." She dried the dishes that were still

wet and set them aside for the breakfast.

My mother came down the stairs to finish preparing the guests' breakfast. I turned back to the dishes, not wishing to get another scolding about not working.

When my father finally returned, he explained to us that it was the same for all the wells in our district. No water in any of them. Others had also noticed and sent a complaint to The Five. We would have to wait for their answer.

"Oh great. Even more waiting." I said, rolling my eyes. A sharp exhale from Lauren while she set out plates told me that she felt the same way.

My mother picked up a knife to cut a loaf bread, the same calm expression as my father's rested on her face. She said, "You need to learn patience Trey."

I mentally screamed. That was the same thing that she told me less than an hour ago when I asked if father was back yet. "Here we are, running out of the only thing keeping us alive and I'm supposed to sit around?" I asked in annoyance.

"Yes." And that was that.

His answer only made me even more determined to find out what was really going on.

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It was three more days before we received any sort of reply. During that time, other parts of the city-realm lost their water. The Five Officials promised us everything was fine and that the springs were in perfect working order. I went in search of Brax.

I found him at the pastry shop staring at the sweets in the window. "Hey Brax," I said as I came up, "we need to talk."

"Sure thing. What's going on?" He said while he followed me.

I waited until we made it to the grass lot before I began talking. "Have you heard what the Five Officials are saying about the water?" I climbed into the only tree which grew at the back of the lot and settled on a browning branch.

"Yeah." Brax said, pulling himself up next to me. "Something about rationing it, right?"

I nodded. "Don't you think that's a bad thing?"

"Well, what are we supposed to do about it? Do a rain dance?" he asked back.

My only answer was a shrug. Honestly I didn't have a clue as to what we could do about it. "I'm just concerned. That's all."

Brax shifted positions on his branch. "Aren't we all? Just because nobody is up in arms doesn't mean no one cares about the situation. Just wait. Things will work out." Silence surrounded us as we sat in the tree. I stared into space, letting my mind wander over both this

potentially deadly problem and what Brax said. I couldn't say that I agreed with him. Somehow or another the whole thing just didn't feel... honest.

"Trey. Just promise me one thing." Brax said, bringing me back from my own world.

"Hn?"

"Don't try anything stupid. And if you do, let me know first so I can tie you up in a closet."

I nodded in response.

"Trey! Are you up there?" Lauren stood underneath the tree looking up at us.

"You know I am. Why are you shouting?"

"Because I've been looking for you for awhile now and it's hot. Hello, Brax!"

He waved in response.

"At least you found me." I said as I jumped out of the tree. "Why were you looking for me anyways?"

"Your mother sent me to find you. She was wondering why you disappeared when you still had chores to do. By now she is probably wondering if I deserted as well." Waving a quick goodbye to Brax, who was still in the tree, I took off at a quick trot across the grass.

"Will you wait up?" Lauren said from behind me.

"Sorry about that." I threw a grin in her direction. "But I thought that you were in such a hurry to get back." She caught up with me and gave me a sideways glare. "I said I was sorry."

"I know." She said with a huff. All of the sudden, she took off ahead of me yelling, "I'll race you back!"

A couple seconds of hard sprinting put me right next to her. By the time we got back to the inn we both were red faced and panting. After a quick recovery, hurried along by my mother, we set about our chores.

It was later that night by the time we finished our chores, including the preparations for the next day's breakfast, and I volunteered to walk Lauren home.

We walked thankfully through the cool streets of Twera. The day's heat evaporated from the ground and surrounding buildings, the breeze refreshing compared to the heat blasts of wind during the day. Our part of the city-realm lay peacefully asleep.

We walked in a comfortable silence until the sound of horses' hooves and many wagon wheels bumped over the road and headed straight for us. We looked at each other in confusion, and ducked into the nearest ally. Waiting in the shadows, we saw another water convoy

"Thieves." Lauren's hiss cut into the darkness, startling me. I agreed.

As soon as they passed out of sight Lauren started on a tirade. "How dare they! How could those low-down scum call themselves officials? Selling off our water for sparkly rocks! They said they were going to stop the shipments! The filth!"

"Maybe they already had the shipment ready?"

Lauren turned towards me and looked like she was about ready to smack me. "Aren't you the one always complaining about the lack of water since Medi Dano started to share as well?"

"Um... Yes? I wasn't trying to defend them or anything." Then I added, more to myself than her, "We should check on the spring levels ourselves."

"True. We could easily climb down one of the shafts and follow the tunnels to—"

"Wait a second. I was talking about me an Brax."

She gave me a hurt look. "Why not me?"

Knowing that she would pound me if I said that I didn't want her to come with us because she was a girl, I didn't answer. Instead I stood there studying my untied bootlace.

"I have just as much right to know what's going on as you and Brax do." She said. "If you don't take me, I'll tell."

Of all the low tricks to pull. "You wouldn't," I challenged.

She smirked and cocked a questioning eyebrow.

"Fine, fine. You can come. Just don't complain or act all squeamish and girly when we're down there." She hugged me quickly.

Once we got to her house I promised to let her know when we would go under. First I had to convince Brax.

I found Brax the next day, and told him about the plan to go underground. "So, I know this is a crazy idea but Lauren and I saw Medi Dano leaving with more water last night and we are going to climb down a well shaft and find the five springs to see just what is going on down there."

"Sounds interesting. We would definitely need a map of the tunnel system. I think I can get a hold of one."

"Whatever happened to 'tying me up in a closet' if I tried anything stupid?"

Brax shrugged. "Not much is going on around here, so seems like fun. And besides, somebody's gotta chaperone the two of you." I slugged him in the arm.

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That night we met in the grass lot in the shadows of the only tree. Brax was the first to arrive. Lauren and I were not far behind.

Once we were all together we reviewed our supplies. Between the three of us we had three lengths of rope, enough water and food to last us for several days if we took longer than expected, a lantern and

several torches, my father's steel and flint to start fires with, and a water-proofed map of the tunnels. Lauren was in charge of distributing the supplies between our three packs.

When we finished, Lauren pulled out a tin box and opened it, revealing several thick pieces of white chalk and a few dry rags. She said it was to mark our way in case we get lost.

We walked to the nearest well, and tying the lantern to one end of the rope, lowered it in to the inky darkness. The lantern threw a circle of light like a halo on the dry shaft walls as it descended. Once it reached the bottom, we secured the end to a metal ring anchored to the outside of the well wall.

One at a time we climbed down the rope to the waiting circle of light. I went first, then Lauren, then Brax. We lit a torch using the steel and flint, sending rats scurrying. We all took a step closer to each other.

"At least we have company down here." I said.

"Isn't this your hogball?" Lauren picked up a round, blue object.

"Now we don't have to buy a new one. Nice, but I think we should leave it here for now."

I could have sworn we were in another world down there. The air was cooler, like when you go down into the cellar after being in the hot kitchen. The only thing that stirred the moldy air was our movements and breathing. Close darkness felt even more pressing by the long, black tunnel walls that arched so low over our heads that we had to hunch over. The light caught on the still damp rock, causing dull, shimmering reflections to spread out down the tunnel. A stagnant inch of water lay beneath our feet.

"You ready?" I said, raising my torch slightly higher in an effort to see farther along. Part of me wished that one of them would call the whole thing off.

Brax pulled out the map and studied it. "Obviously we start by going to the west." He pointed. We could only go west. The east was an immediate dead end. His statement came back to us in a jumble of quiet echoes.

I paused to fortify myself, sucking in a deep breath to do so. "Here we go."

Lauren blew out the lantern, we figured that it wouldn't last long enough anyway, and the three of us set out in single file.

"How long do you think it's going to take us to get to the springs?" Lauren said from the back.

Brax answered, "Looking at the map and not counting breaks, the times we get lost, and the possibility that we may never get out of here..." he paused to count on his fingers, "I'd say give or take a few hours... I have no idea."

I snorted.



Within a few minutes we came to an intersection of tunnels at a room with a ceiling that allowed for a decent stretch of the arms above my head.

"Alright, Brax. You're up. Which shaft do we take?" I said, as I walked the perimeter of the intersection, the torch light revealing five shafts splitting off in different directions.

He stood next to me in the light. "Um.... There? Wait this can't be right." A solid wall blocked the exact spot that the map was showing us there was a tunnel.

I traded him the torch for the map. "Are you sure this map is even of the water system." I turned the paper upside down in the idiotic hope that that would help.

"It says so on the back of it." He snatched it back. "I don't get it."

I groaned. "Don't tell me we have to go back."

Lauren interrupted, "Look up." She pointed to the ceiling above the blank wall.

Lifting the torch higher, I could see that she was pointing to a hole big enough for two of us to fit through at once.

"Uh, good job." I said. She grinned.

Lauren marked the tunnel we came through, before we forgot which it was, while Brax boosted me through the hole.

"Why can't you boost me, Trey?" He protested as he clasped his hands together in front of him.

"Because," I said, putting a foot into his clasped hands, "I'm lighter." He boosted me up till I could grab the edge of the hole. I tried to pull myself up but one of my hands slipped on some kind of slime.

"You alright?"

I grimaced as I wiped the slick substance on my pants. "Yeah."

"I'm finished with the marker. Should I come up next?" Lauren said, looking up at me.

"First toss up the bags then bring the torch with you."

After three successful catches, Lauren's head shot through the hole. I took the torch from her with one hand and easily pulled her up with the other. "And now, for Brax." We tossed a rope from the packs down to him.

"Alright, you try to climb up and we'll pull. Got it?"

"Yeah."

Lauren and I braced ourselves. The both of us kept our footing on that slick, downward slope and made sure he didn't fall.

The torch now half-covered in slime, I picked it up and lead the way up the curving slope. This one was taller than the last. "I think I'm just going to get rid of this torch and light a new one. My hand is sticky."

"And waste a good torch?" Brax said.

"I'd be happy to let you carry it." I held the smelly handle out for him to take.

He jumped back from the shiny green end. "No thanks. Feel free to light another."

"Think of it this way," I said while pulling out another and lighting it with one I had, "when we come back, if we're walking along and one of us trips over something wooden then we know we are going in the right direction." I put the old one out and set it on the floor.

"Sure, I just hope it won't be me tripping."

Our progress quickened as the tunnel floor no longer sloped upward but stayed flat. By that time, the bottoms of our shoes were mucked with the green sludge and made squishing sounds with each step.

Lauren sighed at the noise, "It's like an annoying younger brother who won't stop repeating himself."

"Hey!" I said "For one I'm the same age as you and two, I don't repeat myself."

She chuckled. "I think the fumes from that torch are getting to you. I'll take a turn with it."

"Thank you." My arm was getting tired from holding up since we climbed down into the water system maze.

We stopped at another junction.

"I can't quite make this out Trey. I'm not sure if the map is saying to go straight or through one of the tunnels to the right." Brax handed me the map.

I looked where he had pointed, and then turned to Lauren. "You know the way we determine who has to clean tables?" She nodded. "That's how we are going to decide which tunnel to take."

"How do you do that?" Brax said, looking confused.

"Rock, Paper, Scissors." We both stated in a matter of fact tone.

Brax rolled his eyes. "Because that's a smart way to do things."

I ignored the sarcasm, "If Lauren wins, we take the tunnel in front of us. If you win, then we take the tunnel to the immediate right. And if I win, we take the one to the right of that one. Got it?" He looked at me incredulously but still put his fist in with ours. The first three tries were three way ties. One more and Lauren was out. After two more ties Brax beat my paper with his scissors, his victory taking us down the shaft to the right.

Once again we made sure to mark the entrance to the tunnel we had come out of. We struck out into the black hole, rounding a bend we stopped at a dead end. A well shaft cut through the rock above our heads. Like other wells in Twera, this one's tunnel for water supply stopped below it so that the water level could build up.

"Brilliant plan!" Brax said.

"Well you shouldn't have won then." Lauren shot back.

"How about we go back to the junction again and take a break." I quickly suggested, hoping to avoid the brewing fight.

We tromped back to the room. I was tired of standing up and tried to find a place to sit that wasn't wet. Within a minute I gave up and set myself down where I was standing. We dug some food from our rations.

"So Brax," I said around a mouthful of bread "What's your take on this. You still think that it's nothing?" I gestured to the empty room.

He shrugged. "Like I said, even if there was something up down here. It's not like we can do anything about it."

"Why did you come with us then?" Lauren said.

"For the adventure of it." He stated flatly.

"Oh." Both of us said and we fell into silence.

"I say we try my tunnel first and if that's not it then we try Trey's." Lauren stood and led the way with the torch.

That one ended as well, sending us back to the room for a second time. My tunnel was the right one, or at least the one that kept going.

For the next half hour we said little.

I took the torch back from Lauren. Soon, the spreading halo of light gave me a headache and I wished that the torch would go out. Moments later it stuttered and died.

"Wait, what?"

"I think I've gone blind."

"Hang on. The torch just went out. I'll light a new one."

I dropped the used one and tried to fish another, as well as the flint and steel, out of my bag. Without paying attention to what my feet were doing I took a few steps forward. I yelped as I tumbled down a slope, hit the bottom with a splash, and sat up as quickly as possible.

"Trey! Are you all right?"

"What happened?"

Their voices came from a short distance above me. Spitting out water I answered, "I'm fine but don't come any closer or you'll wind up down here with me. Could you drop a rope down? I'm not sure how steep it is." I could hear them scuffling around in the dark.

"Here it comes." Lauren said.

The rope slid down and I easily found it by sense of touch. "Oh, almost forgot my bag." I had to fish for that. Once I located it I double-checked for the flint and steel.

I climbed up and sat in an unhappy, soaking wet huddle while Brax lit a torch from his pack since mine were no good. Lauren began to pack the rope away but Brax stopped her. "I think it would be best if we found a place to tie one end of it and keep the other end at the bottom of the slope so we can climb back up."

After a few minutes of searching the nearby rock face we came

across a chiseled out ring of rock in the floor. "Apparently the tunnel workers had the same idea." I said.

Lauren spoke up. "We should eat then rest for an hour." She opened her bag and pulled out an apple. "It must be morning by now," she said, casting a glance at the lit rock above our heads. "Next time I ask to come along on something dumb like this, please don't let me."

"I thought Trey said you promised not to complain." Brax took a gulp of his water. She hit him square in the chest with her apple core.

"At least I'm willing to try and do something if there really is something wrong with the springs." She said.

By the torch light I could see him roll his eyes. "Not this again."

Lauren continued. "Come on Brax, you can't really think we wouldn't be able to help, even a little."

"Nope" He said and leaned against the wall with a challenging look.

"Leave him alone." I cut off Lauren's retort. "If he wants to think that way then let him."

We settled down to get some rest and I think someone asked me a question about how many miles we had left to go, but all the walking over the last who-knows-how-long, combined with lack of sleep, drew my eyes shut.

The next thing I knew I awoke to pitch darkness, wondering where I was. The torch had died out while the three of us slept. Searching for another, as well as the flint and steel, I woke Brax and Lauren up saying that we should keep moving.

We looked at the map again to check our distance. To our relief, the reservoirs were a mile ahead of us. Sliding down the slope into the same water that had already soaked me from head to toe, we slogged onward through the murky, knee-deep liquid. Brax lit the way. From the dampness on the walls I could see that under normal circumstances, there wouldn't even have been the space to catch a breath.

Lauren broke the sloshing silence. "So, what exactly are we going to do once we get there?"

"Huh? Check to see how much water there is of course."

"What I mean is, what are we going to do if the springs are empty? Or what if they are full? Then what?" I steadied her from behind as she slipped. "If the springs are full then I suppose we tell the adults and they go to the Five to get answers. Though you know how long that would take. And if the springs are empty then--"

"We're doomed." Brax said.

"Thank you for the delicate input." I said, tempted to splash water on him with my foot.

"Welcome as usual."

We rounded the latest corner and came to one of the opening shafts of the underground springs which rose a few feet above the current water level. A quick look at the map confirmed our guess.

We hoped to see water flowing from the tunnel but to our disappointment there was nothing. The three of us prepared ourselves for unpleasant news as we walked towards the other end.

A wall blocked any further progress.

"I've never been here before but I'm pretty sure that this wall isn't supposed to be here." Lauren said. She ran her fingers through the condensation covering the rough, new-cut stone for several feet above our heads. "There is water on the other side though."

Brax stretched his arm up as far as it would go. "Look. It ends before it connects with the roof."

"If you can boost us up again we can do what we did last time." I shrugged off my bag and placed it with the other two and the still-lit torch in the driest spot I could find.

Brax set the torch down a safe distance away and stood by the wall, ready to boost me up. This time I pulled myself up without incident. The whole wall was only a foot thick, making it hard for me to keep my balance when I helped Lauren up.

"We should try something different to get you up this time. There's not enough room for us to brace ourselves while you climb up a rope." I said to Brax in the circle of light bellow. "The wall is short enough so I think it will work best if I leaned down and reached for you and then pulled you up."

"Alright. Ready when you are."

Lauren looked skeptical. "Will this work?"

"Sure. We do this all the time to take short cuts through the neighborhood. Just make sure you hold onto my belt." With that I hauled Brax to the edge and he pulled himself over.

I thought I would be safe from mishap once he was up with us. However, the next thing I know Lauren lost her balance and grabbed onto Brax who grabbed my arm in an attempt to steady the both of them. "Of course" was all I could say as we fell into the water.

"Oh that's cold!" Brax yelled when he surfaced. We scrambled to get a grip on the ledge above us.

The temperature of the water stole my breath and caused my muscles to contract painfully.

Lauren clung with a shivering grasp to the rim. "Well, I'm awake now if I wasn't before." She tried to joke in-between shivers.

"Guess we should get out. There is obviously water here." I began to pull myself up but Brax stopped me.

"Hang on a second. Is that a light on the other side of the springs?" Through a large, natural archway the glow could easily be made out in the dark. Once total silence settled, the water effectively

carried faint sounds to our ears.

"You want to check it out?" I said, looking between the two of them.

"It can't be too far of a swim."

"And it would be pointless to come all this way and not."

"Here we go then." I pushed off and they followed suit. We swam as fast as possible because we didn't want to be in there any longer than we had to. The voices and other noises became louder and more distinct as we approached.

Passing under the archway we entered the second of the five connected caverns and found a shelf above the water level near the light. We pulled ourselves up and huddled for warmth. I heard Lauren's teeth chattering next to me. Soon we warmed up enough to stealthily make our way single file over to where the people were. The shelf gradually widened until it became broad enough to hold the hundred or so people and their equipment. The walls echoed with hammers hitting metal, rocks being sorted into piles, and men yelling instructions and warnings, the sounds of a tunnel construction project.

We stayed in the shadows. Locating a hiding spot behind some rubble, we watched intently. "Who are these people?" I whispered. "That's not a Tweran accent."

"They sound like they're from Medi Dano. I visited the city-realm once with my family. How did they get so many of them down here?" Lauren said.

Brax moved to a more comfortable position. "They could have just walked in here through the main entrance in the Official's district."

His answer seemed too easy. "But we never saw more people come in than leave. I would count them every time they came through our district." I poked my head out far enough to survey most of the operation. "We assumed that the barrels that Medi Dano brought in were empty; we could have been wrong."

Three more official-looking men broke from the rest and started walking in our direction. I ducked back behind the pile of rocks before they got close enough to see us in the shadows.

They stopped at a table by our hiding place and looked over some papers by lamp light. I forgot to breathe, they were so close. The men's conversation could easily be heard over the noise of hammers striking rock from our vantage point. "At this rate, this last part of the connecting tunnel should be done within a few hours." One of them pointed to something on the table. "Just so long as things are kept under wraps, Medi Dano will soon have enough water to last the drought."

Lauren let out an angry squeak and I put my hand over her mouth to keep her quiet. Though I felt the same way, I knew that jumping up

and punching one of them would not help.

Brax shifted positions as quietly as possible. He nudged me with his elbow and pointed. When I leaned towards him, I could see that he pointed at what looked to be the entrance to a tunnel. Many people went about their different tasks. Some empty handed, some with tools, and others pushed out carts full of rock.

Our attention came back to the three men at the table when one of them said, "I can't believe Twera's Officials would trade their water for the diamonds during a drought."

His partner scoffed. "I hear they left on the last water convoy a few nights ago. Glad they're not in charge of Medi Dano."

The man pointed up at the ceiling. "As soon as the connecting tunnel is done we can finish sealing off all entrances to Twera."

It took all I had to not lose my temper and let go of Lauren. Brax stayed silent, his jaw set in anger. We waited until the men went back to the others before making a move.

Brax leaned close to me and whispered in my ear so Lauren wouldn't hear. "Trey, take Lauren back to the surface as quickly as possible. When you get up there the two of you go tell our parents about this."

I cocked an eyebrow. "Just the two of us?"

"I'm going to find a way to stop them from finishing their tunnel—"

"Are you crazy?" I said, still in a low whisper. "You could get yourself killed or something! Now who needs to be tied up in a closet?" I could see that now was not a good time to argue with him; I knew that look from especially vicious hogball games.

"I'm not going to let Medi Dano take water away from us and leave my family and friends to die."

I reluctantly understood, "Well I'm not just going to leave you here to do something stupid by yourself. What if they catch you?" I argued back. "I want to help."

"Word needs to get back to the adults and I don't want Lauren wandering the water system by herself."

At the mention of her name, Lauren noticed our argument. "What's wrong?"

"I want the two of you to get out of here and tell someone what's happening. I'm staying behind to try and slow them up." Brax paused. A worker trundled past us with a cart of rocks. As long as he didn't look to his right our hiding place stayed a secret.

After the man continued on his way, I gave in. "We'll go and make sure that the adults know about all of this. First though, I want to know if you have a plan."

Brax nodded. "I saw some dynamite crates over there." He pointed to stack of crates ahead. "My grandfather used to work in the water tunnels. Sometimes they would use dynamite to clear or block

passages and he taught me how to use it both ways.”

“Right.” I said, looking at the stone floor instead of him. “Good luck.”

Lauren gave him a hug. “Please, stay safe.”

He hugged her back. “You too.” He let go and checked the surrounding area. “It looks clear. I’m going.”

We watched until he made it safely to another hiding place. I heard a noise behind us and spun around in my crouched position to face it. Not five feet away was the same man with the cart of rocks who had passed by our hiding spot earlier.

“Hey! Who are you?” He said, looking just as surprised to see us as we were to see him.

Knowing that things would turn bad for the three of us if he sounded a warning, I jumped up and punched him in the jaw as hard as I could. With a groan he sank to the floor. Picking him up, I dumped him in the cart.

“Come on.” I said to Lauren but she was already ahead of me.

We ducked our way through the shadowed rubble piles until we came to the end of the rock shelf. “That was too close. I think I stopped breathing.” Lauren huffed. “I hope you hit him hard enough to keep him out long enough for Brax to do what he’s going to do.”

“Same here. I wish we weren’t leaving him here.” I looked back at the lit construction area.

Lauren pulled on my arm. “We have to go. I don’t want him to stay either but the adults have to know.”

I sighed and lowered myself into the pitch black water. Once again my breath left me on contact with the cold liquid. We began to make our way back to the tunnel, teeth chattering and limbs going numb.

Half-way there Lauren glanced behind us. “We’re being followed; they have boats.”

I stopped in order to get a good look. Two lantern lights floating above the surface of the underground lake were easy to pick out in the darkness. “Darn, he must have come to and told them about the two random kids he saw. I think we have a big enough head start to beat them to the tunnel though.” We continued on as silently as the cold water would allow.

I made it to the wall first and hauled myself up, water running off me in rivulets. Thankfully the torch was still going strong where I had left it earlier. Lauren climbed up next to me. As we sat catching our breath the lights continued to close in on us. “You ready to go?” I asked her. I barely made out her silent nod in the shadowed light.

Suddenly a brilliant flash of light came from across the water; a loud, echoing explosion reached us seconds later. Lauren and I looked at each other.

“That was faster than I thought it would be. Should we wait for



him?" Lauren said.

I jumped off the wall and hit the rock floor. "We don't know if that was even Brax who set that off. Either way, we need to tell our parents."

Lauren jumped down, almost rolling her ankle when she landed. I slung two of the bags over my shoulder while Lauren took the last one and the torch.

We set off down the tunnel as fast as we could, knee-deep in the stagnant water. Soon we made it to the slope that I had tumbled down earlier. "You first." I said to Lauren and took the torch from her. I followed, trying to hold on to the lit torch without setting the rope on fire.

"Should we leave this for Brax? I mean, if he might be coming it would make it easier for him to get back up." Lauren said hopefully.

"We have to cover our tracks."

Someone's voice came from back down the tunnel. "I see a light ahead. It must be those kids Jean was talking about."

"Thanks for the warning," I muttered. I untied the rope, knowing that the steep, slick slope would slow them down.

I would have put the torch out, we couldn't find our markers without it; we followed Lauren's chalk markers back to the second to last junction, smudging them out as we passed. I called a rest.

"I'm sure they're still coming." I tried to catch my breath after running the last stretch in the cramped tunnels.

Lauren smudged out the last chalk marker. "Since we know that it's a pretty straight shot to our well from here, I say we put out the light and run for it."

"Alright." I rolled the lit end of the torch in the mucky inch of water at our feet, enveloping us in darkness.

We held hands tightly, even though there was no way we could lose each other in the dark curving tunnel.

"Trey?"

"Hn?"

"I'm sorry about earlier and saying that you didn't care about Brax."

"Don't worry about it." I gave her hand a gentle squeeze. "You're worried about him. I am too."

We fell silent again, gingerly making our way down the mucked slope. I kept one hand on the wall to keep us steady. Lauren kicked something in the dark and it made wooden clunking sound.

"Was that the torch we left here earlier?" she said as she felt around the floor. She found the object and picked it up. "It is. Except now it's even more disgusting than before."

I smiled to myself. "The hole in the floor should be coming up." Sure enough, by stretching out my foot I could feel the rim of the hole

not but a few feet in front of us. "That would not have been fun to fall through."

"So, who's first?" Lauren said.

"You as usual. Unless you want me to go first so I catch you."

"I'm good." She lowered herself as far as she could then let go. I dropped the bags after her. "Good grief, Trey. Give me a second to get out of the way. They nearly landed on my head."

"Sorry."

"Ok, everything's clear. You can come down."

I dropped down and we both stood in the first junction that we had encountered at the start of our adventure. I remembered that there were several tunnel entrances in the room. Our problem was finding the right one without the light.

Lauren nudged me with her elbow. "That one. To your left. There's a light."

"Let's go. I can't stand this place anymore."

We made it to the end of the tunnel and found the rope and lantern where we left them. Sunlight poured in. Lauren and I were smiling at each other, happy to leave the dark behind.

"You first," I said.

"As usual."

"I'll wait till you get all the way up. Just in case it's not strong enough to hold the both of us."

Lauren started to climb. I leaned against a wall while I waited and recovered the hogball from against the wall, exactly where Brax had left it at the beginning of our adventure. I rolled the blue ball absent-mindedly, worrying about Brax. Frustrated, I growled and unleashed the hardest kick I could on the defenseless ball. It flew into the gloom.

"Ouch!" said a voice from down the tunnel.

"Quiet, Haren!"

"But something hit my shin."

They were still on our trail. I grabbed the rope and pulled myself hand overhand as fast as I could.

Lauren stopped and looked down. "Geez, Trey. I thought you said you were going to wait till I reached the top."

"They're right behind us. Climb faster!"

"Why didn't you say so?" Lauren climbed faster.

"Hey! I see them!" Our pursuers were right below us.

"Don't let them reach the top!"

The rope below me pulled taut. I glanced down to see one of the men climbing after us.

I caught up with Lauren. "Hurry up!" I urged. My arms ached from the effort of climbing.

"I'm trying!" She yelled back.

The sunlight grew stronger with each foot we gained. Not a second too soon we popped out of the well mouth and into the late morning. We looked back down the well shaft to see the man still climbing.

"What do we do, Trey?" Lauren panted.

I gulped another breath before answering. "We could just untie the rope and let him drop. But," I paused for more air, "I have a better idea. We're going to pull him up."

"You've lost it, right?" Lauren said. "Why?"

"Because, the adults can question him in case they don't believe us." I seized of the end rope tied at the top of the well. "Grab hold of rope and we'll get him up here together." She did as I instructed, gave a quick count to three, and we hauled on the rope.

As soon as he came over the wall, the both of us pounced on him with the rope, smashing the lantern still tied to the other end. For good measure, Lauren gagged him with his own sock. "If you know what's good for you, don't try to escape." She threatened him triumphantly.

"Trey? Lauren? What on earth are you doing? And why are you so wet?"

I looked up to see a growing group of people gathering around us. "Oh, uh... hello Mr. Pericles. We're just, um... Well." I didn't know how to even begin explaining why we just tied up a stranger who we pulled out of the same well we came out of.

Lauren saved me the trouble. "I'm sorry, sir, but we can't chat now. Can you watch this man till we get back? Thank you!" She pulled me through the crowd. Once it thinned out we ran for the inn.

I jumped up the back steps and threw the door open. "Mother! Father! Quick! We found out th--"

My mother opened my parent's bedroom door "Where have you been, Trey! You had us worried sick. Your fathers are out looking for the three of you." Behind her Lauren and Brax's mothers sat at the kitchen table.

"Thank goodness you're alright, Lauren." Her mother rushed over and caught her in a crushing hug.

Lauren tried to break away from her mother. "Yes, we're fine but Brax and Twera might not be if something isn't done soon."

Brax's mother stood up. "What do you mean Brax might not be alright? Did something happen?"

I was trying to figure out a way to explain to her that Brax was still underground when our fathers walked in with our captive in tow.

"This man says you tied him up." Lauren's father stated.

I sighed. "Everyone might want to sit down. We have a lot of news and less time." With that, Lauren and I launched into a two-person recap of our adventure. "So that's why we have to do something soon. Brax might be hurt and Medi Dano could have finished the tunnel if

he didn't blow it up."

Brax's mother exclaimed, "We have to do something, anything! We can't leave my son down there!" And they started to argue.

"We also can't let them take our water. We're in the middle of a drought. They have no right to take our water."

"But the Five made that deal with Medi Dano."

"They left the city; shouldn't that nullify the deal?"

"The district governors need to hear this."

Exhausted, my head refused to stay up as my eyes closed on their own. Lauren's head already rested against the table top.

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I woke up worried about Brax. I jumped out of bed and ran to find someone who could tell me what was going on. Delicious aromas of breakfast led to the kitchen. Lauren sat at the table with a plate full of bacon and pancakes.

My mother greeted me with my own plate of breakfast. "Well, good morning."

Lauren poked at her pancake with her fork before stabbing a piece. "Mrs. Chapman? Where are my parents?"

"They're with Brax's folks."

"Is he alright? Did he come back on his own or did they find him?" I couldn't resist asking.

She came over to me and laid her hands on my shoulders. "They were able to recover him from the debris of the tunnel collapse early yesterday, but," I could feel her grip on my shoulders tighten, "he was in bad shape. They took him to the hospital and I don't know much more than that. Right now, Lauren's mom is staying with his parents. Both of your fathers are in a meeting the district governors to try and figure out what to do with this whole mess."

"I want to see him." Lauren said.

"Me too." I added.

"Go change and wash up then you can go see him. I have to stay here to run the inn." My mother said as she scrubbed a dirty pan.

"Yes ma'am!" We both scrambled to get ready and left as soon as we could.

We hurried through the district; Lauren spotted a well and ran over to it. "Trey, hang on a sec. I want to check something." She lowered the bucket and pulled it back up. Water filled the bucket to the brim. We grinned at each other. "I guess somebody did something right." She dumped it back in and we hurried to the hospital.

We easily located Brax's parents and Lauren's mother, as well as both of our fathers. Everyone looked tired. We ran up to the group of adults. "How is he?"

His father answered. "Brax is stabilized, but he lost his right arm." My jaw dropped; Lauren gasped.

"It was pinned under a slab of rock and they had no way to save it. They had to amputate up to his shoulder."

I didn't want to believe it. I shouldn't have left him there by himself. "Can we see him?" I asked.

"He's resting now, but maybe in a bit." His father said.

"Yes sir." More waiting.

I pulled a chair up next my father's. "What happened after I fell asleep? Did we run the people from Medi Dano out?"

He gave a tired chuckle. "Not quite, Trey. After a little persuasion, your captive told the district governors everything they needed to know. We took teams of medics and water system workers through the main entrance to the five springs' reservoirs."

"You mean the three of us could have just walked through the main entrance instead of sorting our way through those nasty tunnels?"

He laughed again. "Not quite. You have to get the keys to the gate locks."

"Good."

Lauren and her father came over to join us. "When we got down there the whole operation was in disarray. We could see that the tunnel entrance was completely collapsed and blocked off. We made sure that they didn't have any weapons before we offered our help. There were plenty of injured, but no casualties. They had already dug Brax out and tied off his arm."

"Then what did you do?" I said as I fidgeted around in my seat to find a more comfortable position.

"We brought everyone topside, took the injured to the hospitals, and the rest of them to the governors. The three of you might have saved Twera and her water supply by taking it upon yourselves to check the problem with the springs in the first place." My father ruffled my hair. "But don't think you're getting away with it."

"The same goes for you Lauren."

We both hung our heads in dread of what the punishment might entail. "Yes, sir." Lauren and I never did get to see Brax that day.

Three weeks passed before they allowed Brax to leave the hospital. Twera allowed the men from Medi Dano to return home, with the promise that we would share our water. I laid out in the shade of the solitary tree of our grass lot, dozing in the cooled heat of the afternoon. Someone's footsteps swished through the grass. "I thought I'd find you here. You're so predictable Trey." My eyes flew open at the sound of my best friend's voice.

"Brax! You're alive." I jumped up, self-consciously trying not to look at the stump of his right shoulder.

He noticed me staring at where his arm should have been. “I know. It’s weird isn’t it?”

“It’s going to take some getting used to.”

“Ha, you and me both.”

“I’m sorry,” was all I could say.

“Don’t worry about it. The worst thing for me is that it’s going to be awfully hard to play hogball now.”

“That’s right. What are we going to do without our star player?” We both laughed at the thought of Brax ever giving up hogball.

Brax leaned against the tree. “So I guess you, Lauren, and I are big heroes now. Saving Twera’s water and everybody’s lives and all that.”

I laughed and rested my head on my knees, watching the people go about their business beyond our grass lot.

Suddenly Brax turned to me. “So, are you grounded for the rest of your life like I am?”

“Oh yeah.” Ω

# STREAMS OF WATER IN THE SOUTH

*John Buchan*

*“As streams of water in the south, Our bondage, Lord,  
recall.” —PSALM cxxvi. (Scots Metrical Version).*

## I

It was at the ford of the Clachlands Water in a tempestuous August, that I, an idle boy, first learned the hardships of the Lammas droving. The shepherd of the Redswirehead, my very good friend, and his three shaggy dogs, were working for their lives in an angry water. The path behind was thronged with scores of sheep bound for the Gledsmuir market, and beyond it was possible to discern through the mist the few dripping dozen which had made the passage. Between raged yards of brown foam coming down from murky hills, and the air echoed with the yelp of dogs and the perplexed cursing of men.

Before I knew I was helping in the task, with water lipping round my waist and my arms filled with a terrified sheep. It was no light task, for though the water was no more than three feet deep it was swift and strong, and a kicking hogg is a sore burden. But this was the only road; the stream might rise higher at any moment; and somehow or other those bleating flocks had to be transferred to their fellows beyond. There were six men at the labour, six men and myself and all were cross and wearied and heavy with water.

I made my passages side by side with my friend the shepherd, and thereby felt much elated. This was a man who had dwelt all his days in the wilds and was familiar with torrents as with his own doorstep. Now and then a swimming dog would bark feebly as he was washed against us, and flatter his fool's heart that he was aiding the work. And so we wrought on, till by midday I was dead-beat, and could scarce stagger through the surf, while all the men had the same gasping faces. I saw the shepherd look with longing eye up the long green valley, and mutter disconsolately in his beard.

“Is the water rising?” I asked.

“It's no rising,” said he, “but I likena the look o' yon big black clud upon Cairncraw. I doubt there's been a shoor up the muirs, and a shoor there means twae mair feet o' water in the Clachlands. God help Sandy Jamieson's lambs, if there is.”

“How many are left?” I asked.

"Three, fower,—no abune a score and a half," said he, running his eye over the lessened flocks. "I maun try to tak twae at a time." So for ten minutes he struggled with a double burden, and panted painfully at each return. Then with a sudden swift look up-stream he broke off and stood up. "Get ower the water, every yin o' ye, and leave the sheep," he said, and to my wonder every man of the five obeyed his word.

And then I saw the reason of his command, for with a sudden swift leap forward the Clachlands rose, and flooded up to where I stood an instant before high and dry.

"It's come," said the shepherd in a tone of fate, "and there's fifteen no ower yet, and Lord kens how they'll dae't. They'll hae to gang roond by Gledsmuir Brig, and that's twenty mile o' a differ. 'Deed, it's no like that Sandy Jamieson will get a guid price the morn for sic sair forfochen beasts."

Then with firmly gripped staff he marched stoutly into the tide till it ran hissing below his armpits. "I could dae't alone," he cried, "but no wi' a burden. For, losh, if ye slippit, ye'd be in the Manor Pool afore ye could draw breath."

And so we waited with the great white droves and five angry men beyond, and the path blocked by a surging flood. For half an hour we waited, holding anxious consultation across the stream, when to us thus busied there entered a newcomer, a helper from the ends of the earth.

He was a man of something over middle size, but with a stoop forward that shortened him to something beneath it. His dress was ragged homespun, the cast-off clothes of some sportsman, and in his arms he bore a bundle of sticks and heather-roots which marked his calling. I knew him for a tramp who long had wandered in the place, but I could not account for the whole-voiced shout of greeting which met him as he stalked down the path. He lifted his eyes and looked solemnly and long at the scene. Then something of delight came into his eye, his face relaxed, and flinging down his burden he stripped his coat and came toward us.

"Come on, Yeddie, ye're sair needed," said the shepherd, and I watched with amazement this grizzled, crooked man seize a sheep by the fleece and drag it to the water. Then he was in the midst, stepping warily, now up, now down the channel, but always nearing the farther bank. At last with a final struggle he landed his charge, and turned to journey back. Fifteen times did he cross that water, and at the end his mean figure had wholly changed. For now he was straighter and stronger, his eye flashed, and his voice, as he cried out to the drovers, had in it a tone of command. I marvelled at the transformation; and when at length he had donned once more his ragged coat and shouldered his bundle, I asked the shepherd his



name.

"They ca' him Adam Logan," said my friend, his face still bright with excitement, "but maist folk ca' him 'Streams o' Water.'"

"Ay," said I, "and why 'Streams of Water'?"

"Juist for the reason ye see," said he.

Now I knew the shepherd's way, and I held my peace, for it was clear that his mind was revolving other matters, concerned most probably with the high subject of the morrow's prices. But in a little, as we crossed the moor toward his dwelling, his thoughts relaxed and he remembered my question. So he answered me thus:

"Oh, ay; as ye were sayin', he's a queer man Yeddie-aye been; guid kens whaur he cam frae first, for he's been trampin' the countryside since ever I mind, and that's no yesterday. He maun be sixty year, and yet he's as fresh as ever. If anything, he's a thocht dafter in his ongaein's, mair silent-like. But ye'll hae heard tell o' him afore?" I owned ignorance.

"Tut," said he, "ye ken nocht. But Yeddie had aye a queer crakin' for waters. He never gangs on the road. Wi' him it's juist up yae glen and doon anither and aye keepin' by the burn-side. He kens every water i' the warld, every bit sheuch and burnie frae Gallowa' to Berwick. And then he kens the way o' spates the best I ever seen, and I've heard tell o' him fordin' waters when nae ither thing could leeve i' them. He can weyse and wark his road sae cunnin'ly on the stanes that the roughest flood, if it's no juist fair ower his heid, canna upset him. Mony a sheep has he saved to me, and it's mony a guid drove wad never hae won to Gledsmuir market but for Yeddie."

I listened with a boy's interest in any romantic narration. Somehow, the strange figure wrestling in the brown stream took fast hold on my mind, and I asked the shepherd for further tales.

"There's little mair to tell," he said, "for a gangrel life is nane o' the liveliest. But d'ye ken the langnebbit hill that cocks its tap abune the Clachlands heid? Weel, he's got a wee bit o' grund on the tap frae the Yerl, and there he's howkit a grave for himsel'. He's sworn me and twae-three ithers to bury him there, wherever he may dee. It's a queer fancy in the auld dotterel."

So the shepherd talked, and as at evening we stood by his door we saw a figure moving into the gathering shadows. I knew it at once, and did not need my friend's "There gangs 'Streams o' Water'" to recognise it. Something wild and pathetic in the old man's face haunted me like a dream, and as the dusk swallowed him up, he seemed like some old Druid recalled of the gods to his ancient habitation of the moors.

## II

Two years passed, and April came with her suns and rains and again the waters brimmed full in the valleys. Under the clear, shining sky the lambing went on, and the faint bleat of sheep brooded on the hills. In a land of young heather and green upland meads, of faint odours of moor-burn, and hill-tops falling in clear ridges to the skyline, the veriest St. Anthony would not abide indoors; so I flung all else to the winds and went a-fishing.

At the first pool on the Callowa, where the great flood sweeps nobly round a ragged shoulder of hill, and spreads into broad deeps beneath a tangle of birches, I began my toils. The turf was still wet with dew and the young leaves gleamed in the glow of morning. Far up the stream rose the grim hills which hem the mosses and tarns of that tableland, whence flow the greater waters of the countryside. An ineffable freshness, as of the morning alike of the day and the seasons, filled the clear hill-air, and the remote peaks gave the needed touch of intangible romance.

But as I fished I came on a man sitting in a green dell, busy at the making of brooms. I knew his face and dress, for who could forget such eclectic raggedness?—and I remembered that day two years before when he first hobbled into my ken. Now, as I saw him there, I was captivated by the nameless mystery of his appearance. There was something startling to one accustomed to the lack-lustre gaze of town-bred folk, in the sight of an eye as keen and wild as a hawk's from sheer solitude and lonely travelling. He was so bent and scarred with weather that he seemed as much a part of that woodland place as the birks themselves, and the noise of his labours did not startle the birds that hopped on the branches.

Little by little I won his acquaintance—by a chance reminiscence, a single tale, the mention of a friend. Then he made me free of his knowledge, and my fishing fared well that day. He dragged me up little streams to sequestered pools, where I had astonishing success; and then back to some great swirl in the Callowa where he had seen monstrous takes. And all the while he delighted me with his talk, of men and things, of weather and place, pitched high in his thin, old voice, and garnished with many tones of lingering sentiment. He spoke in a broad, slow Scots, with so quaint a lilt in his speech that one seemed to be in an elder time among people of a quieter life and a quainter kindliness.

Then by chance I asked him of a burn of which I had heard, and how it might be reached. I shall never forget the tone of his answer as his face grew eager and he poured forth his knowledge.

“Ye'll gang up the Knowe Burn, which comes down into the Cauldshaw. It's a wee tricklin' thing, trowin' in and out o' pools i' the

rock, and comin' doun out o' the side o' Caerfraun. Yince a merry maiden bided there, I've heard folks say, and used to win the sheep frae the Cauldshaw herd, and bile them i' the muckle pool below the fa'. They say that there's a road to the ill Place there, and when the Deil likit he sent up the lowe and garred the water faem and fizzle like an auld kettle. But if ye're gaun to the Colm Burn ye maun haud atower the rig o' the hill frae the Knowe heid, and ye'll come to it wimplin' among green brae faces. It's a bonny bit, rale lonesome, but awfu' bonny, and there's mony braw trout in its siller flow."

Then I remembered all I had heard of the old man's craze, and I humoured him. "It's a fine countryside for burns," I said.

"Ye may say that," said he gladly, "a weel-watered land. But a' this braw south country is the same. I've traivelled frae the Yeavinger Hill in the Cheviots to the Caldons in Galloway, and it's a' the same. When I was young, I've seen me gang north to the Hielands and doun to the English lawlands, but now that I'm gettin' auld I maun bide i' the yae place. There's no a burn in the South I dinna ken, and I never cam to the water I couldna ford."

"No?" said I. "I've seen you at the ford o' Clachlands in the Lammas floods." "Often I've been there," he went on, speaking like one calling up vague memories. "Yince, when Tam Rorison was drooned, honest man. Yince again, when the brigs were ta'en awa', and the Black House o' Clachlands had nae bread for a week. But oh, Clachlands is a bit easy water. But I've seen the muckle Aller come roarin' sae high that it washed awa' a sheepfold that stood weel up on the hill. And I've seen this verra burn, this bonny clear Callowa, lyin' like a loch for miles i' the haugh. But I never heeds a spate, for if a man just kens the way o't it's a canny, hairmless thing. I couldna wish to dee better than just be happit i' the waters o' my ain countryside, when my legs fail and I'm ower auld for the trampin'." Something in that queer figure in the setting of the hills struck a note of curious pathos. And towards evening as we returned down the glen the note grew keener. A spring sunset of gold and crimson flamed in our backs and turned the clear pools to fire. Far off down the vale the plains and the sea gleamed half in shadow. Somehow in the fragrance and colour and the delectable crooning of the stream, the fantastic and the dim seemed tangible and present, and high sentiment revelled for once in my prosaic heart.

And still more in the breast of my companion. He stopped and sniffed the evening air, as he looked far over hill and dale and then back to the great hills above us. "Yen's Crappel, and Caerdon, and the Laigh Law," he said, lingering with relish over each name, "and the Gled comes doun between them. I haena been there for a twalmonth, and I maun hae anither glisk o't, for it's a braw place." And then some bitter thought seemed to seize him, and his mouth twitched. "I'm an

auld man," he cried, "and I canna see ye a' again. There's burns and mair burns in the high hills that I'll never win to." Then he remembered my presence, and stopped. "Ye maunna mind me," he said huskily, "but the sicht o' a' thae lang blue hills makes me daft, now that I've faun i' the vale o' years. Yince I was young and could get where I wantit, but now I am auld and maun bide i' the same bit. And I'm aye thinkin' o' the waters I've been to, and the green heichs and howes and the linns that I canna win to again. I maun e'en be content wi' the Callowa, which is as guid as the best."

And then I left him, wandering down by the streamside and telling his crazy meditations to himself.

### III

A space of years elapsed ere I met him, for fate had carried me far from the upland valleys. But once again I was afoot on the white moor-roads; and, as I swung along one autumn afternoon up the path which leads from the Glen of Callowa to the Gled, I saw a figure before me which I knew for my friend. When I overtook him, his appearance puzzled and troubled me. Age seemed to have come on him at a bound, and in the tottering figure and the stoop of weakness I had difficulty in recognising the hardy frame of the man as I had known him. Something, too, had come over his face. His brow was clouded, and the tan of weather stood out hard and cruel on a blanched cheek. His eye seemed both wilder and sicklier, and for the first time I saw him with none of the appurtenances of his trade. He greeted me feebly and dully, and showed little wish to speak. He walked with slow, uncertain step, and his breath laboured with a new panting. Every now and then he would look at me sidewise, and in his feverish glance I could detect none of the free kindliness of old. The man was ill in body and mind.

I asked him how he had done since I saw him last.

"It's an ill world now," he said in a slow, querulous voice.

"There's nae need for honest men, and nae leevin'. Folk dinna heed me ava now. They dinna buy my besoms, they winna let me bide a nicht in their byres, and they're no like the kind canty folk in the auld times. And a' the countryside is changin'. Doun by Goldieslaw they're makkin' a dam for takin' water to the toun, and they're thinkin' o' daein' the like wi' the Callowa. Guid help us, can they no let the works o' God alane? Is there no room for them in the dirty lawlands that they maun file the hills wi' their biggins?"

I conceived dimly that the cause of his wrath was a scheme for waterworks at the border of the uplands, but I had less concern for this than his strangely feeble health.

"You are looking ill," I said. "What has come over you?" "Oh, I

canna last for aye," he said mournfully. "My auld body's about dune. I've warkit it ower sair when I had it, and it's gaun to fail on my hands. Sleepin' out o' wat nichts and gangin' lang wantin' meat are no the best ways for a long life"; and he smiled the ghost of a smile.

And then he fell to wild telling of the ruin of the place and the hardness of the people, and I saw that want and bare living had gone far to loosen his wits. I knew the countryside, and I recognised that change was only in his mind. And a great pity seized me for this lonely figure toiling on in the bitterness of regret. I tried to comfort him, but my words were useless, for he took no heed of me; with bent head and faltering step he mumbled his sorrows to himself.

Then of a sudden we came to the crest of the ridge where the road dips from the hill-top to the sheltered valley. Sheer from the heather ran the white streak till it lost itself among the reddening rowans and the yellow birks of the wood. The land was rich in autumn colour, and the shining waters dipped and fell through a pageant of russet and gold. And all around hills huddled in silent spaces, long brown moors crowned with cairns, or steep fortresses of rock and shingle rising to foreheads of steel-like grey. The autumn blue faded in the far sky-line to white, and lent distance to the farther peaks. The hush of the wilderness, which is far different from the hush of death, brooded over the scene, and like faint music came the sound of a distant scytheswing, and the tinkling whisper which is the flow of a hundred streams.

I am an old connoisseur in the beauties of the uplands, but I held my breath at the sight. And when I glanced at my companion, he, too, had raised his head, and stood with wide nostrils and gleaming eye revelling in this glimpse of Arcady. Then he found his voice, and the weakness and craziness seemed for one moment to leave him.

"It's my ain land," he cried, "and I'll never leave it. D'ye see yon broun hill wi' the lang cairn?" and he gripped my arm fiercely and directed my gaze. "Yon's my bit. I howkit it richt on the verra tap, and ilka year I gang there to make it neat and orderly. I've trystit wi' fower men in different pairishes that whenever they hear o' my death, they'll cairry me up yonder and bury me there. And then I'll never leave it, but be still and quiet to the world's end. I'll aye hae the sound o' water in my ear, for there's five burns tak' their rise on that hillside, and on a' airts the glens gang down to the Gled and the Aller."

Then his spirit failed him, his voice sank, and he was almost the feeble gangrel once more. But not yet, for again his eye swept the ring of hills, and he muttered to himself names which I knew for streams, lingeringly, lovingly, as of old affections. "Aller and Gled and Callowa," he crooned, "braw names, and Clachlands and Cauldshaw and the Lanely Water. And I maunna forget the Stark and the Lin and

the bonny streams o' the Creran. And what mair? I canna mind a' the burns, the Howe and the Hollies and the Fawn and the links o' the Manor. What says the Psalmist about them?

'As streams o' water in the South, Our bondage Lord, recall.' Ay, but yen's the name for them. 'Streams o' water in the South.'" And as we went down the slopes to the darkening vale I heard him crooning to himself in a high, quavering voice the single distich; then in a little his weariness took him again, and he plodded on with no thought save for his sorrows.

## IV

The conclusion of this tale belongs not to me, but to the shepherd of the Redswirehead, and I heard it from him in his dwelling, as I stayed the night, belated on the darkening moors. He told me it after supper in a flood of misty Doric, and his voice grew rough at times, and he poked viciously at the dying peat.

In the last back-end I was at Gledfoot wi' sheep, and a weary job I had and little credit. Ye ken the place, a lang dreich shore wi' the wind swirlin' and bitin' to the bane, and the broun Gled water choked wi' Solloway sand. There was nae room in ony inn in the town, so I bude to gang to a bit public on the Harbour Walk, where sailor-folk and fishermen feucht and drank, and nae dacent men frae the hills thocht of gangin'. I was in a gey ill way, for I had sell't my beasts dooms cheap, and I thocht o' the lang miles hame in the wintry weather. So after a bite o' meat I gangs out to get the air and clear my heid, which was a' rammled wi' the auction-ring.

And whae did I find, sittin' on a bench at the door, but the auld man Yeddie. He was waur changed than ever. His lang hair was hingin' over his broo, and his face was thin and white as a ghaist's. His claes fell loose about him, and he sat wi' his hand on his auld stick and his chin on his hand, hearin' nocht and glowerin' afore him. He never saw nor kenned me till I shook him by the shoulders, and cried him by his name.

"Whae are ye?" says he, in a thin voice that gaed to my hert.

"Ye ken me fine, ye auld fule," says I. "I'm Jock Rorison o' the Redswirehead, whaur ye've stoppit often."

"Redswirehead," he says, like a man in a dream. "Redswirehead! That's at the tap o' the Clachlands Burn as ye gang ower to the Dreichil."

"And what are ye daein' here? It's no your countryside ava, and ye're no fit noo for lang trampin'." "No," says he, in the same weak voice and wi' nae fushion in him, "but they winna hae me up yonder noo. I'm ower auld and useless. Yince a'boday was gled to see me, and wad keep me as lang's I wantit, and had aye a gud word at meeting

and pairting. Noo it's a' changed, and my wark's dune." I saw fine that the man was daft, but what answer could I gie to his havers? Folk in the Callowa Glens are as kind as afore, but ill weather and auld age had put queer notions intil his heid. Forbye, he was seeck, seeck unto death, and I saw mair in his een than I likit to think.

"Come in-by and get some meat, man," I said. "Ye're famishin' wi' cauld and hunger." "I canna eat," he says, and his voice never changed. "It's lang since I had a bite, for I'm no hungry. But I'm awfu' thirsty. I cam here yestreen, and I can get nae water to drink like the water in the hills. I maun be settin' out back the morn, if the Lord spares me." I mindit fine that the body wad tak nae drink like an honest man, but maun aye draibble wi' burn water, and noo he had got the thing on the brain. I never spak a word, for the maitter was bye ony mortal's aid.

For lang he sat quiet. Then he lifts his heid and looks awa ower the grey sea. A licht for a moment cam intil his een.

"Whatna big water's yon?" he said, wi' his puir mind aye rinnin' on waters.

"That's the Solloway," says I.

"The Solloway," says he; "it's a big water, and it wad be an ill job to ford it." "Nae man ever fordit it," I said.

"But I never yet cam to the water I couldna ford," says he. "But what's that queer smell i' the air? Something snell and cauld and unfreendly."

"That's the salt, for we're at the sea here, the mighty ocean.

He keepit repeatin' the word ower in his mouth. "The salt, the salt, I've heard tell o' it afore, but I dinna like it. It's terrible cauld and unhamely."

By this time an onding o' rain was coming up' frae the water, and I bade the man come indoors to the fire. He followed me, as biddable as a sheep, draggin' his legs like yin far gone in seeckness. I set him by the fire, and put whisky at his elbow, but he wadna touch it.

"I've nae need o' it," said he. "I'm find and warm"; and he sits staring at the fire, aye comin' ower again and again, "The Solloway, the Solloway. It's a guid name and a muckle water."

But sune I gaed to my bed, being heavy wi' sleep, for I had traivelled for twae days.

The next morn I was up at six and out to see the weather. It was a' changed. The muckle tides lay lang and still as our ain Loch o' the Lee, and far ayont I saw the big blue hills o' England shine bricht and clear. I thankit Providence for the day, for it was better to tak the lang miles back in sic a sun than in a blast o' rain.

But as I lookit I saw some folk comin' up frae the beach carryin' something atween them. My hert gied a loup, and "some puir, drooned sailor-body," says I to mysel', "whae has perished in

yesterday's storm." But as they cam nearer I got a glisk which made me run like daft, and lang ere I was up on them I saw it was Yeddie.

He lay drippin' and white, wi' his puir auld hair lyin' back frae his broo and the duds clingin' to his legs. But out o' the face there had gane a' the seekness and weariness. His een were stelled, as if he had been lookin' forrit to something, and his lips were set like a man on a lang errand. And mair, his stick was grippit sae firm in his hand that nae man could loose it, so they e'en let it be.

Then they tell't me the tale o't, how at the earliest licht they had seen him wanderin' along the sands, juist as they were putting out their boats to sea. They wondered and watched him, till of a sudden he turned to the water and wadit in, keeping straucht on till he was oot o' sicht. They rowed a' their pith to the place, but they were ower late. Yince they saw his heid appear abune water, still wi' his face to the other side; and then they got his body, for the tide was rinnin' low in the mornin'. I tell't them a' I kenned o' him, and they were sair affected. "Puir cratur," said yin, "he's shurely better now."

So we brocht him up to the house and laid him there till the folk i' the town had heard o' the business. Syne the procurator-fiscal came and certifeed the death and the rest was left tae me. I got a wooden coffin made and put him in it, juist as he was, wi' his staff in his hand and his auld duds about him. I mindit o' my sworn word, for I was yin o' the four that had promised, and I ettled to dae his bidding. It was sixteen mile to the hills, and yin and twenty to the lanely tap whaur he had howkit his grave. But I never heedit it. I'm a strong man, weel-used to the walkin' and my hert was sair for the auld body. Now that he had gotten deliverance from his affliction, it was for me to leave him in the place he wantit. Forbye, he wasna muckle heavier than a bairn.

It was a long road, a sair road, but I did it, and by seven o'clock I was at the edge o' the muirlands. There was a braw mune, and a the glens and taps stood out as clear as midday. Bit by bit, for I was gey tired, I warstled ower the rigs and up the cleuchs to the Gled-head; syne up the stany Gled-cleuch to the lang grey hill which they ca' the Hurlybackit. By ten I had come to the cairn, and black i' the mune I saw the grave. So there I buried him, and though I'm no a releegious man, I couldna help sayin' ower him the guid words o' the Psalmist—

"As streams of water in the South, Our bondage, Lord, recall."

So if you go from the Gled to the Aller, and keep far over the north side of the Muckle Muneraw, you will come in time to a stony ridge which ends in a cairn. There you will see the whole hill country of the south, a hundred lochs, a myriad streams, and a forest of hill-tops. There on the very crest lies the old man, in the heart of his own land, at the fountain-head of his many waters. If you listen you will hear a hushed noise as of the swaying in trees or a ripple on the sea. It is the



sound of the rising of burns, which, innumerable and unnumbered,  
flow thence to the silent glens for evermore. Ω

# METHODS OF PURIFYING WATER

*Allen Hazen*

The general natures of these methods are elsewhere noted in connection with the descriptions of different kinds of water that require treatment. A brief statement of the natures of the various processes at this point may be helpful, even though some of the matter is repeated.

The processes of water purification may be briefly classified as follows:

1. **Mechanical Separation:** by gravity sedimentation; by screening screens, scrubbers, filters; by adhesion scrubbers, filters.
2. **Coagulation:** by chemical treatment resulting in drawing matters together into groups, thereby making them more susceptible to removal by mechanical separation, but without any significant chemical change in the water.
3. **Chemical Purification:** softening by the use of lime, etc; iron removal; neutralization of objectionable acids, etc.
4. **Poisoning Processes:** ozone; sulphate of copper, etc.; the object of these processes is to poison and kill objectionable organisms, without at the same time adding substances objectionable or poisonous to the users of the water.
5. **Biological processes:** oxidation of organic matter by its use as food for organisms which thereby effect its destruction; death of objectionable organisms, resulting from the production of unfavorable conditions, such as absence of food (removed by the purification processes) killing by antagonistic organisms, etc.
6. **Aeration:** evaporation of gases held in solution and which are the cause of objectionable tastes and odors; evaporation of carbonic acid, a food supply for some kinds of growths; supplying oxygen necessary for certain chemical purifications, and especially necessary to support growths of water-purifying organisms.
7. **Boiling:** the best household method of protection from disease-carrying waters.

These are the most important ways in which water is cleaned and purified, but the classification is necessarily imperfect and inadequate because each of the actions mentioned is related to and grades into some of the others, and in many cases it cannot be

determined how much of the purification effected by a given process is brought about in one way and how much in another.

For instance, in filtration it is known that the straining out of suspended matters, the sedimentation taking place in the pores of the filtering material, and that adhesion of the suspended particles to fixed particles of filtering material, are all important in bringing about purification, and in addition, there is also taking place at the same time and in the same place a whole series of biological changes, so complicated that at the present time only a general outline of their nature is understood.

In a similar way, coagulation is usually effected by a chemical process, and some chemical change in the water is produced by the treatment, although this is not its direct and principal object.

Sometimes two processes are combined, as where river water is softened by chemical treatment in such a way as to produce a coagulating effect upon the suspended matters.

Many of the poisoning operations are by the use of very powerful oxidizing agents. Ozone and chloride of oxygen are among the most powerful oxidizing agents known. In addition to killing the objectionable organisms, there is sure to be direct chemical action resulting from these substances which tends to the purification of the water, and at the same time to the destruction and elimination of the applied substances from the water.

These secondary actions are often of great importance. If ozone is applied to a dirty water in quantity sufficient to kill the objectionable organisms in clean water, it may happen that the impurities in the water will absorb and use up the ozone so rapidly that it will not have a chance to act upon the organisms, and the desired effect will not be produced. For this and other reasons it is not advisable to apply such oxidizing agents to dirty raw water.

So far as they can be used with advantage they must be applied to waters that -have already been filtered and oxidized and largely purified by other and cheaper methods.

**Straining.** This is used particularly to remove fish and floating leaves, sticks, etc. Coarse screening is best effected by passing between steel bars arranged to be easily raked off. Fine screening is most frequently done through screens covered with wire cloth, arranged in pairs so that one screen is raised for cleaning while its mate is below in service. Such screens are often made large and heavy and are raised by hydraulic or electric power.

Revolving screens are also used, and they are better.

They are of two general types. In one the screen runs as a link-belt over pulleys above and below; in the other the screen is in the form of a cylinder partly immersed in the water and passing between guides which insure the passage of all the water through it. In either case the

motion of the screens is continuous, and cleaning is done in the part of the screen above the water by jets of water playing upon it.

Screens are largely used in paper mills, wire cloth having as many as sixty meshes per lineal inch being often employed.

Many elaborate screening arrangements have been installed for unfiltered reservoir waters, in the hope that algae and other organisms would be removed by them.

Some organisms are removed, but the most troublesome ones and their effects are not removed or even sensibly reduced by screening.

Screening as a preliminary to filtration is often used, and within certain limits is advantageous; but close screening is unnecessary, and in many plants there is no screening before filtration and no need of it.

**Sedimentation.** This consists in taking water through tanks or basins in which the velocity of flow is reduced and the heavier suspended matters are taken to the bottom by gravity. The accumulated sediment is removed from time to time. Sedimentation is widely used as a preliminary process and is the cheapest way of removing those relatively large particles which will settle out in a moderately short length of time.

It pays to remove such particles in this way when they are numerous, even though other and more thorough processes are to follow, as the subsequent processes are more easily and effectively carried out in the absence of heavy suspended matters.

**Scrubbers.** These are rapid, coarse-grained filters, or their equivalent. They have been used to a considerable extent in recent works. To some extent they are used in place of sedimentation, doing about the same work, but doing it quicker and in less space, though usually at greater cost; and to some extent they carry the process further, removing smaller and lighter particles than could be readily removed by settling alone.

Scrubbers act in part as strainers, but the principal action is apparently the sedimentation which takes place in the pores of the scrubbing material, where conditions of sedimentation are extremely favorable.

It is very easy to build a scrubber to do good work. It is more difficult to build one to do this and also be capable of being cleaned in a cheap and efficient manner. From the standpoint of design and construction, the cleaning devices are the most important parts of a scrubber.

**Mechanical Filters.** This is a most important type of apparatus. It is an arrangement for passing water through a sand layer at a relatively high rate, with devices for cleaning the sand when it becomes dirty, by reversing the current, and by other means, and of all necessary auxiliary apparatus for regulating and controlling the

process.

The term mechanical filter came from the mechanical nature of the appliances used for cleaning the sand.

There are many types of mechanical filters and there has been a great development in the devices used. The substitution of concrete, bronze, and other durable materials for the wood and the rapidly corroded iron and brass of the earlier designs, is conspicuous, but in addition, developments in the direction of simpler and more adequate and effective devices have been most important.

From the standpoint of design and construction the cleaning devices offer far greater difficulties than the filtering devices.

In mechanical filters the straining action is probably more important than the sedimentation taking place in the pores of the filtering material.

In a few cases mechanical filters have been used as a first or preliminary process, but usually they are employed as a final process of purification. To make them effective in this way the water reaching them must be thoroughly prepared by coagulation or otherwise. That is to say, all extremely small particles must have been drawn together into aggregates of sufficient size to be capable of being removed by filtration at a high rate, and the total amount of such particles must have been reduced by subsequent sedimentation to such a quantity that the filtering material will not be too rapidly clogged by them. Without such thorough preliminary treatment mechanical filters are not capable of removing the bacteria, or the finely divided sediment or turbidity, and many other matters requiring to be removed.

**Sand Filters.** Sand filters are used at a lower rate than mechanical filters, and cleaning is done by removing by scraping of a surface layer of dirty sand instead of by washing the whole sand layer by a reverse current. The cost of cleaning devices being saved, and construction simplified in other ways, as compared with mechanical filters, a far greater filtering area can be provided for the same cost; and filtration being at a lower rate, the straining action is more thorough, and there are opportunities for biological purification. Sand filtration alone, without preliminary treatment, is able to remove nearly all of the objectionable bacteria, as well as other organisms, from many waters, at the same time purifying them in other ways. The straining is not close enough, however, to remove the clay particles that render many waters, especially some river waters, turbid, and such waters require preliminary treatment.

Sand filters are used in connection with various preliminary treatments, but, generally speaking, they are adapted to treating only such waters as are capable of being purified in that way without any preliminary treatments, or with only rough and inexpensive treatments. If the water ordinarily requires coagulation, then, as a

rule, it will be better to make the coagulation thorough and use mechanical niters for the final treatment.

**Coagulating Devices.** Coagulating devices consist of apparatus for dissolving the chemical or chemicals used for coagulating the water, and for mixing the solutions, and bringing them to the required strengths, and for applying them to the water, and mixing them with it, and all auxiliary appliances.

There is great variety in coagulating devices, and much ingenuity has been displayed in meeting special conditions. There is no great or insuperable difficulty in securing the regular and proper addition of coagulant to a water, and in many cases this has been done in a perfectly satisfactory way. On the other hand, the coagulating devices have probably failed to act more frequently than any other part of the plants of which they form parts, and for this reason the greatest care must be given to their design and operation.

**Coagulating Basins.** Coagulating basins are required to hold the water for a time after it has received the coagulant or coagulants, to allow the chemical reactions resulting from the treatment to take place. They also serve to remove by sedimentation the greater part of the precipitate that results from these reactions. This feature is of the utmost importance, as otherwise the precipitate would choke the filters, and cleaning would be required too frequently. The bulk of the precipitates should always be removed before the water goes to the filter, and to this end baffles and other devices tending to complete sedimentation are desirable, and the bottoms of the basins are made with slopes and gutters to facilitate the easy and frequent removal of the mud which is deposited upon them.

**Aerating Devices.** Aerating devices are used to bring the water in contact with air, either for the purpose of introducing oxygen or of removing carbonic acid or gases which produce tastes and odors. The natural flow of water in the bed of a mountain stream having a rapid fall aerates it in a most effective way, and many works are so arranged that this kind of aeration is utilized. Flow in sluggish streams or canals has comparatively little value for aeration.

When aeration must be done with artificial appliances, playing the water in jets forming fountains is one of the most effective ways, but to be thoroughly efficient considerable head is used up, and this is a serious obstacle, when the water is pumped, because of the cost. In other cases the water is allowed to fall through the perforated bottoms of trays, and similar devices. Under some conditions flowing over or through coke or other coarse-grained ballast seems to aid, but it is essential that the air in the voids of such material should be frequently changed by some certain means, as otherwise the materials instead of being helpful will greatly reduce the amount of aeration obtained.

When aeration is used to introduce oxygen, a substantial result may be obtained by well designed appliances with a drop of not more than two or three feet in water level. Much more extended aeration is required to remove objectionable gases from a water, and a greater head may be advantageously used where they are troublesome.

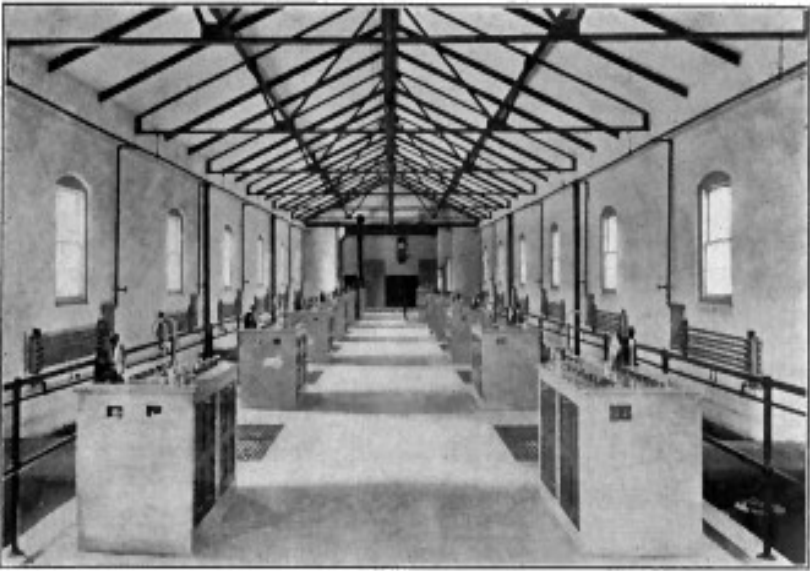
Intermittent niters can be operated so as to thoroughly aerate the water passing them, so long as the water quantity and the amount of organic matter in it are not too large, having reference to the grain-size, depth, and condition of the filter sand; and for this reason this form of nitrification has advantages when much aeration is required.

The above outlines of the most important processes of water purification, and of the appliances used to carry them out, is intended only to give a general idea of what is aimed at, and of the objects of the various parts of the works, and no detailed descriptions are necessary for this purpose. In the same way only those methods and appliances of some practical importance are included.

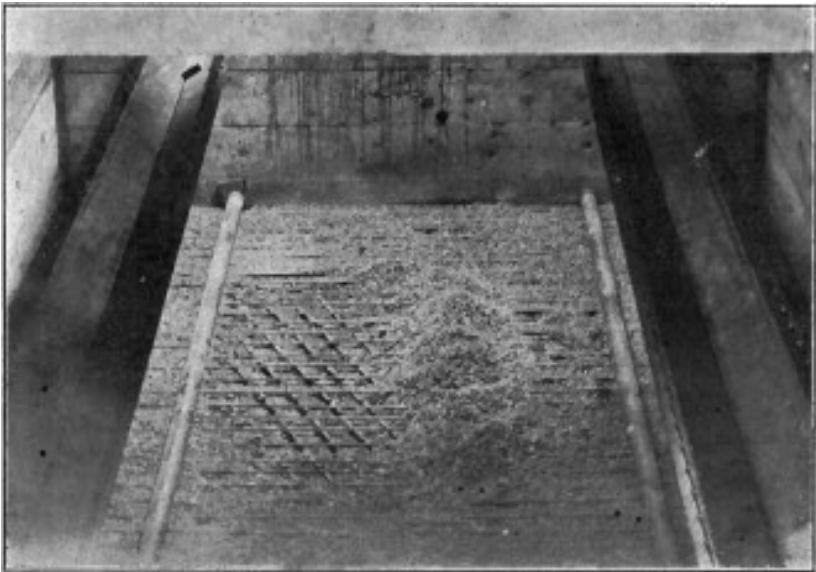
A great number of other processes have been proposed, and a few of them may be in time developed so as to be of practical value. But a discussion of such processes, not yet brought to successful application, would not aid in a clear understanding of first principles.

It is worth noting that most of the advance in water purification comes from the development of old processes.

It is only at long intervals that a new method or principle of treatment is discovered that is important enough to find a permanent place in the art. Ω



Interior of Filter House. Little Falls Filters of the East Jersey Water Company, showing operating table for mechanical filters. Courtesy of Mr. G. W. Fuller.

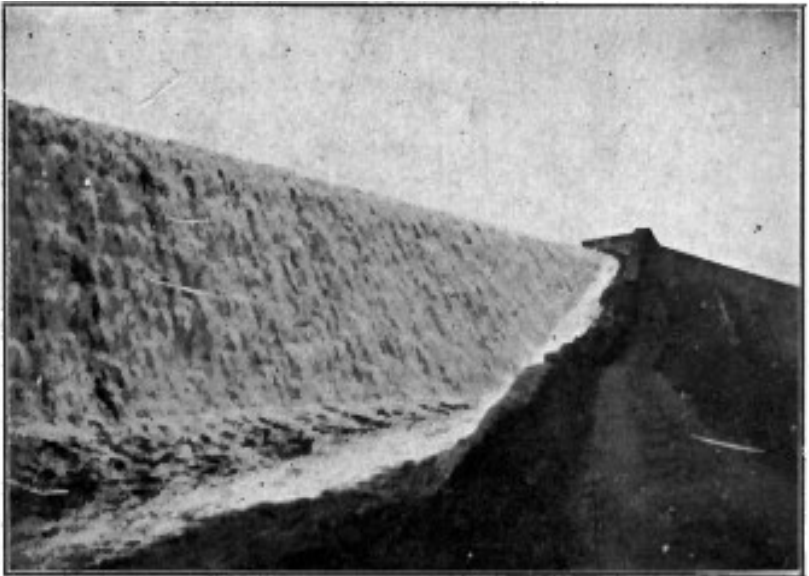


Bottom of a mechanical filter at Watertown, N. Y., with the sand removed to show the water and air piping and strainers.

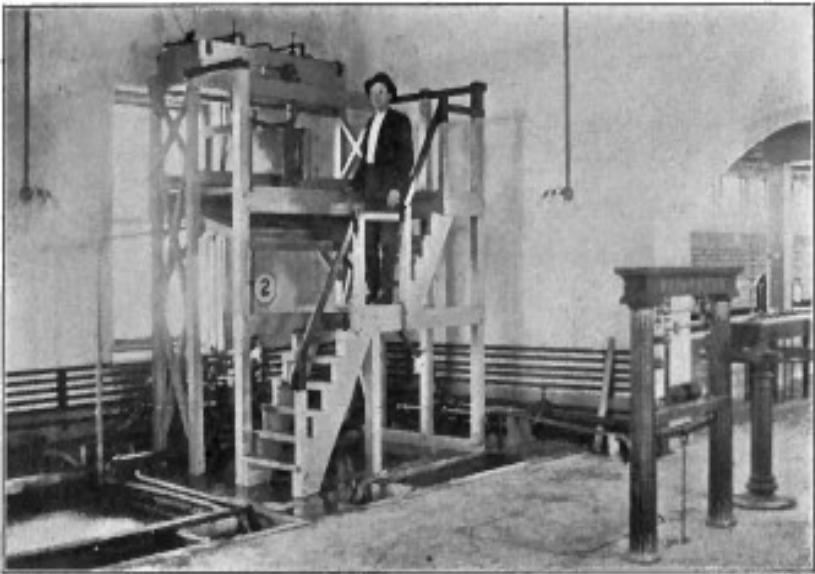




Aeration of Missouri River Water in passing from one settling basin to another at Omaha, Neb.



Aeration of water in falling over a stone dam.



Coagulating Devices at Watertown, N. Y.



Covered coagulating basins and mechanical filters in course of construction at Watertown, N. Y.

# ADVENTURES ON THE ATOMIC EARTH: RAIN MAN

*Winston Crutchfield*

Ashram Carver finished his morning prayers and looked up at the cloudless sky, already bright blue overhead and dazzling white to the sandy horizon. That sky promised another scorching day without the respite of shade or rain. He shook his head and rose from his knees, brushing the dirt from his legs and staring forlornly at the layers of grime on his skin. The village had run out of water for bathing several months ago, their drinking supply dwindling from scarce to vaporous. He motioned to the handful of people in attendance, saying a few kind words to each one as the prayer meeting broke up.

No more than a hundred families remained in the settlement. Most of the departed had simply packed their belongings and left when the well started to run dry. A few had died. Many more had stayed, preferring the hope of rain or the death of dehydration to the horrors of the atomically fueled wilderness. Ashram stayed because he was still needed. Still needed, he reflected, though not wanted.

He looked to the east gate at the town wall. Not even the first hour of daylight, and Alderman Sitz already waited patiently for yesterday's scouts to return with the day's water supply. Sitz had objected to Ashram's arrival from the Foundation a year ago, had opposed Ashram's staying once his meager supply of medicines had run out, and now had begun blaming Ashram for the current drought. Every one of Ashram's efforts to better the community met with stiff opposition from Sitz.

A pillar of dust rising above the wall started Ashram walking that direction. Everyone already awake would want to be at the gate when the scouts returned, and it looked like they were coming in early today. By the time Ashram made it to the town border, more than a dozen men and women had gathered; the makeshift cistern set up near the gate grew queues of containers like knobbly tentacles. No one stood by the tap. Ashram frowned; that meant yesterday's reservoir was completely gone. Same as the day before. Same as the week before.

The crowd noise swelled, drawing Ashram's attention to the gate. He moved quickly in that direction and pushed his way to the front of the gathering. Three rooster-tails of dust plumed against the sky, kicked up by the speeders of the town scouts. The town only sent scouts out two at a time. Ashram glanced sidelong at Alderman Sitz;

the councilman scowled into the glare of the rising sun. Ashram nearly grinned; Sitz was going to hate having another stranger in town, however briefly.

Men on either side of the gate cranked the winches that drew apart the heavily reinforced doors. The crowd backed away from the opening, clearing a street for the speeders to enter. Three slim frames howled across the threshold, two of them skidding sideways to a halt just beyond the crowd. The third slowed, stopped, and parked his machine in the middle of the street. The town gates swung shut with a reverberating clang Ashram felt in his teeth.

The gathered people rushed the scouts, crowding the two men, shouting questions, and demanding water. Ashram hung back; Sitz moved up to his side. The two did not greet each other. The scouts worked their way forward to make their report, but it was Sitz who spoke first. "Where is the tank?" he asked softly.

The scouts glanced at each other, each hoping the other would explain. Finally, one of the men spoke reluctantly, "We lost it." The crowd, now doubled in size since Ashram's arrival and the gradual waking of the town, roared immediately in outrage and protest. "We was attacked by gaunts just after we left the crick," the other scout yelled to be heard over the noise. "Clipped my wing," he motioned with the shoulder of a bandaged arm in a makeshift sling, "ripped a hole in the tanker, near took the back end off my speeder. We got away while they was lapping at the water."

Sitz curled his lip in disgust, "Your cowardice has killed us all." He rounded on Ashram, "Or yours has, Doctor." He spat the title like a curse.

"Don't matter no how," the scout interrupted. "Wasn't nothing in there to speak of. Crick's dry." His companion nodded affirmation.

"And yet you still managed to bring home someone else to die of thirst with us," Sitz snarled at the two men. He glared at the stranger hanging back beyond the edge of the crowd, "You'll find nothing here for you. Get out and leave us to die."

"I don't like you, and I don't owe you anything." The stranger lifted goggles from his face, leaving clean rings of skin in a dust-caked face. He drew a piece of equipment from his belt, the T.A.Q. Device that was the Challenger City wilderness scout's badge of office. "But since I'm here, the least I can do is fill your reservoir – give you and your folk water enough to pack up and leave." The scout played with the settings on his device. A moment later, a small fragment of blue crystal hung in the air, tethered to the T.A.Q. Device by a nearly invisible cone of energy. "What's your processor there hold?"

One of the men in the crowd moved hastily to the controls of the reservoir, released the valves in the tank, and breached the reaction chamber. "This is a bad idea," Sitz began, but was quickly drowned

out by the crowd's roar of protest.

The scout waited patiently, finally dropping the crystals into to the processor. The chamber sealed; machinery thrummed softly. With the roar of rushing water and the hiss of escaping air, water splashed against the walls of the reservoir tank, absolutely pure water extracted directly from the elemental matrix of the scout's atomic shards.

For the next hour, volunteers dispensed the water into waiting containers. Even with an apparent surplus, town officials stood by to ensure that rationing was observed. After the first round of earnest thanks and townsfolk clutching to grasp his hand, the scout withdrew to his speeder and away from the hubbub, warding off further expressions of gratitude by pretending to arrange his saddlebags.

Ashram received his ration and savored a few cool swallows before stowing his thermos out of sight. He approached the scout, who puttered pointedly with his speeder for a moment before realizing Ashram wasn't going to leave. The man finally looked up at him, "Yeah?"

"Thank you."

"Welcome." The scout turned back to fussing with his speeder.

Ashram continued, "They're going to want more."

"I'll fill it back up at the end of the day," came the answer, "but that's it. I can't stay, and you shouldn't either."

"I'm Ashram Carver," he extended his hand.

"Ted Bussen, a pleasure," the man's tone of voice didn't sound like it was a pleasure, but the scout took Ashram's hand in a cursory grip anyway. "Doctor Ashram Carver?" The grip tightened. "I read your treatise on resonance tracking and elemental polarization – real good stuff, sir."

Ashram managed a weak grin, "Pleasure's mine. Glad you could put it to good use."

"Are you on a missionary sabbatical?"

"Oh, you know," Ashram raised a hand to shield his eyes from the sun, "It's all about the field research. I came to fix their equipment and see about a mission – wound up rolling pills. You need anything from the clinic?" Ted shook his head; Ashram continued, "Any particular reason you think we should leave town? Some of those here won't take that kindly." He eyed Alderman Sitz, who had taken personal charge of the water distribution now that most of the town had arrived.

Ted closed the saddlebags on his speeder and sat roughly on the side of the seat. "I picked up your boys just after the gaunts found 'em. The creek they were using to fill that tanker's little more than mud; they said your well is dry. I don't figure you've got a good reason to stay." He shrugged, "but that's you. Happens I'm here cause

your little vacation spot registered hot on my T.A.Q. Device. You've got a fairly high-level rad signature coming from right around here, and that's going to draw all sorts of nasties out of the wilderness." Ted lifted his chin curtly at the city walls. "That ain't going to stop much of anything serious."

Ashram nodded gravely. "I see."

"Yeah, you might," he hesitated, noting the look on Ashram's face. "But you don't look like they're going to do it."

"Oh, they won't." Ashram assured him, "They're going to want to stay more than ever, now."

Ted scowled, "Why?"

"The Foundation sent me here a year ago when the town requested aid. Their Quantumizer had failed; I brought the tools and knowledge to fix it." Ashram drew a hand across his forehead to clear the sweat already gathering in the heat. "But that didn't solve their problem."

"They've been a year without a working T.A.Q. Device?" Ted's hand moved protectively to his own machine.

"Off and on; I can't keep it working right. See, they aren't using it to provide for the town; they're using it on the monsters."

Ted grunted.

"This area's always had a faint elemental resonance. Instead of mining for shards to power the town, they would periodically use the harmonic to draw out monsters and pit them against each other. The conflict unleashed enough energy to feed the winner, and the town harvested the meat of the loser." Ashram shrugged at the grim set of Ted's jaw. "I guess they kept things far enough from the walls that nothing ever took any interest in the town; plus, it kept the population of mutants down."

"S blasted foolish, is what it is," Ted growled.

"Huh," Ashram almost grinned. "When I got here, I found them in a panic because their favorite monster was drifting away."

Ted just shook his head.

"They had caught the interest of an elemental embodiment – an inertial/density matrix composed of air and water – and were feeding it enough energy to keep it pacified and localized. It killed the local creatures, rained on their crops, and everyone was happy."

"Shards and blazes," Ted swore. "Tell me it was a small one."

"Class Five," Ashram said. "A tornado in a bottle that doesn't exist."

Ted's scowl deepened. "I was worried I wouldn't be able to attract any attention to the area, be able to stir up enough trouble to trap some energy, but if they've conditioned a Class Five into thinking of this as its feeding ground..."

"Now you've brought a working Quantumizer into town," Ashram

continued. "Elemental activity has spiked enough to draw your attention, which means it's going to draw monster attention, and the only things left in the area are Class Two and below." Ashram finished the thought with a grimace. "At least their pet cloud monster seems to have wandered off to the west. If their Device hadn't quit altogether when it did I doubt there would be a town left."

Neither one of them had noticed Sitz approach. "Dr Carver is a self-important fear-monger who would rather *civilize* heathens like us than help us improve our standard of living," Sitz said acidly. "He hasn't repaired our Quantumizer because he can't." Sitz turned his back on Ashram and stepped deftly between the two men, "and he won't live up to a man's duty and report that failure to the Foundation. Despite anything he would have you believe, Mr ...."

"Bussen," Ted supplied.

"Mr Bussen, we had and would still have everything under control. Come," Sitz made a move to walk away, "I'll have someone service your speeder so we can get out of this heat. Besides, I was intolerably rude earlier, and I cannot help but admit I owe you an apology."

Ted glanced at the readout strapped to his wrist and acquiesced. Ashram folded his arms across his chest and let them walk away without further protest.

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Ted spent the morning letting Sitz talk. They toured the perimeter of the wall, Sitz proudly detailing their defensive measures against the atomically charged horrors of the wilderness. "Won't be enough," was all Ted would say.

Sitz led Ted to the garage where the town's motor pool was. Ted's speeder was there, already serviced and being detailed by a pair of energetic youths. Sitz showed him a workshop at the back of the bay, where the pieces of a Trans-Atomic Quantumizer Device lay disassembled in order along a schematic diagram. "Can you fix it?" Sitz asked simply.

Ted looked over the Device with a practiced eye. "Got no parts," he said.

Sitz gestured, and one of the men who had joined them lifted two locked cases from one of the shelves nearby. Ted shook his head, "Guess I could put it back together for you, flash the program from mine, and get you back up and running."

"Will you?"

"Not sure as that would be a good idea; software can get tetchy." Ted made a face and ran a hand unconsciously along the Challenger Foundation sigil stitched into his vest. "Dr Carver's the senior Foundationist, and he doesn't seem to think you folks are hurting so

bad you need it. Besides, from what I hear you've got a Class Five been visiting periodically. That's three kinds of dangerous."

Sitz exchanged glances with the other men, and let the matter drop. The group headed for town center, joined along the way by several more townsfolk. Once in town hall, they headed to the basement, the party of eight crowding into a climate controlled room lined with tracking equipment. Sitz sat down in one of the two operator's chairs, and motioned for Ted to take the other. On the monitors, a S.E.N.T.R.I. uplink fed data from the satellites keeping watch on atomic monsters in the region. Ted nervously eyed an indistinct hologram with the number five glowing uncomfortably close to the borders of the town.

Sitz spoke hesitantly, choosing his words carefully, "Mr Bussen, I can't express how much we appreciate your refilling our emergency reservoir. With your experience and assistance, we can keep the town vital for a long time to come. You and I could become the pillars of a new community. We can replenish the well, and start to grow crops again. We'll track down the survivors of those that abandoned us and bring them back to safety."

"It's not safe here, Alderman," Ted grunted. "I tried to tell you that before, and now its getting on in the day. I've got to spike this signature and see if I can collect it before it draws the attention of something uglier even than me."

Sitz leaned back in his chair and folded his hands in displeasure, the last pretense of politeness vanishing from his face.

Ted shook his head, "I don't mind doing what I can, you're welcome to the water and all. But if I was you, I'd take advantage of the kindness and get to greener pastures. I passed two or three settlements towards the north that'd welcome some new faces. Settlements where you'll find plenty of water and a chance to start over."

"I don't care for your tone, Mr Bussen. We've done just fine in the past, and will continue to do so in the future. But it's apparent we're just heathens and savages to you as well." Sitz fairly spat venom, "you Foundationists are all the same, convinced you've got all the answers, and the only right ones."

Ted stared, and rose to his feet. "Alderman, you've been playing with really dangerous creatures. I appreciate that you think you can control them, but you can't. Dr Carver's a smart man who's spent a lifetime studying the effects of elemental signatures. I've near grown up in the wilderness, myself. Beats me why you don't listen to him, do what he tells you to do, and be done with it."

"What do you know about us? Only the lies Carver's put in your head." Sitz made no move to rise himself, "The Foundation thinks it can run our lives because they hold the technology that keeps us



alive. Set up their tin-plated dictators to take the shards of energy that we've bled for and grow fat in their atomically powered city. Force us even to pray to their little invented god who's so powerful and aloof that he has to send atomic monsters to judge us for our sins." Sitz nodded to several of the others in the room, and Ted abruptly found himself surrounded.

"Carver's done nothing but preach this drivel since he got here; don't think I haven't heard what he's really saying beneath all the fine platitudes. He won't fix our Quantumizer until we pledge fealty to the Foundation, yield our independence to their appointed manager, and abase ourselves daily to an invisible, imaginary god so we never forget our place. No, I don't think so," Sitz didn't appear to make a motion, but four of the men seized Ted by the arms and forced him back into his chair. "We're surrounded by monsters in the wilderness, monsters we can see and touch and kill. I've tolerated Carver's poison this long out of desperation that his own survival would be enough to make him yield. I've no intention of letting more outsiders force us to suffer for their own amusement."

Ted struggled futilely, "You don't know what you're doing, Alderman. You're not playing with fire, you're playing with an atom bomb. Those creatures can't be controlled. You can't train them. They're not animals you can entice with treats and scare with tricks." One of the men strapped Ted's arms to the chair and relieved him of the Quantumizer on his belt and the controller on his wrist. "At best, these things are forces of nature utterly indifferent to your survival. At worst, they see you as rivals, intruders, and food."

Sitz rose and took the T.A.Q. Device from the man who had taken it from Ted. He smiled, and it wasn't a pretty sight, "You're wrong, Mr Bussen. We aren't blind, superstitious savages – no matter what your Foundation believes. I do not act out of hate or fear or prejudice. I do what I do because we want to live, and we want to live in freedom." His lip curled in contempt. "Freedom from people like you and Carver."

They made to leave the room, and Sitz paused in the open doorway, "We're not barbarians, Mr Bussen. We're simply going to repair our own Quantumizer and resume our way of life. Your property and your freedom will be returned to you once we're done." Sitz closed the door behind him, leaving Ted alone in the tracking station.

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Ashram attended to the few patients at the clinic he operated, setting the injured scout's arm properly and making rounds checking up on the worst cases of dehydration and malnutrition, recent problems caused by the drought. Introducing himself as "Doctor

Carver” last year had landed him an immediate position as the town bone-setter, despite Ashram’s protests that his degree was scientific and not medical. He’d spent the first month in town using up the medical care package brought from Challenger City, and the next month studying furiously on practical rural medicine. His nurse was a thin, querulous man who had assisted the previous doctor, earning a field promotion when the doctor was killed by roving gaunts outside the town walls. The man had been relieved to abrogate the position of medico to Ashram.

By mid-afternoon, Ashram handed off a short check-list of duties to his nurse and excused himself from the clinic. Stepping into the heat of the day, Ashram headed for the motor pool, arriving just in time to witness scouts from the town tear out of the service bay on their speeders and through the western gates. He frowned. There had been three riders.

In the motor pool, he laid a hand on the shoulder of the first mechanic he saw, “Was that the stranger that just took off? I didn’t think he’d be leaving this soon.” The man just shrugged and pointed to the back of the bay where Alderman Sitz stood with several members of the town council. Ashram groaned inwardly.

He walked towards the workshop. “What’s going on here, Alderman?”

Sitz smirked and made no answer. Ashram hurried past him and into the workshop. The non-functional Quantumizer was nowhere in sight. Both cases of replacement parts lay open on the workbench, and portions of the assembly schematic still glowed soft white against the surface of the display. Ashram’s jaw clenched. A noise from the threshold drew his attention, and the door to the workshop slammed shut with a sudden bang.

A couple of Sitz’s men pushed heavy equipment in front of the door, keeping it from opening. Sitz moved idly up to the large windows that enclosed the room, leaning against the wire-reinforced glass. He spoke loudly, so Ashram could hear through the window, “Mr Bussen has enabled us to repair our Quantumizer and it is time to bring this drought to an end – without the help of your Foundation. When we’re done, you will be free to leave and I intend that you do so without preamble.” Sitz smiled without humor, and no small measure of malice. “In the meantime, we are going to retrieve our cloud monster and coax him docilely back into our service.”

Ashram slammed both fists futilely against the glass, “Sitz, please, you don’t understand what you’ve been messing with! You’ve got to get those scouts back here before they engage the creature! There’s nothing left around here that can challenge a Class Five; feeding it energy from the T.A.Q.s will just make it more uncontrollable!”

“You’re a fool and a coward, Carver. I’ve known that since I first

laid eyes on you. We'll coax it close enough for a bit of rain, and then drain it until it leaves – just as we did before you began sabotaging our T.A.Q. Device." Sitz smirked coldly, "The rain will replenish the well in time, and now that we've got a hot zone again, we have all the time we need."

Ashram slumped against the window, "I've tried to tell you, the T.A.Q.s aren't meant to be used that way; they can't handle the resonant feedback. You're wrong, Alderman. These monsters don't serve us, they consume us."

Sitz slammed his hand on the glass between them, "Your Foundation can't abide the thought that someone might be able to survive without your precious technology. Men like me mastered these monsters long ago, drove them back to the center of the earth, and stupidly depended on men like you to advance civilization while we kept the atomic horrors at bay. Your god is a coward's gambit, an imaginary trump card to bring low all those greater than yourself."

"If my god is imaginary, he can't possibly matter." Ashram chose his words carefully. "But he's real, and powerful, and hasn't left us to face these nuclear-powered monsters alone." Ashram paused, "He's given us men like you, with great courage and leadership." He drew a measured breath. "And great pride."

Sitz sneered, "Then maybe you should pray for me. I've endured every one of your petty gambits to force us to the bow the knee to the Foundation; this town and these people have survived by my will alone. Let's see your god lay that low."

Ashram bowed his head.

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The three scouts rode west into the desert, throttles maxed out on the open plain. Once outside the city walls, they had paused to lock onto the hot zone's elemental signature and secure an entangling particle for the T.A.Q. Devices to use. The city walls lay distantly behind them now; just ahead dark thunderheads rolled heavy and low, a dense mass of storm and twister in an otherwise cloudless sky.

The scouts glided to a halt, resting their speeders on the crest of a dune. Two of them fiddled with their Quantumizers, words muffled behind layers of cloth pulled tight across their faces against the desert sand. "You got a reading, Sten?"

"Yeah, I got two of 'em. That's our rainmaker right there, no doubt." Sten pushed on the controls of the T.A.Q., "but I can't figure what this other is. Got red and green energy signatures, and it's big, no doubt." He wiped the readouts from the display and looked around, "Just can't see nothing."

"Huh," the man without a T.A.Q. Device dismounted and slogged through the whipping wind and shifting sand to the edge of the dune.

The heavy clouds that formed the body of their rainmaker surged overhead, supremely uninterested in the insignificant men below. Across the plain of the desert nothing moved in the glare, no elemental monstrosity rose against the sun to roar its fury, no treeline obscured the expanse of blowing, billowing white sand. "What you got, Lex?"

Lex booted up his own T.A.Q. and scrolled through the readouts. "Same as, Mark." He threw up his hands in frustration. "This our boy right above us. Something else hereabouts, just can't see 'im. What do you want we should do?"

Mark slogged back to his speeder, "borrowed" from Ted Bussen, laid a hand on the steering column, "You got a lock on the hot zone back home?"

"Yeah."

"Spike it."

Lex spun a dial on the controller, gripped the wrist strapped to it in one hand, and mashed the activator.

The world went white. Thunder split the air in the middle of the party of scouts; Lex and his speeder vanished in an incandescent, plasma-fueled inferno that knocked Mark to the ground and fused the crest of the dune into molten glass. Mark scrambled against the sand to clutch for his speeder, careering in the suddenly violent wind down the far slope of the dune. His hand snatched a loose tie cord, and the speeder dragged him across the sand.

Sten couldn't hear anything, could barely see, was grateful he'd remained in his seat, and now clung to his speeder with panic-born strength. Rain fell, a sudden downpour that ran in muddy rivulets down the slope of the dune to pool in spillways at the base of the hill. He spun his vehicle around and gunned the throttle for home.

Mark flopped onto his back, staring at the sky as the runaway speeder dragged him through the mud of the dune. In the thunderheads above, twisters roiled and surged against each other; lightning drew fresh lines of dazzle in his still sparkling vision. Columns of rain as dense as tree trunks blasted and blew and ruined great tracts of sand into gorges of flowing mud. The sky opened up jaws of midnight that swallowed the noon sun; lightning flashed in eyes that saw no mortal plane, and smoky claws of ice annihilated the smooth run of rain across the sand.

Mark screamed.

The wind pushed his speeder over the edge of a defile cut by the storm and already filling with mud. He dropped roughly on the rear of the vehicle and scrambled into the seat. A twist of the throttle leapt the machine out of the gorge, across the dunes, and away from the raging storm.

He couldn't see Sten, couldn't hear anything beyond the ringing in

his ears and the howl of the storm. The speeder kicked and bucked against him like a thing alive, and Mark reached desperately for the tie straps that would secure him to the seat. He pulled them one-handed across his chest, swerved in the wind, and screamed out of the edge of the storm and into clear skies.

Mark turned to look behind him. The storm monster moved with deliberation, twisters and columns of rain marching inexorably over the dunes and in his direction. Mark gave his full attention to the speeder.

The vehicle surged unexpectedly and the ground in front of him rose sharply, launching Mark into the air. He fought for balance and control, trying to angle his descent for a sloped dune. Beneath him the ground opened up in an eruption of magma and earth. Inhuman jaws formed from rock and fire gaped hungrily, engulfing Mark and his speeder in a crushing, blazing death.

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Sten whipped through the gates and past the entrance to the motor pool, sliding his speeder to a stop in front of town hall. He jumped from the seat and ran up the steps, pushed through the doors and yelled for Alderman Sitz at the top of his lungs.

Sitz appeared within seconds, followed by the town council. "Did you find it? The rainmaker, did you find it?" He demanded of the breathless, doubled-over scout.

Sten nodded, and handed over the T.A.Q. Device. "We found it alright. Killed Lex right off, never seen 'em act that way afore." He straightened up, "Ain't seen Mark, neither. He wasn't behind me when I cleared out."

"They're brave men who knew the risks," Sitz declared. "Their sacrifice may have saved us all." Sitz clapped a hand on Sten's shoulder, "Spread the word, get people indoors and secure the town. It's going to rain."

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Within the hour, the storm being stood directly over the town, pelting the buildings with rocks of ice and dropping an endless rain of needles on roof, street, and wall. Winds tore at vehicle and edifice alike with an abrasive moan that twisted every structure around curve and corner. Bolt after bolt of lightning crashed into the rods strategically placed near energizing receptors designed to feed the power into capacitor banks.

Minutes after the monster announced its arrival in a roar of elemental fury, the town had recharged its generators, filled every cistern, and now simply waited for the creature to wear itself out.

Alderman Sitz and the town council convened in the basement of the town hall, attempting to stifle the radiation bleed from the latent

hot zone so that the monster would lose interest. So far, Sitz's attempts to use the T.A.Q. Device this way had met with utter failure. He had finally given up in disgust, and set the instrument aside, content that this storm would pass, as had all others before it.

And then the ground shook.

A yell from the S.E.N.T.R.I. monitor room sent the men scrambling to the doorway. Ted Bussen's chair lay on its side, with Ted still strapped firmly to its seat. "What's going on," Sitz demanded. "Sit him up, might as well let him out."

Some of the men loosed the straps on Ted's arms, and he rolled onto the floor. They righted the chair, and Ted staggered to his feet, glaring angrily. "I warned you," was all he said.

On the tracking monitor, a holographic tornado hovered directly over the town, the number five burning inside it. On the outskirts, just breaching the walls, a shapeless mass also bearing the number five rolled like a tidal wave through the display. The building shook again, and the screeching tear of shredding metal reached them even in the basement. On the display, a section of wall disintegrated, and the second monster was inside the town.

"My god," breathed Sitz.

"That's the problem, isn't it?" Ted muttered. "Give me my T.A.Q. Device."

The building heaved, tossing everyone to the ground. "Now!" Ted ordered.

"We left it in the other room," someone answered.

Ted staggered as the building bucked again, and dust floated from the ceiling. He lurched into the conference room and scooped up the Quantumizer from the floor. "It's not mine," he grunted. No one answered. "Get out of here before the building comes down on us. I'll take care of this."

Ted grabbed at the handrails on the stairs leading up to the first floor, and hauled himself up, through the hall, and into the open.

The western quarter of the town was gone.

In its place, dark twisters struggled with columns of rock. Gobbets of magma shot into the air to steam sheets of rain into oblivion. Tongues of lightning fused sheets of earth into fulgurite tubes. The elemental embodiments of nature clashed and howled, each utterly unable to comprehend the other.

The earth heaved. Torrential wind plucked Ted from his feet and flung him down the street. He rolled to a stop against the wall of a house and dragged himself painfully to a sitting position. He grunted and activated the T.A.Q. Device, quickly calling up readouts and diagnostics. "Blast their eyes!" Burning, sulfurous boulders rained from the sky, smashing buildings and setting them ablaze.

Ted scrambled to his feet and lurched against the unsteady earth

in what he hoped was the direction of the clinic, not included on Sitz's tour of the town. Flooding from the town hall, one of the councilmen seized his arm, yelling to be heard above the howl of the near tornado, "What do we do?"

Ted shook him free, "What do I care? This town is done; head north and pray you can find the next settlement before you die of thirst." Ted left the man in the dirt, pulled his goggles down against the wind and grit, and staggered away.

"Pray to whom?" The man called after him.

When he could no longer see the city center for the blowing dirt, Ted began pounding on doors, ordering people to evacuate by the closest gate. Before long, he had located several volunteer Civil Defenders waiting for official word from the town council. Ted grimly informed them of the state of things, mobilized evacuation protocols, and got directions to the clinic. Back in the street, people emerged from their homes in barely controlled panic, going from a state of lockdown to evacuation in the space of a few words spread by the talkies of the Civil Defenders.

To the west, the titanic battle between the two elemental embodiments drifted north, shearing away another section of reinforced wall with an ear-splitting shriek. Dirt, debris, cloud, and rain blotted out the noonday sun. The west end of town burned, including the motor pool, great billows of steam rising where unending rain fell on unquenchable fires.

Ted pushed south towards the clinic.

He finally made it to the small building, uncomfortably close to the southwest perimeter where the earth elemental had first breached the town wall. Ted tried the door, pounding on it with both fists when he found it was locked. The door cracked and swung suddenly open to slam against the wall as the gale roared into the clinic. Someone dragged Ted inside, and two other men forced the door shut again by sheer weight.

Ted sagged against the wall to catch his breath. Less than a dozen people were crowded into the main waiting room of the clinic, men, women, and a few children. Dr Carver was not among them. "Why are you still here? Didn't you hear the CDs on the talkies? Is anyone hurt?"

The scout with the injured arm from earlier in the day was the only one. "Some of us were about to make a run for the south gate," he said.

"Some of you?" Ted asked, "Where's Dr Carver?"

"The alderman had him locked up in the motor pool, put a couple of guys on guard when we went to check on him."

Ted sagged, "The motor pool's a loss, anyone in there's got to be dead."

The scout lifted a talkie and keyed it, "How you doing, Ash?"

The voice from the speaker struggled against the static, drowned out on squeals and bursts of noise, "Hanging in there. Are they getting tired yet?" The ground shook; lightning and thunder split the sky. "Guess not."

Ted took the talkie, "Dr Carver, can you get out?"

"Not a chance," came the faint voice, "there's an armored carrier shoved up against the door of the workshop. At this point I'm just thankful the wind keeps blowing the smoke and fire away from me."

Ted growled in frustration, "All right. Say a prayer, doctor, and get ready to run for it." He handed the talkie back to the scout. "Get everyone to the south gate, away from the town and make for the wilderness. If you're lucky, you can make the next settlement to the north."

The man nodded and the people in the room gathered themselves for a rush to the wall.

"Are you going to the motor pool?" The clinic's nurse worried, "It's far too dangerous outside; wouldn't we all be better off waiting for them to just leave?"

Ted grunted, "They aren't going to just leave. They'll level this town and mine the ashes for elemental shards. No one who stays here is going to live. Now, I'm going after Carver," one of the men protested, and Ted stared him in silence, "and I'm going alone. No sense more of us dying than have to. Get out of here."

The injured scout flung the door open, and everyone piled outside and into the wind and dirt.

Ted split from the main group and fought for the remnants of the motor pool. The fight had moved well north of the area, devastating another section of the town. He ignored the fires burning the buildings still standing until he reached a jagged hole in the wall of the motor pool. Pulling a scarf up over his mouth and nose against the thick black smoke that crept from the the breach, Ted carefully pushed his way inside, mindful of the jagged metal edges and wary of burning patches.

Once through he spotted the source of this smoke, a barrel of oily rags flaming red and orange in the twilight noon. Other sections of the motor pool burned as well, isolated plumes of fire restricted to benches, vehicles, and spilled chemical. As Ashram had described, the remains of the roof funneled a strong wind from the back of the room through the gaping hole where the garage doors had been. Ted climbed over a smashed equipment bank and skirted a carrier with a metal roof beam pinning it to the concrete. He found another carrier on its side at the back of the garage, pinning the workshop door shut.

Ted shoved benches and tool chests out of the way until he could reach the reinforced window where Carver's back pressed against it.



He pounded it with his fist, and Ashram jumped away, startled. Motioning that Ashram should stay back, Ted looked for a heavy object, finally lifting with both hands a spanner as large as his arm, used to apply torque to the wheels of the armored carriers.

He twisted around, reached back, and letting out a grunt of effort swung the massive wrench with all the force of his weight behind it. The head of the spanner smashed into the window, shattering the integrity of the glass into a puzzle of fragments held firmly in place by the wire reinforcement. Ted yelled in frustrated incoherence and dropped the spanner loudly.

Ashram's shape appeared through the now opaque window. "Have you got a T.A.Q. Device?" He shouted.

"Yeah," Ted yelled back.

The door to the workshop barely opened an inch before hitting the body of the carrier. A roll of conductor sailed through the gap, clipped the frame of the vehicle and fell to the ground. Ted gathered the fallen wire, and untangled it. He went back to the window. "Now what?"

Ashram pressed up against the shattered glass, poking away bits of crystal with his fingers. "The wire in the window's also conductive. Tie it off, get some distance..."

"...and then spike the elemental signature. Yeah, I got it. Get to cover as best you can." Ted worked hastily, attaching the conductor to the improvised antenna, and laying as much distance between himself and the workshop as he could. He ducked behind the pinned carrier, and hastily used the Quantumizer to isolate the energy of the hot zone. A moment later, he mashed the control.

The motor pool bucked and heaved; sulfur and magma roared through the garage. The vehicle in front of Ted ripped free from its mooring and slid toward the open air. Ted clung desperately to the frame, tearing the antenna free from his T.A.Q. Device.

In front of the workshop, the earth gaped, swallowing the concrete floor with casual ease and plummeting the carrier into a chasm rapidly filling with molten lava. In the space of an instant, the gap widened from ten feet to twenty. The frame of the motor pool around the workshop twisted and warped. Glass fragments rained from the shattered remains of the window.

Ashram braced himself against the frame of the door, psyching himself up for a jump he couldn't possibly make. He looked for alternatives, but few presented themselves. The chasm rent by the earth elemental ran the length of the motor pool. Safety, if any were to be had, lay on the other side. Ashram gripped the frame with white knuckles and prayed.

White plasma fell through the hole in the roof and thunder twisted the motor pool's frame effortlessly. Ashram's hand slipped

from its grip. Torn from its anchor by the brutal torque, the back wall of the workshop bent outward and caught the wind which stripped it from the frame of the building in an instant. Violent drafts sucked the contents of the workshop through the back wall, flinging Ashram like a paper doll against the burning carcass of a building twenty feet away.

Ashram lay gasping for breath until rough hands pulled him away from the structure and helped him to his feet. Drawn back to the area of the motor pool, fallout from the monstrous combat kicked Ted and Ashram along as they ran, stumbled, and clawed for the south gate.

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Beyond the walls of the town, the survivors huddled in a mass of wretched misery. Barely two-thirds of the population were left; none of the vehicles had made it out. None of the watchmen along the city walls had escaped.

Ted and Ashram were the last to arrive. They saw a figure detach itself from the group well before they reached it, rushing across the distance to them.

Alderman Sitz hit Ashram in a rough tackle, bearing them both to the ground, pounding the doctor brutally with both fists, leaving him spitting blood before Ted could halt the councilman off. "This is your fault!" He screamed, waving a hand at the destruction of the town, knuckles still red with the other man's blood.

More townsfolk were right behind him; two men Ted recognized from the monitor room roughly freed Sitz from his clutches. Someone yelled an accusation, and the whole crowd erupted into shouts, shoving matches, and threats.

The controller strapped to Ted's wrist beeped for attention, and he shoved his way momentarily free of the mob. "Blast you all! Those things aren't done with us yet!" He shot the display into the air in full holographic projection. The threat monitor glowed angrily.

"We'll never get away in time," Ashram spoke softly. "Not all of us."

Sitz raised a fist to punch the doctor again, but someone behind him caught it before the blow fell. Sitz settled down, "Do you have anything constructive to add, or is this just more doom-saying."

"I can use the T.A.Q. Device to set up a resonance in the perimeter walls, keep the creatures' attention focused on the town while everyone else escapes." He shrugged, "In theory."

"In theory?" Ted asked.

"You read the treatise. These walls are lined with conductor so the towers can trade information and power securely. All I have to do is tie the Quantumizer into that network, and keep the harmonic entangled with the hot zone signature." Ashram indicated Sitz with a

jerk of his chin, "He knows it'll work. It'd keep everything away from the town, including these Class Five elementals that Sitz keeps trying to tame."

"Or in this case, it'll keep the creatures inside the perimeter." Ted confirmed. "They'll level the place, but you might be able to make a clean getaway."

An explosion cast smoke and fire into columns that rose quickly above the walls. "That was one of the main generator capacitors," someone supplied.

Ted grunted, "I'll stay too, the rest of you git." Ashram started to object, but Ted silenced him, "The software doesn't work right. You'll need someone to keep a fix on the signature while you do the math thing.

"No." Sitz shook himself free from the men restraining him. "Absolutely not. This is my town. These are my monsters. I'm not going to trust a pair of Foundationists to keep their courage while my people flee for their lives." He nodded at two of his men, "Hold him."

Ted was ready for them this time, and one of the men went down with a mouthful of blood before the rest of them pinning his arms.

"Are you insane?!?" Ashram yelled.

Sitz relieved Ted of his T.A.Q. Device and turned to the doctor. "Pray that I'm not. Understand me very clearly, doctor. We are going to see this through, hold the line against these atomic horrors, and likely die in the defense of my people." He leaned in until the two men were nose to nose. "And if you try to run before the creatures leave, I'll kill you with my bare hands."

Sitz turned back to his men, "We can make the south tower from here. Get to Sulfur Springs in the north if you can. We'll follow in a few days if we're still alive."

Ted struggled against the men holding him, until Ashram shook his head. "Get them through the wilderness safely and report to Challenger City." Ted calmed down, the men released him, and the few hundred survivors turned and trudged north.

Sitz and Ashram started for the south tower, "Well doctor," Sitz said, "looks like we get to settle this once and for all." He held up the T.A.Q. Device, "Your god..." he pointed to the pitch black inferno of lightning, magma, and thunder, "... or mine."

Ashram said nothing.

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Ted coasted his speeder across the plain to the wall of the town he had left just over a week ago. Little remained of the defensive perimeter. None of the towers still stood. One section of one quadrant of the wall was still intact. Within the gates, no building remained whole.

Parking his vehicle at the empty archway, Ted kicked at the shredded remains of a gate. Where the south tower had stood lay only rubble. The scout picked his way through scattered timbers and the crumbling remnants of houses. Deep trenches scarred the earth, hardened over with the onyx remains of the elemental's fury. Blackened earth marked the scorch patterns where lightning has obliterated every hint of metal.

Behind the ruin of the town hall, a thin stream of smoke rose wispy against the clear sky, still devoid of rain but no longer oppressively hot. Ted hoped it was a campfire and not the remains of another building still smoldering in a sealed fire pit.

The smoke proved to be coming from inside the town hall, and Ted picked his way over the jagged stones thrust upwards from the earth by the titanic clash and into a space mostly cleared of debris.

Ashram sat on the ground in front of a small fire, attempting to boil water. He looked up as Ted approached, gratefully rising to accept the man's firm grip.

"Dr Carver," Ted said, "It's a pleasure." And he meant it.

Ashram led Ted through the ruin of the town to the edge of the western gate. He walked with a pronounced limp and paused every few minutes to breathe heavily. "We held out for three days in the south tower before they brought it down around us. He lived until nightfall on sheer arrogance, while we hid in the remains of the motor pool."

They rested in front of a cairn of shattered brick and ruined steel.

"What are you going to tell the rest of the townsfolk?" Ted asked politely, though markedly without the emotion he had displayed on finding Ashram alive.

"I'll tell them the truth," Ashram replied. "Sitz was a man of great courage and leadership." He drew a ragged breath. "And great pride."

Ω

# THE TIDAL WAVE

*Ethel May Dell*

## I: STILL WATERS

Rufus the Red sat on the edge of his boat with his hands clasped between his knees, staring at nothing. His nets were spread to dry in the sun; the morning's work was done. Most of the other men had lounged into their cottages for the midday meal, but the massive red giant sitting on the shore in the merciless heat of noon did not seem to be thinking of physical needs.

His eyes under their shaggy red brows were fixed with apparent concentration upon his red, hairy legs. Now and then his bare toes gripped the moist sand almost savagely, digging deep furrows; but for the most part he sat in solid contemplation.

There was only one other man within sight along that sunny stretch of sand—a small, dark man with a shaggy, speckled beard and quick, twinkling eyes. He was at work upon a tangled length of tarred rope, pulling and twisting with much energy and deftness to straighten out the coil, so that it leaped and writhed in his hands like a living thing.

He whistled over the job cheerily and tunelessly, glancing now and again with a keen, birdlike intelligence towards the motionless figure twenty yards away that sat with bent head broiling in the sun. His task seemed a hopeless one, but he tackled it as if he enjoyed it. His brown hands worked with a will. He was plainly one to make the best of things, and not to be lightly discouraged—a man of resolution, as the coxswain of the Spear Point lifeboat needed to be.

After ten minutes of unremitting toil he very suddenly ceased to whistle and sent a brisk hail across the stretch of sand that intervened between himself and the solitary fisherman on the edge of the boat.

“Hi—Rufus—Rufus—ahoy!”

The fiery red head turned in his direction without either alacrity or interest. The fixed eyes came out of their trance-like study and took in the blue-jerseyed, energetic figure that worked so actively at the knotted hemp. There was something rather wonderful about those eyes. They were of the deep, intense blue of a spirit-fed flame—the blue of the ocean when a storm broods below the horizon.

He made no verbal answer to the hail; only after a moment or two he got slowly to his feet and began leisurely to cross the sand.

The older man did not watch his progress. His brown, lined face was bent again over his task.

Rufus the Red drew near and paused. “Want anything?”

He spoke from his chest, in a voice like a deep-toned bell. His arms hung slack at his sides, but the muscles stood out on them like ropes.

The coxswain of the lifeboat gave his head a brief, upward jerk without looking at him. "That curly-topped chap staying at The Ship," he said, "he came messing round after me this morning, wanted to know would I take him out with the nets one day. I told him maybe you would."

"What did you do that for?" said Rufus.

The coxswain shot him a brief and humorous glance. "I always give you the plums if I can, my boy," he said. "I said to him, 'Me and my son, we're partners. Going out with him is just the same as going out with me, and p'raps a bit better, for he's got the better boat.' So he sheered off, and said maybe he'd look you up in the evening."

"Maybe I shan't be there," commented Rufus.

The coxswain chuckled, and lashed out an end of rope, narrowly missing his son's brawny legs. "He's not such a soft one as he looks, that chap," he observed. "Not by no manner of means. Do you know what Columbine thinks of him?"

"How should I know?" said Rufus.

He stooped with an abrupt movement that had in it a hint of savagery, and picked up the end of rope that lay jerking at his feet.

"Tell you what, Adam," he said. "If that chap values his health he'll keep clear of me and my boat."

Everyone called the coxswain Adam, even his son and partner, Rufus the Red. No two men could have formed a more striking contrast than they, but their partnership was something more than a business relation. They were friends—friends on a footing of equality, and had been such ever since Rufus—the giant baby who had cost his mother her life—had first closed his resolute fist upon his father's thumb.

That was five-and-twenty years ago now, and for eighteen of those years the two had dwelt alone together in their cottage on the cliff in complete content. Then—seven years back—Adam the coxswain had unexpectedly tired of his widowed state and taken to himself a second wife.

This was Mrs. Peck, of The Ship, a widow herself of some years' standing, plump, amiable, prosperous, who in marrying Adam would have gladly opened her doors to Adam's son also had the son been willing to avail himself of her hospitality.

But Rufus had preferred independence in the cottage of his birth, and in this cottage he had lived alone since his father's defection.

It was a dainty little cottage, perched in an angle of the cliff, well apart from all the rest and looking straight down upon the great Spear Point. He tended the strip of garden with scrupulous care, and

it made a bright spot of colour against the brown cliff-side. A rough path, steep and winding, led up from the beach below, and about half-way up a small gate, jealously padlocked in the owner's absence, guarded Rufus's privacy. He never invited any one within that gate. Occasionally his father would saunter up with his evening pipe and sit in the little porch of his old home looking through the purple clematis flowers out to sea while he exchanged a few commonplace remarks with his son, who never broke his own silence unless he had something to say. But no other visitor ever intruded there.

Rufus had acquired the reputation of a hermit, and it kept all the rest at bay. He had lived his own life for so long that solitude had grown upon him as moss clings to a stone. He did not seem to feel the need of human companionship. He lived apart.

Sometimes, indeed, he would go down to The Ship in the evening and lounge in the bar with the rest, but even there his solitude still wrapped him round. He never expanded, however genial the atmosphere.

The other men treated him with instinctive respect. He was powerful enough to thrash any two of them, and no one cared to provoke him to wrath. For Rufus in anger was a veritable mad bull.

"Leave him alone! He's not safe!" was the general advice and warning of his fellows, and none but Adam ever interfered with him.

Just recently, however, Adam had begun to take a somewhat quizzical interest in the welfare of his son. It had been an established custom ever since his second marriage that Rufus should eat his Sunday dinner at the family table down at The Ship. Mrs. Peck—Adam's wife was never known by any other title, just as the man's own surname had dropped into such disuse that few so much as knew what it was—had made an especial point of this, and Rufus had never managed to invent any suitable excuse for refusing. He never remained long after the meal was eaten. When all the other fisher-lads were walking the cliffs with their own particular lasses, Rufus was wont to trudge back to his hermitage and draw his mantle of solitude about him once more. He had never walked with any lass. Whether from shyness or surliness, he had held consistently aloof from such frivolous pastimes. If a girl ever cast a saucy look his way the brooding blue eyes never seemed aware of it. In speech with womenkind he was always slow and half-reluctant. That his great bull-like physique could by any means be an object of admiration was a possibility that he never seemed to contemplate. In fact, he seemed expectant of ridicule rather than appreciation.

In his boyhood he had fought several tough fights with certain lads who had dared to scoff at his red hair. Sam Jefferson, who lived down on the quay, still bore the marks of one such battle in the absence of two front teeth. But he did not take affront from

womenkind. He looked over their heads, and went his way in massive unconcern.

But lately a change had come into his life—such a change as made Adam's shrewd dark eyes twinkle whenever they glanced in his son's direction, comprehending that the days of Rufus's tranquillity were ended.

A witch had come to live at The Ship, such a witch as had never before danced along the Spear Point sands. Her name was Maria Peck, and she was the daughter of Mrs. Peck's late lamented husband's vagabond brother—"a seafaring man and a wastrel if ever there was one," as Mrs. Peck was often heard to declare. He had picked up with and eventually married a Spanish pantomime girl up London way, so Mrs. Peck's information went, and Maria had been the child of their union.

No one called her Maria. Her mother had named her Columbine, and Columbine she had become to all who knew her. Her mother dying when she was only three, Columbine had been left to the sole care of her wastrel father. And he, then a skipper of a small cargo steamer plying across the North Sea, had placed her in the charge of a spinster aunt who kept an infants' school in a little Kentish village near the coast. Here, up to the age of seventeen, Columbine had lived and been educated; but the old schoolmistress had worn out at last, and on her death-bed had sent for Mrs. Peck, as being the girl's only remaining relative, her father having drifted out of her ken long since.

Mrs. Peck had nobly risen to the occasion. She had no daughter of her own; she could do with a daughter. But when she saw Columbine she sucked up her breath.

"My, but she'll be a care!" was her verdict.

"She don't know—how lovely she is," the dying woman had whispered. "Don't tell her!"

And Mrs. Peck had staunchly promised to keep the secret, so far as lay in her power.

That had happened six months before, and Columbine was out of mourning now. She had come into the Spear Point community like a shy bird, a little slip of a thing, upright as a dart, with a fashion of holding her head that kept all familiarity at bay. But the shyness had all gone now. The girlish immaturity was fast vanishing in soft curves and tender lines. And the beauty of her!—the beauty of her was as the gold of a summer morning breaking over a pearly sea.

She was a creature of light and laughter, but there were in her odd little streaks of unconsidered impulse that testified to a passionate soul. She would flash into a temper over a mere trifle, and then in a moment flash back into mirth and amiability.

"You can't call her bad-tempered," said Mrs. Peck. "But she's



sharp—she's certainly sharp."

"Ay, and she's got a will of her own," commented Adam. "But she's your charge, missus, not mine. It's my belief you'll find her a bit of a handful before you've done. But don't you ask me to interfere! It's none o' my job."

"Lor' bless you," chuckled Mrs. Peck, "I'd as soon think of asking Rufus!"

Adam grunted at this light reference to his son. "Rufus ain't such a fool as he looks," he rejoined.

"Lor' sakes! Whoever said he was?" protested the equable Mrs. Peck. "I've a great respect for Rufus. It wasn't that I meant—not by any manner o' means." What she had meant did not transpire, and Adam did not pursue the subject to inquire. He also had a respect for Rufus.

It was not long after that brief conversation that he began to notice a change in his son. He made no overtures of friendship to the dainty witch at The Ship, but he took the trouble to make himself extremely respectable when he made his weekly appearance there. He kept his shag of red hair severely cropped. He attired himself in navy serge, and wore a collar.

Adam's keen eyes took in the change and twinkled. Columbine's eyes twinkled too. She had begun by being almost absurdly shy in the presence of the young fisherman who sat so silently at his father's table, but that phase had wholly passed away. She treated him now with a kindly condescension, such as she might have bestowed upon a meek-souled dog. All the other men—with the exception of Adam, whom she frankly liked—she overlooked with the utmost indifference. They were plainly lesser animals than dogs.

"She'll look high," said Mrs. Peck. "The chaps here ain't none of her sort."

And again Adam grunted.

He was fond of Columbine, took her out in his boat, spun yarns for her, gave her such treasures from the sea as came his way—played, in fact, a father's part, save that from the very outset he was very careful to assume no authority over her. That responsibility was reserved for Mrs. Peck, whose kindly personality made the bare idea seem absurd.

And so to a very great extent Columbine had run wild. But the warm responsiveness of her made her easy to manage as a general rule, and Mrs. Peck's government was by no means exacting.

"Thank goodness, she's not one to run after the men!" was her verdict after the first six months of Columbine's sojourn.

That the men would have run after her had they received the smallest encouragement to do so was a fact that not one of them would have disputed. But with dainty pride she kept them at a

distance, and none had so far attempted to cross the invisible boundary that she had so decidedly laid down.

And then with the summer weather had come the stranger—had come Montagu Knight. Young, handsome, and self-assured, he strolled into The Ship one day for tea, having tramped twelve miles along the coast from Spearmouth, on the other side of the Point. And the next day he came again to stay.

He had been there for nearly three weeks now, and he seemed to have every intention of remaining. He was an artist, and the sketches he made were numerous and—like himself—full of decision. He came and went among the fishermen's little thatched cottages, selecting here, refusing there, exactly according to fancy.

They had been inclined to resent his presence at first—it was certainly no charitable impulse that moved Adam to call him “the curly-topped chap”—but now they were getting used to him. For there was no gainsaying the fact that he had a way with him, at least so far as the women-folk of the community were concerned.

He could keep Mrs. Peck chuckling for an hour at a time in the evening, when the day's work was over. And Columbine—Columbine had a trill of laughter in her voice whenever she spoke to him. He liked to hear her play the guitar and sing soft songs in the twilight. Adam liked it too. He was wont to say that it reminded him of a young blackbird learning to sing. For Columbine was as yet very shy of her own talent. She kept in the shallows, as it were, in dread of what the deep might hold.

Knight was very kind to her, but he was never extravagant in his praise. He was quite unlike any other man of her acquaintance. His touch was always so sure. He never sought her out, though he was invariably quite pleased to see her. The dainty barrier of pride that fenced her round did not exist for him. She did not need to keep him at a distance. He could be intimate without being familiar.

And intimate he had become. There was no disputing it. From the first, with his easy *savoir-faire*, he had waived ceremony, till at length there was no ceremony left between them. He treated her like a lady. What more could the most exacting demand?

And yet Adam continued to call him “the curly-topped chap,” and turned him over to his son Rufus when he requested permission to go out in his boat.

And Rufus—Rufus turned with a gesture of disgust after the utterance of his half-veiled threat, and spat with savage emphasis upon the sand.

Adam uttered a chuckle that was not wholly unsympathetic, and began deftly to coil the now disentangled rope.

“Do you know what I'd do—if I was in your place?” he said.

Rufus made a sound that was strictly noncommittal.

Adam's quick eyes flung him a birdlike glance. "Why don't you come along to The Ship and smoke a pipe with your old father of an evening?" he said. "Once a week's not enough, not, that is, if you—" He broke off suddenly, caught by a whistle that could not be resisted.

Rufus was regarding the horizon with those brooding eyes of vivid blue.

Abruptly Adam ceased to whistle. "When I was a young chap," he said, "I didn't keep my courting for Sundays only. I didn't dress up, mind you. That weren't my way. But I'd go along in my jersey and invite her out for a bit of a cruise in the old boat. They likes a cruise, Rufus. You try it, my boy! You try it!"

The rope lay in an orderly coil at his feet, and he straightened himself, rubbing his hands on his trousers. His son remained quite motionless, his eyes still fixed as though he heard not.

Adam stood up beside him, shrewdly alert. He had never before ventured to utter words of counsel on this delicate subject. But having started, he was minded to make a neat job of it. Adam had never been the man to leave a thing half done.

"Go to it, Rufus!" he said, dropping his voice confidentially. "Don't be afraid to show your mettle! Don't be crowded out by that curly-topped chap! You're worth a dozen of him. Just you let her know it, that's all!"

He dug his hands into his trousers pockets with the words, and turned to go.

Rufus moved then, moved abruptly as one coming out of a dream. His eyes swooped down upon the lithe, active figure at his side. They held a smile—a fiery smile that gleamed meteor-like and passed.

"All right, Adam," he said in his deep-chested voice.

And with a sidelong nod Adam wheeled and departed. He had done his morning's work.

## II: THE PASSION-FLOWER

"Where's that Columbine?" said Mrs. Peck.

A gay trill like the call of a blackbird in the dawning answered her. Columbine, with a pink sun-bonnet over her black hair, was watering the flowers in the little conservatory that led out of the drawing-room. She had just come in from the garden, and a gorgeous red rose was pinned upon her breast. Mrs. Peck stood in the doorway and watched her.

The face above the red rose was so lovely that even her matter-of-fact soul had to pause to admire. It was a perpetual wonder to her and a perpetual fascination. The dark, unawakened eyes, the long, perfect brows, the deep, rich colouring, all combined to make such a picture as good Mrs. Peck realised to be superb.

Again the pure contralto trill came from the red lips, and then, with a sudden movement that had in it something of the grace of an alighting bird, Columbine turned, swinging her empty can.

"I've promised to take Mr. Knight to the Spear Point Caves by moonlight," she said. "He's doing a moonlight study, and he doesn't know the lie of the quicksand." "Sakes alive!" said Mrs. Peck. "What made him ask you? There's Adam knows every inch of the shore better nor what you do."

"He didn't ask," said Columbine. "I offered. And I know the shore just as well as Adam does, Aunt Liza. Adam himself showed me the lie of the quicksand long ago. I know it like my own hand." Mrs. Peck pursed her lips. "I doubt but what you'd better take Adam along too," she said. "I wouldn't feel easy about you. And there won't be any moonlight worth speaking of till after ten. It wouldn't do for you to be traipsing about alone even with Mr. Knight—nice young gentleman as he be—at that hour."

"Aunt Liza, I don't traipse!" Momentary indignation shone in the beautiful eyes and passed like a gleam of light. "Dear Aunt Liza," laughed Columbine, "aren't you funny?" "Not a bit," maintained Mrs. Peck. "I'm just common-sensical, my dear. And it ain't right—it never were right in my young day—to go walking out alone with a man after bedtime."

"A man, Aunt Liza! Oh, but a man! An artist isn't a man—at least, not an ordinary man." There was a hint of earnestness in Columbine's tone, notwithstanding its lightness.

But Mrs. Peck remained firm. "It wouldn't make it right, not if he was an angel from heaven," she declared.

Columbine's gay laugh had in it that quality of youth that surmounts all obstacles. "He's much safer than an angel," she protested, "because he can't fly. Besides, the Spear Point Caves are all on this side of the Point. You could watch us all the time if you'd a mind to."

But Mrs. Peck did not laugh. "I'd rather you didn't go, my dear," she said. "So let that be the end of it, there's a good girl!"

"Oh, but I—" began Columbine, and broke off short. "Goodness, how you made me jump!" she said instead.

Rufus, his burly form completely blocking the doorway, was standing half in and half out of the garden, looking at her.

"Lawks!" said Mrs. Peck. "So you did me! Good evening, Rufus! Are you wanting Adam?"

"Not specially," said Rufus. He entered, with massive, lounging movements. "I suppose I can come in," he remarked.

"What a question!" ejaculated Mrs. Peck.

Columbine said nothing. She picked up her empty watering-can and swung it carelessly on one finger, hunting for invisible weeds in

the geranium-pots the while.

Mrs. Peck was momentarily at a loss. She was not accustomed to entertaining Rufus in his father's absence.

"Have a glass of mulberry wine!" she suggested.

"Columbine, run and fetch it, dear! It's in the right-hand corner, third shelf, of the cupboard under the stairs. I'm sure you're very welcome," she added to Rufus, "but you must excuse me, for I've got to see to Mr. Knight's dinner."

"That's all right, Mother," said Rufus.

He always called her mother; it was a term of deference with him rather than affection. But Mrs. Peck liked him for it.

"Sit you down!" she said hospitably. "And mind you make yourself quite at home! Columbine will look after you. You'll be staying to supper, I hope?"

"Thanks!" said Rufus. "I don't know. Where's Adam?"

"He's chopping a bit of wood in the yard. He don't want any help. You'll see him presently. You stop and have a chat with Columbine!" said Mrs. Peck; and with a smile and nod she bustled stoutly away.

When Columbine returned with the mulberry wine and a glass on a tray the conservatory was empty. She set down her tray and paused.

There was a faintly mutinous curve about her soft lips, a gleam of dancing mischief in her eyes.

In a moment a step sounded on the path outside, and Rufus reappeared. He had been out to fill her watering-can, and he deposited it full at her feet.

"Don't put it there!" she said, with a touch of sharpness. "I don't want to tumble over it, do I? Thank you for filling it, but you needn't have troubled. I've done."

"Then it'll come in for tomorrow," said Rufus, setting the can deliberately in a corner.

Columbine turned to pour out a glass of Mrs. Peck's mulberry wine.

"Only one glass?" said Rufus.

She threw him a quizzing smile over her shoulder. "Well, you don't want two, do you?"

"No," said Rufus slowly. "But I don't drink—alone."

She gave a low, gurgling laugh. "You'll be saying you don't smoke alone next. If you want someone to keep you company, I'd better fetch Adam." She turned round to him with the words, offering the glass on the tray. Her eyes were lowered, but the upward curl of the black lashes somehow conveyed the impression that she was peeping through them. The tilt of the red lips, with the pearly teeth just showing in a smile, was of so alluring an enchantment that the most level-headed of men could scarcely have failed to pause and admire.

Rufus paused so long that at last she lifted those glorious eyes of

hers in semi-scornful interrogation.

"What's the matter?" she inquired. "Don't you want it?"

He made an odd gesture as of one at a loss to explain himself. "Won't you drink first?" he said, his voice very low.

"No, thank you," said Columbine briskly. "I don't like it."

"Then—I don't like it either," he said.

"Don't be silly!" she said. "Of course you do! I know you do! Take it, and don't be ridiculous!"

But Rufus turned away with solid resolution. "No, thanks," he said.

Columbine set down the tray again with a hint of exasperation. "You're just like a child," she said severely. "A great, overgrown boy, that's what you are!"

"All right," said Rufus, propping himself against the door-post.

"It's not all right. It's time you grew up." Columbine picked up the full glass, and, carrying it daintily, advanced upon him. "I suppose I shall have to make you take it like medicine," she remarked.

She stood against the door-post, facing him, upright, slender, exquisite as an opening flower.

"Drink, puppy, drink!" she said flippantly, and elevated the glass towards her guest's somewhat grim lips.

The sombre blue eyes came down to her with something of a flash. And in the same moment Rufus's great right hand disengaged itself from his pocket and grasped the slim wrist of the hand that held the wine.

"You drink—first!" said Rufus, and guided the glass with unmistakable resolution to the provocative red lips.

She jerked back her head to avoid it, but the doorpost against which she stood checked the backward movement. Before she could prevent it the wine was in her mouth.

She flung up her free hand and would have knocked the glass away, but Rufus could be prompt of action when he chose. He caught it from her and drained it almost in the same movement. Not a drop was spilt between them. He set down the glass on a shelf of the conservatory, and propped himself up once more with his hands in his pockets.

Columbine's face was burning red; her eyes literally blazed. Her whole body vibrated as if strung on wires. "How—dare you?" she said, and showed her white teeth with the words like an angry tigress.

He looked down at her, a faint smile in his blue eyes. "But I don't drink—alone," he said in such a tone of gentle explanation as he might have used to a child.

She stamped her foot. "I hate you!" she said. "I'll never forgive you!"

"A joke's a joke," said Rufus, still in the tone of a mild instructor.

"A joke!" Her wrath enwrapped her like a flame. "It was not a joke! It was a coarse—and hateful—trick!" "All right," said Rufus, as one giving up a hopeless task.

"It's not all right!" flashed Columbine. "You're a bounder, an oaf, a brute! I—I'll never speak to you again, unless—you—you—apologise!" He was still looking down with that vague hint of amusement in his eyes—the look of a man who watches the miniature fury of some tiny creature.

"I'll do anything you like," he said with slow indulgence. "I didn't know you'd turn nasty, or I wouldn't have done it."

"Nasty!" echoed Columbine. And then her wrath went suddenly into a superb gust of scorn. "Oh, you—you are beyond words!" she said. "You had better get along to the bar and drink there. You'll find your own kind there to drink with."

"I'd rather drink with you," said Rufus.

She uttered a laugh that was tremulous with anger. "You've done it for the first and last time, my man," she said.

With the words she turned like a darting, indignant bird, and left him.

Someone was entering the drawing-room from the hall with a careless, melodious whistle—a whistle that ended on a note of surprise as Columbine sped through the room. The whistler—a tall, bronzed young man in white flannels—stopped short to regard her.

His eyes were grey and wary under absolutely level brows. His hair was dark, with an inclination—sternly repressed—to waviness above the forehead. He made a decidedly pleasant picture, as even Adam could not have denied.

Columbine also checked herself at sight of him, but the red blood was throbbing at her temples. There was no hiding her agitation.

"You seem in a hurry," remarked Knight. "I hope there is nothing wrong."

His chin was modelled on firm lines, but there was a very distinct cleft in it that imparted to him the look of one who could smile at most things. His words were kindly, but they did not hold any very deep concern.

Columbine came to a stand, gripping the back of a chair to steady herself. "Oh, I—I have been—insulted!" she panted.

The straight brows went up a little; the man himself stiffened slightly. Without further words he moved across to the door into the conservatory and looked through it. He was in time to see Rufus's great, lounging figure sauntering away in the direction of the wood-yard.

Knight stood a moment or two and watched him, then quietly turned and rejoined the girl.

She was still leaning upon the chair, but she was gradually

recovering her self-control. As he drew near she made a slight movement as if to resume her interrupted flight. But some other impulse intervened, and she remained where she was.

Knight came up and stood beside her. "What has he been doing to annoy you?" he asked.

She made a small, vehement gesture of disgust. "Oh, we won't talk of him. He is an oaf. I dare say he doesn't know any better, but he'll never have a chance of doing it again. I don't mix with the riff-raff."

"He's Adam's son, isn't he?" questioned Knight.

She nodded. "Yes, the great, hulking lubber! Adam's all right. I like Adam. But Rufus—well, Rufus is a bounder, and I'll never have anything more to say to him."

"I think you are quite right to hold your head up above these fisher fellows," remarked Knight, his grey eyes watching her with an appraising expression. "They are as much out of place near you as a bed of bindweed would be in the neighbourhood of a passion-flower." His glance took in her still panting bosom. "I think you are something of a passion-flower," he said, faintly smiling. "I wonder at any man daring to risk offending you." Columbine stood up with the free movement of a disdainful princess. "Oh, he's just a lout," she said. "He doesn't know any better. It isn't as if you had done it."

"That would have been different, would it?" said Knight.

She smiled, but a sombre light still shone in her eyes. "Quite different," she said with simplicity. "You see, you're a gentleman. And—gentlemen—don't do unpleasant things like that." He laughed a little. "You make me feel quite nervous. What a shocking thing it would be if I ever did anything to forfeit your good opinion."

"You couldn't," said Columbine.

"Couldn't!" He repeated the word with an odd inflection.

"It wouldn't be you," she explained with the utmost gravity, as one stating an irrefutable fact.

"Thank you," said Knight.

"Oh, it's not a compliment," she returned. "It's just the truth. There are some people—a few people—that one knows one can trust through and through. And you are one of them, that's all."

"Is that so?" said Knight. "You know, that's rather—a colossal thing—to say of any one."

"Then you are colossal," said Columbine, smiling more freely.

Knight turned aside, and picked up the sketch-book he had laid upon the table on entering. "Are you sure you are not rash?" he said, rather in the tone of one making a remark than asking a question.

"Fairly sure," said Columbine.

She followed him. Perhaps he had foreseen that she would. She stood by his side.

"May I see the latest?" she asked.



He opened the book and showed her a blank page. "That is the latest," he said.

She looked at him interrogatively.

"I am waiting for my—inspiration," he said.

"I hope you will find it soon," she said.

He answered her with steady conviction. "I shall find it tonight by moonlight at the Spear Point Rock."

Her face clouded a little. "I believe Adam is going to take you," she said.

"What?" said Knight. "You are never going to let me down?"

She smiled with a touch of irony. "It was the Spear Point you wanted," she reminded him.

"And you," said Knight, "to show the way."

Something in his tone arrested her. Her beautiful eyes sank suddenly to the blank page he held. "Adam can do that—as well as I can," she said.

"But you said you would," said Knight. His voice was low; he was looking full at her. He saw the rich colour rising in her cheeks. "What is it?" he said. "Won't they let you?" She raised her head abruptly, proudly. "I please myself," she said. "No one has the ordering of me."

His grey eyes shone a little. "Then it pleases you—to let me down?" he questioned.

Her look flashed suddenly up to his. She saw his expression and laughed. "I didn't think you'd care," she said. "Adam knows the lie of the quicksand. That's all you really want."

"Oh, pardon me!" said Knight. "You are quite wrong, if you imagine that I am indifferent as to who goes with me. Inspiration won't burn in a cold place." She dropped her lids, still looking at him. "Isn't Adam inspiring?" she asked.

"He couldn't furnish the particular sort of inspiration I am needing for my moonlight picture," said Knight.

He spoke deliberately, but his brows were slightly drawn, belying the coolness of his speech.

"What is the sort of inspiration you are wanting?" asked Columbine.

He smiled with a hint of provocation. "I'll tell you that when we get there."

Her answering smile was infinitely more provocative than his. "That will be very interesting," she said.

Knight closed his sketch-book. "I am glad to know," he said thoughtfully, "that you please yourself, Miss Columbine. In doing so, you have the happy knack of pleasing—others." He made her a slight, courtly bow, and turned away.

He left her still standing at the table, looking after him with perplexity and gathering resolution in her eyes.

### III: THE MINOTAUR

"Not stopping to supper even? Well, you must be a darned looney!"

Adam sat down astride his wood-block with the words, and looked up at his son with the aggressive expression of a Scotch terrier daring a Newfoundland.

Rufus, with his hands in his pockets, leaned against the woodshed. He made no reply of any sort to his father's brisk observation. Obviously it made not the faintest impression upon him.

After a moment or two he spoke, his pipe in the corner of his mouth. "If that chap bathes off the Spear Point rocks when the tide's at the spring he'll get into difficulties." "Who says he does?" demanded Adam.

Rufus jerked his head. "I saw him—from my place—this afternoon. Tide was going down, or the current would have caught him. Better warn him."

"I did," responded Adam sharply. "Warned him long ago. Warned him of the quicksand, too."

Rufus grunted. "Then he's only himself to thank. Or maybe he doesn't know a spring tide from a neap."

"Oh, he's not such a fool as that," said Adam.

Rufus grunted once again, and relapsed into silence.

It was at this point that Mrs. Peck showed her portly person at the back door of The Ship.

"Why, Rufus," she said, "I thought you was in the front with Columbine."

Rufus stood up with the deference that he never omitted to pay to Adam's wife. "So I was," he said. "I came along here after to talk to Adam." Mrs. Peck's round eyes gave him a searching look. "Did you have your mulberry wine?" she asked.

"Yes, Mother."

"You were mighty quick about it," commented Mrs. Peck.

"Yes, he's in a hurry," said Adam, with one of his birdlike glances. "Can't stop for anything, missus. Wants to get back to his supper."

"I never!" said Mrs. Peck. "You aren't in that hurry, Rufus, surely! Just as I was going to ask you to do something to oblige me, too!" "What's that?" said Rufus.

Mrs. Peck descended into the yard with a hint of mystery. "Well, just this," she said confidentially. "That there Mr. Knight, he's a very nice young gentleman; but he's an artist, and you know, artists don't look at things like ordinary folk. He wants to get a moonlight picture of the Spear Point, and he's got our Columbine to say she'll take him there tonight. Well, now, I don't think it's right, and I told her so. But, of course, she come out as pat as anything with him being an artist

and different-like from the rest. Still, I said as I'd rather she didn't, and Adam had better take him, because of the quicksand, you know. It wouldn't be hardly safe to let him go alone. He's a bit foolhardy too. But Adam's not so young as you, Rufus, and he was out before sunrise. So I thought as how maybe you'd step into the breach and take Mr. Knight along. Come, you won't refuse?"

She spoke the last words coaxingly, aware of a certain hardening of the young fisherman's rugged face.

Adam had got off his chopping-block, and was listening with pursed lips and something of the expression of a terrier at a rat-hole.

"Yes, you go, Rufus!" he said, as Mrs. Peck paused. "You show him round! I'd like him to know you."

"What for?" said Rufus.

Adam contorted one side of his face into something that was between a wink and a grin. "Do you good to go into society," he said. "That's all right, missus, he'll go. Better go and ask Mr. Knight what time he wants to start."

"Wait a bit!" commanded Rufus.

Mrs. Peck waited. She knew that her stepson was as slow of speech as his father was prompt, but she thought none the less of him for that. Rufus was solid, and she respected solid men.

"It comes to this," said Rufus, speaking ponderously. "I'll go if I'm wanted. But I'm not one for shoving myself in otherwise. Maybe the chap won't be so keen himself when he knows he can't have Columbine to go with him. Find that out first!"

Mrs. Peck looked at him with an approving smile. "Lor', Rufus! You've got some sense," she said. "But I wonder how Columbine will take it if I says anything to Mr. Knight behind her back." Adam chuckled. "Columbine in a tantrum is one of the best sights I know," he remarked.

"Ah! She don't visit her tantrums on you," rejoined his wife. "You can afford to smile."

"And I does," said Adam.

Rufus turned away. There was no smile on his countenance. He said nothing, but there was that in his demeanour that clearly indicated that he personally was neither amused nor disconcerted by the tantrums of Columbine.

He followed Mrs. Peck indoors, and sat down in the kitchen to await developments. And Adam, whistling cheerfully, strolled to the bar.

Mrs. Peck had to dish up the visitor's dinner before she could tackle him upon the subject in hand. She trotted to and fro upon her task, too intent for further speech with Rufus, who sat in unbroken silence, gazing steadily before him with a Sphinx-like immobility that made of him an impressive figure.

The beefsteak was already in the dish, and Mrs. Peck was in the act of pouring the gravy over it when there sounded a light step on the stone of the passage and Columbine entered.

She had removed her sun-bonnet and donned a dainty little apron. The soft dark hair clustered tenderly about her temples.

"Oh, Aunt Liza," she said, "if I didn't go and forget that Sally was out tonight! I'm sorry I'm too late to help with the dinner. But I'll take it in." She caught her breath at sight of the massive, silent figure seated against the wall, but instantly recovered her composure and passed it by with an upward tilt of the chin.

"You needn't trouble yourself to do that, my dear," rejoined Mrs. Peck, with a touch of tartness. "I'll wait on Mr. Knight myself. You can lay the supper in the parlour if you've a mind to be useful. There'll be four to lay for."

Columbine turned with something of a pounce. "No, there won't! There'll be three," she said. "If that—oaf—stays to supper, I go without!"

"Good gracious!" ejaculated Mrs. Peck.

Rufus came out of his silence. "That's all right. I'm not staying to supper," he said.

"But—lor' sakes!—what's the matter?" questioned Mrs. Peck. "Have you two been quarrelling?"

"No, we haven't!" flashed Columbine. "I wouldn't stoop. But I'm not going to sit down to supper with a man who hasn't learnt manners. I'd sooner go without—much." Rufus remained absolutely unmoved. He made no attempt at self-justification, though Mrs. Peck was staring from one to the other in mystified interrogation.

Columbine turned swiftly and caught up a cover for the savoury dish that steamed on the table. "You'd better let me take this in before it gets cold," she said.

"No; put it on the rack!" commanded Mrs. Peck. "There's a drop of soup to go in first. And, Columbine, my dear, I don't think it's right of you to go losing your temper that way. Rufus is Adam's son, remember, and you can't refuse to sit at table with him."

"Leave her alone, Mother!" For the second time Rufus intervened. "I've offended her. My mistake. I'll know better next time." His deep voice was wholly devoid of humour. It was, in fact, devoid of any species of emotion whatever. Yet, oddly enough, the anger died out of Columbine's face as she heard it. She turned to the tablecloth-press and began to unwind it in silence.

Mrs. Peck sniffed, and took up the soup-tureen.

As she waddled out of the kitchen Columbine withdrew the parlour tablecloth and turned round.

"If you're really sorry," she said, "I'll forgive you."

Rufus regarded her for several seconds in silence, a slow smile

dawning in his eyes. "Thank you," he said finally.

"You are sorry then?" insisted Columbine.

He shook his great bull-head, the smile still in his eyes. "I wouldn't have missed it for anything," he said.

There was no perceptible familiarity in the remark, and Columbine, after brief consideration, decided to dismiss it without discussion. "Well, let it be a lesson to you, and don't you ever do such a thing again!" she said severely. "For I won't have you or any man lay hands on me—not even in fun."

"All right," said Rufus.

He thrust his hands deep into his pockets as if to remove all cause of offence, and was rewarded by a swift smile from Columbine. The storm had blown away.

"I'll lay for four after all," she said, as she whisked out of the room.

Rufus was still seated in solitary state in the kitchen when Mrs. Peck returned from the little coffee-room where she had been serving her guest.

She peered round with caution ere she came close to him and spoke.

"It's as you thought. He don't want to go with either you or Adam."

Rufus's face remained unchanged; it was slightly bovine of expression as he received the news. "We'll both get to bed in good time then," was his comment.

Mrs. Peck's smooth brow drew in momentary exasperation. She had expected something more dramatic than this.

"I'm glad you're so easily satisfied," she said. "But let me tell you—I'm not!"

She paused to see if this piece of information would take more effect than the first, but again Rufus proved a disappointment. Neither by word nor look did he express any sympathy.

Mrs. Peck continued, it being contrary to her nature to leave anything to the imagination of her hearers. "If he'd been content to go with one of you, I wouldn't have given it another thought. Goodness knows, I'm not of a suspicious turn. But the moment I mention the matter, he turns round with his sweetest smile and he says, 'Oh, don't you trouble, Mrs. Peck!' he says. 'I quite understand. Miss Columbine explained it all, and I quite see your point. It ought to have occurred to me sooner,' he says, smiling with them nice teeth of his, 'but, if you'll believe me, it didn't.' And then, when I suggested maybe he'd like you or Adam to go with him instead, it was, 'No, no, Mrs. Peck. I wouldn't ask it of 'em. I couldn't drag any man at the chariot-wheels of Art. If I did, she would see to it that the chariot was empty.' He most always talks like that," ended Mrs. Peck in an aggrieved tone. "He's that airy in his ways."

A sudden trill of laughter from the doorway caused her to straighten herself sharply and trot to the fireplace with a guilty air.

Columbine entered, light of foot, her eyes brimful of mirth. "You're caught, Aunt Liza! Yes, you're caught!" she commented ungenerously. "I know exactly what you were saying. Shall I tell you? No, p'raps I'd better not. I'll tell you what you looked like instead, shall I? You looked exactly like that funny old speckled hen in the yard who always clucks such a lot. And Rufus"—she threw him a merry glance from which all resentment had wholly departed—"Rufus looks—and is—just like a great red ox."

"Don't you be pert!" said Mrs. Peck, stooping stoutly over the fire. "Get a duster and dust them plates!"

Columbine laughed again with her chin in the air. She found a duster and occupied herself as desired.

Her eyes were upon her work. Plainly she was not looking at Rufus, not apparently thinking of him. But—very suddenly—without changing her attitude, she flashed him a swift glance. He was looking straight at her, and in his blue eyes was an intense, deep glow as of flaming spirit.

Columbine's look shot away from him with the rapidity of a swallow on the wing. The colour deepened in her cheeks.

"P'raps he's almost more like a prize bull," she said meditatively. "Perhaps he's a Minotaur, Aunt Liza. Do you think he is?"

"My dear, I don't know what you're talking about," said Mrs. Peck, with a touch of acidity.

Columbine laughed a little. "Do you know, Rufus?" she said.

She did not look at him with the question; there was a quivering dimple in her red cheek that came and went.

"I'd like to know," said Rufus with simplicity.

"Would you, really?" Columbine polished the last plate vigorously and set it down. "The Minotaur," she said, in the tone of a schoolmistress delivering a lecture, "was a monster, half-bull, half-man, who lived in a place like the Spear Point Caves, and devoured young men and maidens. You live nearer to the Caves than any one else, don't you, Rufus?"

Again she ventured a darting glance at him. His look was still upon her, but its fiery quality was less apparent. He met the challenge with his slow, indulgent smile.

"Yes, I live there. I don't devour anybody. I'm not—that sort of monster."

Columbine shook her head. "I'm not so sure of that," she said. "But I dare say you'd tame."

"P'raps you'd like to do it," suggested Rufus.

It was his first direct overture, and Columbine, who had angled for it, experienced a thrill of triumph. But she was swift to mask her

satisfaction. She tossed her head, and turned: "Oh, I've no time to waste that way," she said. "You must do your own taming, Mr. Minotaur. When you're quite civilised, p'raps I'll talk to you."

She was gone with the words, carrying her plates with her.

"She's a deal too pert," observed Mrs. Peck to the saucepan she was stirring. "It's my belief now that that Mr. Knight's been putting ideas into her head. She's getting wild; that's what she is." Knowing Rufus, she expected no response, and for several seconds none came.

Then to her surprise she heard his voice, deep and sonorous as the bell-buoy that was moored by the Spear Point Reef.

"Maybe she'd tame," he said.

And "Goodness gracious unto me!" said Mrs. Peck, as she lifted her saucepan off the fire.

## IV: THE RISING TIDE

A long dazzling pathway of moonlight stretched over the sea, starting from the horizon, ending at the great jutting promontory of the Spear Point. The moon was yet three nights from the full. The tide was rising, but it would not be high for another two hours.

The breakers ran in, one behind the other, foaming over the hidden rocks, splashing wildly against the grim wall of granite that stood sharp-edged to withstand them. It was curved like a scimitar, that rock, and within its curve there slept, when the tide was low, a pool. When the tide rose the waters raged and thundered all around the rock, but when it sank again the still, deep pool remained, unruffled as a mountain tarn and as full of mystery.

Over a tumble of lesser rocks that bounded the pool to shoreward the wary might find a path to the Spear Point Caves; but the path was difficult, and there were few who had ever attempted it. For the quicksand lay like a golden barrier between the outer beach and the rocks that led thither.

It was an awesome spot. Many a splinter of wreckage had been tossed in over the Spear Point as though flung in sport from a giant hand. And when the water was high there came a hollow groaning from the inner caves as though imprisoned spirits languished there.

But on that night of magic moonlight the only sound was the murmurous splash of the rising waves as they met the first grim rocks of the Point. Presently they would dash in thunder round the granite blade, and the sleeping pool would be turned to a smother of foam.

On the edge of the pool a woman's figure clad in white stood balanced with outstretched arms. So still was the water, so splendid the moonlight, that the whole of her light form was mirrored there—a perfect image of nymph-like grace. She sang a soft, low, trilling song like the song of a blackbird awaking to the dawn.

"By Jupiter!" Knight murmured to himself. "If I could get her only once—only once—as—she—is!"

The gleam of the hunter was in his look. He stood on the rocks some yards away from her, gazing with eyes half-shut.

Suddenly she turned herself, and across the intervening space her voice came to him, half-mocking, half-alluring, "Have you found your inspiration yet?"

"Not yet," he said.

She raised her shoulders with a humorous gesture, "Hasn't the magic begun to work?"

He came towards her, moving slowly and with caution. "Don't move!" he said.

She waited for him on the edge of the pool. There was laughter in her eyes, laughter and the sublime daring of innocence.

He reached her. They stood together on the same flat rock. He bent to her, in his eyes the burning worship of beauty.

"Columbine!" he said. "Witch! Enchantress! Queen!"

The red blood raced into her face. Her eyes shone into his with a sudden glory—the glory of the awaking soul. But the woman-instinct in her checked the first quick impulse of surrender.

She made a little motion away from him. She laughed and veiled her eyes from the fiery adoration that flamed upon her. "The magic is working—evidently," she said. "What a good thing I brought you here!"

"Yes; it is a good thing," he said, and in his voice she heard the deep note of a mastery that would not be denied. "Do you know what you have done to me, you goddess? You have opened the eyes of my heart. I am dazzled. I am blinded. I believe I am possessed. When I paint my picture—it will be such as the world has never seen."

"Hadn't you better begin it?" whispered Columbine.

He held out his hand to her—a hand that was not wholly steady. "Not yet," he said. "The vision is too near, too wonderful. How shall I paint the rapture that I have hardly yet dared to contemplate? Columbine!"

His voice suddenly pleaded, and as though in answer she laid her hand in his. But she did not raise her eyes. She palpitated from head to foot like a captured bird.

"You are not—afraid?" he whispered.

"I don't know," she whispered back. "Not of you—not of you!"

"Ah!" he said. "We are caught in the same net. There is nothing terrible in that. The same magic is working in us both. Let it work, dear! We understand each other. Why should there be anything to fear?" But still she did not raise her eyes, and still she trembled in his hold. "I never thought," she faltered, "never dreamed. Oh, is it true?"

"True that you are the most beautiful creature that this earth



contains?" he said, and his voice throbbed upon the words. "True that the very sight of you turns my blood to fire? Aphrodite, goddess and sorceress, do you doubt that? Wait till you see my picture, and then ask! I have found my inspiration tonight—yes, I have found it—but it is so immense—so overwhelming—that I cannot grasp it yet. Tonight, dear, just for tonight—let me worship at your feet! This madness must have its way. In the morning I shall be sane again. Tonight—tonight I tread Olympus with the Immortals." He was drawing her towards him, and Columbine—Columbine, who suffered no man's hand upon her—was yielding slowly, but inevitably, to the persuasion of his touch. Just at the last, indeed, she made a small, wholly futile attempt to free herself; but the moment she did so his hold became the hold of the conqueror, and with a faint laugh she flung aside the instinct that had prompted it. The next instant, freely and splendidly, she raised her downcast face and abandoned herself utterly to him.

To give without stint was the impulse of her passionate, Southern nature, and she gave freely, royally, that night. The magic that ran in the veins of both was too compelling to be resisted. The girl, with her half-awakened soul, the man, with his fiery thirst for beauty, were caught in the great current that sweeps like a tidal wave around the world, and it bore them swiftly, swiftly, whither neither he in his restlessness nor she in her in experience realised or cared. If the sound of the breakers came to them from afar they heeded it not. They were too far away to matter as yet, and Knight had steered a safe course for himself in troubled seas before. As for Columbine, she knew only the rapture of love triumphant, and tasted perfect safety in the holding of her lover's arms. He had won her with scarcely a struggle, and she gloried with an ecstasy that was in its way sublime in the completeness of her surrender. On such a night as that it seemed to her that the whole world lay at her feet, and she knew no fear.

The still pool slept in the moonlight, a lake of silver, unspeakably calm. Beyond the outstretched blade of rock the great waters rose and rose. The murmur of them had swelled to a roar. The splash of them mounted higher and ever higher. Suddenly a crest of foam gleamed like a tongue of lightning at the point of the curve. The pool stirred as if awakening. The moonlight on its surface was shivered in a thousand ripples. They broke in a succession of tiny wavelets against the encircling rocks.

Another silver crest appeared, burst in thunder, and in a moment the pool was flooded with tossing water.

"Do you see that?" whispered Columbine. "It is like my life."

They stood together under the frowning cliff and watched the wonder of the pool's awakening. Knight's arm held her close pressed to his side. He could feel the beating of her heart. She stood with her

face upturned to his and all the glory of love's surrender shining in her eyes.

He caught his breath as he looked at her. He stooped and kissed the red, red lips that gave so generously. "Is my love as the rising tide to you, sweet?" he murmured.

"It is more!" she answered passionately. "It is more! It is the tidal wave that comes so seldom—maybe only once in a lifetime—and carries all before it." He pressed her closer. "My passion-flower!" he said. "My queen!"

He kissed the throbbing whiteness of her throat, the loose clusters of her hair. He laid his hot face against her neck, and held it so, not breathing. Her arms stretched upwards, clasping him. She was panting—panting as one in deep waters.

"I love you! I love you!" she whispered tensely. "Oh, how I love you!"

Again there came the thunder of the surf. The waters of the pool leapt as if a giant hand had churned them. The foam from beyond the reef overspread them like snow. The whole world became full of the sound of surging waters.

Knight opened his eyes. "The tide is coming up fast," he said. "We must be getting back."

She clung closer to him. "I could die with you on a night like this," she said.

He crushed her to his heart. "Ah, goddess!" he said. "You couldn't die! But I am only mortal, and the tide won't wait." Again the swirling breakers swept around the Point. Reluctantly she came to earth. The pool had become a seething whirl of water.

"Yes," she said, "we must go, and quickly—quickly! It rises so fast here."

Sure-footed as a doe over the slippery rocks, she led the way. They left the magic place and the dazzling tumble of moonlit water, the dark caves, the enchanted strand. Progress was not easy, but Knight had been that way before, though only by day. He followed his guide closely, and when presently they emerged upon level sand, he overtook and walked beside her.

She slipped her hand into his. "It's the lie of the quicksand that's puzzling," she said, "if you don't know it well."

"I am in thy hands, O Queen," he made light reply. "Lead me whither thou wilt!"

She laughed—a low, sweet laugh of sheer happiness. "And if I lead you astray?"

"I would follow you down to the nethermost millstone," he vowed.

Her hand tightened upon his. She paused a moment, looking out over the stretch of sand that intervened between them and the little fishing-quay. He had safely negotiated that stretch of sand by

daylight, though even then it had needed an alert eye to detect that slight oozy surface that denoted the presence of the sea-swamp. But by night, even in that brilliant moonlight, it was barely perceptible. Columbine herself did not trust to appearances. She had learnt the way from Adam as a child learns a lesson by heart. He had taught her to know the danger-spot by the shape of the cliffs above it.

After a very brief pause to take her bearings, she moved forward with absolute assurance. Knight accompanied her with unquestioning confidence. His faith in his own luck was as profound as his faith in the girl at his side. And the tumult in his veins that night was such as to make him insensible of danger. The roar of the rising tide exhilarated him. He walked with the stride of a conqueror, free and unafraid, his face to the sea.

Unerringly she led him, but she did not speak again until they had made the passage and the treacherous morass of sand was left behind.

Then, with a deep breath, she stopped. "Now we are safe!"

"Weren't we safe before?" he asked carelessly.

Her eyes sought his; she gave a little shiver. "Oh, are we ever safe?" she said. "Especially when we are happy? That quicksand makes one think."

"Never spoil the present by thinking of the future!" said Knight sententiously.

She took him seriously. "I don't. I want to keep the present just as it is—just as it is. I would like to stay with you here for ever and ever, but in another half-hour—in less—the tide will be racing over this very spot, and we shall be gone." Her voice vibrated; she cast a glance behind. "One false step," she said, "too sharp a turn, too wide a curve, and we'd have been in the quicksand! It's like that all over. It's life, and it's full of danger, whichever way we turn."

He looked at her curiously. "Why, what has come to you?" he said.

She caught her breath in a sound that was like a sob. "I don't know," she said. "It's being so madly happy that has frightened me. It can't last. It never does last." He smiled upon her philosophically. "Then let us make the most of it while it does!" he said. "Tonight will pass, but—don't forget—there is tomorrow." She answered him feverishly. "The moon may not shine tomorrow."

He laughed, drawing her to him. "I can do without the moon, queen of my heart."

She went into his arms, but she was trembling. "I feel—somehow—as if someone were watching us," she whispered.

"Exactly my own idea," he said. "The moon is a bit too intrusive tonight. I shan't weep if there are a few clouds tomorrow." She laughed a little dubiously. "We couldn't cross the quicksand if the light were bad."

"We could get down to the Point by the cliff-path," he pointed out. "I went that way only this afternoon."

"Ah! But it is very steep, and it passes Rufus's cottage," she murmured.

"What of it?" he said indifferently. "I'm sure he sleeps like a log."

She turned from the subject. "Besides, you must have moonlight for your picture. And the moon won't last."

"My picture!" He pressed her suddenly closer. "Do you know what my picture is going to be?"

"Tell me!" she whispered.

"Shall I?" He turned gently her face up to his own. "Shall I? Dare I?"

She opened her eyes wide—those glorious, trusting eyes. "But why should you be afraid to tell me?"

He laughed again softly, and kissed her lips. "I will make a rough sketch in the morning and show it you. It won't be a study—only an idea. You are going to pose for the study." "I?" she said, half-startled.

"You—yes, you!" His eyes looked deeply into hers. "Haven't you realised yet that you are my inspiration?" he said. "It is going to be the picture of my life—'Aphrodite the Beautiful!'" She quivered afresh at his words. "Am I really—so beautiful?" she faltered. "Would you think so if—if you didn't love me?"

"Would I have loved you if you weren't?" laughed Knight. "My darling, you are exquisite as a passion-flower grown in Paradise. To worship you is as natural to me as breathing. You are heaven on earth to me."

"You love me—because of that?"

"I love you," he answered, "soul and body, because you are you. There is no other reason, heart of my heart. When my picture of pictures is painted, then—perhaps—you will see yourself as I see you—and understand."

She uttered a quick sigh, clinging to him with a hold that was almost convulsive. "Ah, yes! To see myself with your eyes! I want that. I shall know then—how much you love me."

"Will you? But will you?" he said, softly derisive. "You will have to show me yourself and your love—all there is of it—before you can do that." She lifted her head from his shoulder. The fire that he had kindled in her soul was burning in her eyes. "I am all yours—all yours," she told him passionately. "All that I have to offer is your own." His face changed a little. The tender mockery passed, and an expression that was oddly out of place there succeeded it. "Ah, you shouldn't tell me that, sweetheart," he said, and his voice was low and held a touch of pain. "I might be tempted to take too much—more than I have any right to take."

"You have a right to all," she said.

But he shook his head. "No—no! You are too young."

"Too young to love?" she said, with quick scorn.

His arm was close about her. "No," he answered soberly. "Only so young that you may—possibly—make the mistake of loving too well."

"What do you mean?" Her voice had a startled note; she pressed nearer to him.

He lifted a hand and pointed to the silver pathway on the sea. "I mean that love is just moonshine—just moonshine; the dream of a night that passes."

"Not in a night!" she cried, and there was anguish in the words.

He bent again swiftly and kissed her lips. "No, not in a night, sweetheart. Not even in two. But at last—at last—*tout passe!*"

"Then it isn't love!" she said with conviction.

He snapped his fingers at the moonlight with a gesture half-humorous, yet half-defiant. "It is life," he said, "and the irony of life. Don't be too generous, my queen of the sea! Give me what I ask—of your graciousness! But—don't offer me more! Perhaps I might take it, and then—"

He turned with the words, as if the sentence were ended, and Columbine went with him, bewildered but too deeply fascinated to feel any serious misgiving. She did not ask for any further explanation, something about him restrained her. But she knew no doubt, and when he halted in the shadow of the deserted quay and took her face once more between his hands with the one word, "Tomorrow!" she lifted eyes of perfect trust to his and answered simply, "Yes, tomorrow!"

And the rapture of his kisses was all-sufficing. She carried away with her no other memory but that.

## V: MIDSUMMER MORNING

It was two mornings later, very early on Midsummer Day, that Rufus the Red, looking like a Viking in the crystal atmosphere of sky and sea, rowed the stranger with great, swinging strokes through the fishing fleet right out into the burning splendour of the sun. Knight had entered the boat in the belief that he was going to see something of the raising of the nets. But it became apparent very soon that Rufus had other plans for his entertainment, for he passed his father by with no more than a jerk of the head, which Adam evidently interpreted as a sign of farewell rather than of greeting, and rowed on without a pause.

Knight, with his sketch-book beside him, sat in the stern. He had never taken much interest in Rufus before; but now, seated facing him, with the giant muscles and grim, unresponsive countenance of the man perpetually before his eyes, the selecting genius in him

awoke and began to appraise.

Rufus wore a grey flannel shirt, open at the neck, displaying a broad red chest, immensely powerful, with a bull-like strength that every swing of the oars brought into prominence. He had not the appearance of exerting himself unduly, albeit he was pulling in choppy water against the tide.

His blue eyes gazed ever straight at the shore he was leaving. He seemed so withdrawn into himself as to be oblivious of the fact that he was not alone. Knight watched him, wondering if any thoughts were stirring in the slow brain behind that massive forehead. Columbine had declared that the man was an oaf, and he felt inclined to agree with her. And yet there was something in the intensity of the fellow's eyes that held his attention, the possibility of the actual existence of an unknown element that did not fit into that conception of him. They were not the eyes of a mere animal. There was no vagueness in their utter stillness. Rather had they the look of a man who waits.

Curiosity began to stir within him. He wondered if by judicious probing he could penetrate the wall of aloofness with which his companion seemed to be surrounded. It would be interesting to know if the fellow really possessed any individuality.

Airily he broke the silence. "Are you going to take me straight into the temple of the sun? I thought I was out to see the fishing." The remote blue eyes came back as it were out of the far distance and found him. There came to Knight an odd, wholly unwonted, sensation of smallness. He felt curiously like a pigmy disturbing the meditations of a giant.

Rufus looked at him for several seconds of uninterrupted rowing before, in his deep, resounding voice, he spoke. "They won't be taking up the nets for a goodish while yet. We shall be back in time."

"The idea is to give me a run for my money first, eh?" inquired Knight pleasantly.

He had not anticipated the sudden fall of the red brows that greeted his words. He felt as if he had inadvertently trodden upon a match.

"No," said Rufus slowly, speaking with a strangely careful accent, as if his mind were concentrated upon being absolutely intelligible to his listener. "That was not my idea." The spirit of adventure awoke in Knight. There was something behind this granite calmness of demeanour then. He determined to draw it forth, even though he struck further sparks in the process.

"No?" he said carelessly. "Then why this pleasure trip? Did you bring me out here just to show me—the 'Pit of the Burning'?" His eyes were upon the dazzling glory of the newly risen sun as he threw the question. Rufus's massive head and shoulders were strongly outlined

against it. He had ceased to row, but the boat still shot forward, impelled by the last powerful sweep of the oars, the water streaming past in a rush of foam.

Slowly, like the hammer-strokes of a deep-toned bell, came Rufus's voice in answer. "It wasn't to show you anything I brought you here. It was just to tell you something."

"Really?" Knight's interest was thoroughly aroused. He became alert to the finger-tips. There was something in the deliberate utterance that conveyed a sense of danger. A wary gleam shone in his eyes under their level brows. It was one of his principles when dealing with an uncertain situation never to betray surprise. "And what may this valuable piece of information be?" he inquired, with a smile.

Rufus shipped his oars steadily, gravely, with purpose. "I saw you cross the quicksand last night," he said.

"Indeed!" Knight's voice was of the most casual quality. He was feeling for his cigarette-case.

Rufus continued heavily, fatefully, gathering force with every word, as a loosened rock beginning to roll down a mountain side. "The light was bad. It was a tomfool thing to do. And Columbine was with you." Knight raised his shoulders ever so slightly. "Or rather—I was with her. Miss Columbine knows the lie of the quicksand. I—do not." Rufus went on as if he had not spoken. "There's danger all along that beach as far as the Spear Point. Adam will tell you the same. When it's a spring tide there's times when there's such a swell that it's round the Point and over the pool like a tidal wave. You'll hear the bell-buoy tolling when there's a swell like that. We call it the Death Current hereabouts, because there's nothing could live in it, and the bell always tolls. And once it comes up like that the way to the cliff-path is under water in less than thirty seconds. And the quicksand is the only chance left." He paused; it was as if the rock halted for a moment on the edge of the precipice before plunging finally into the abyss of silence below. "When there's a ground swell," he said, "the quicksand will pull a man down quicker than hell. And there's no one—not Adam himself—can tell the lay of it for certain when the light is bad." His mouth closed upon the words like the snap of a strong spring. Knight waited for more, but none came. Whatever the thought behind the warning that he had just uttered it was evident that Rufus had no intention of giving it expression. He had uttered the girl's name with no more emotion than that of his father, but it seemed to Knight that by that very fact he had managed to convey a warning more potent than any that had followed. Otherwise he would scarcely have taken the trouble to mention her. The possibility of subtlety in this great, slow-speaking giant piqued him to a keener interest. He resolved to probe a little deeper.

"Miss Columbine is a very reliable guide," he remarked. "If you and Adam have been her instructors in shore-craft, she does you credit." His remark went into utter silence. Rufus, with huge hands loosely clasped between his knees, appeared to be engrossed in watching the progress of the boat as she drifted gently on the rising tide. His face was utterly blank of expression, unless a certain grim fixity could be described as such.

Knight became slightly exasperated. Was the fellow no more than the fool Columbine believed him to be after all? He determined to settle this question once and for all at a single stroke.

"I suppose she has all you fellows at Spear Point at her feet?" he said, with an easy smile. "But I hope you are all too large-minded to grudge a poor artist the biggest find that has ever come his way." There was a pause, but the burning blue eyes were no longer fixed upon the sparkling ripples through which they had travelled. They were turned upon Knight's face, searching, piercing, intent. Before he spoke again, Knight's doubt as to the existence of a brain behind the massive brow was fully set at rest.

"There is another thing I have to say," said Rufus.

Knight's smile broadened encouragingly. "By all means let us hear it!" he said.

Rufus proceeded. "You speak of Columbine as if she were just a bit of amber or such-like as you'd found on the shore and picked up and put in your pocket. You speak as if she's your property to do what you like with. That's just what she is not. You're making love to her. I know it. I seen it. And it's got to stop."

He spoke with blunt force; his hands were suddenly locked upon each other in a hard grip.

Knight lifted his shoulders; his smile had become whimsical. He had drawn the fellow at last. "I thought you'd seen something," he remarked, "by your way. But who could help making love to a girl with a face like that? It would take a heart of stone to resist it. Why, even you"—and his look challenged Rufus with careless derision—"even you have fallen to that temptation before now, or I'm much mistaken. But I gather that your attentions did not meet with a very favourable response."

He was baiting the animal now, taunting him, with the semi-humorous malice of the mischievous schoolboy. He had no particular grudge against Rufus, but he had a lively desire to see him squirm.

But this desire was not to be gratified. Rufus met the thrust without the faintest hint of feeling.

"What you think," he said, in his weighty fashion, "has nothing to do with me. What you do is all that matters. And I tell you straight"—a blue flame suddenly leapt up like a volcanic light in the sombre eyes—"that no man that hasn't honest intentions by her is going to make



love to Columbine."

"Great Jove!" mocked Knight, with his careless laugh. "And who told you, most worthy swain, what my intentions were?" Rufus leaned towards him slowly, with something of the action of a crouching beast. "No one told me," he said in a voice that was deeply menacing. "But—I know." Knight made a gesture of supreme indifference. "You are on an entirely wrong scent," he observed. "But you seem to be enjoying it." He paused to take out a cigarette. "Have a smoke!" he suggested after a moment, proffering his case.

Rufus did not so much as see it. His whole attitude was one of strain, as if he barely held himself back from springing at the other's throat.

Knight, however, was elaborately unconscious of any tension. He smiled and closed his cigarette case. Then with the utmost deliberation he searched for his matches, found them, and lighted his cigarette.

Having puffed forth the first deep breath with luxurious enjoyment, he spoke again. "It is a little difficult to get a man of your stamp to comprehend the fact that an artist—a true artist—is not one to be greatly drawn by the grosser things of life, more especially when he is in ardent pursuit of that elusive flame called inspiration. But you would hardly grasp a condition in which the body—and the impulses of the body—are in complete subjection to the aspirations of the mind. You"—he blew forth a cloud of smoke—"are probably incapable of realizing that the worship of beauty can be of so purely artistic a nature as to be practically free from the physical element, certainly independent of it. I am taking you out of your depth, I know, but it is hard to make myself clear to an untrained mind. I might try a homely simile and suggest to you that you go a-fishing, not for love of the fish, but because it is your profession; but that does not wholly illustrate my meaning, for I love everything in the way of beauty that comes my way. I follow beauty like a guiding star. And sometimes—but seldom, oh, very seldom"—a sudden odd thrill sounded in his voice as if by accident some hidden string had been struck and set vibrating—"I fulfil my desire—I realise my dream—I grasp and hold a spark of the Divine." He paused again, his face to the gold of the dawn and in his eyes the far-off rapture of one who watches some soaring flight of fancy. Then abruptly, lightly, he resumed his normal, half-quizzing demeanour. "Doubtless I weary you," he said. "But you mustn't run away with the idea that I am in love because I feel myself inspired. It may sound callous to you, but if Miss Columbine were to lose her exquisite beauty (which heaven forbid!) I should never voluntarily look upon her again. That I take it, is the test of love, which, we are told, is blind to all defects."

He ceased to speak, and carelessly, yet with obvious enjoyment,

he sent forth another cloud of smoke into the crystal air of the morning.

He was not looking at Rufus. It was abundantly evident that he had not realised how near to open violence the young fisherman had been. His nonchalant explanation was plainly all-sufficing in his own opinion, and during the very marked silence that followed he displayed no faintest hint of anxiety or even interest as to the fashion of its reception.

The boat was rocking lightly on the swell; the sea all around was flooded with gold. The great jagged outline of the Spear Point looked like the castle of a dream. The haze of the newly risen sun had touched with magic all the world. Knight's eyes were half-closed. He had the look of a man at peace with himself.

And Rufus relaxed. The tension went out of his attitude; the volcanic fires died down. For half a minute or more he sat absolutely passive. Then slowly, with massive deliberation, he moved, unshipped the oars, and bent himself to pull. In another ten seconds the boat was rushing through the water under the compulsion of his powerful strokes, heading straight for the boats of the fishing fleet that dotted the bay....

It must have been fully a quarter of an hour later that Knight, having finished his cigarette, came out of his reverie.

"And so, you see," he remarked in the tone of one pleasantly rounding off a conversation, "until my picture is painted I remain the slave of my dream. I wonder if I have succeeded at all in making myself intelligible."

His eyes opened lazily and met Rufus's sombre gaze; they held a laughing challenge, the easy challenge of the practised fencer who condescends to try a bout with ignorance.

Stolidly Rufus met the look. If he realised the challenge he did not accept it. He had barred himself in once more behind an impenetrable wall of unresponsiveness. His gaze was once more obscure and bovine. All hint of violence was gone from his bearing. Only solid force remained—the force that drove the boat strongly, unerringly, through the golden-crested waves.

"If you're going to do a picture of Columbine," he said slowly, "I hope it'll be a good one."

"It will probably be—great," said Knight, and flicked some ash from his sleeve with the complacent air of a man who has accomplished his purpose.

## VI: THE MIDSUMMER MOON

It was very late that night, just as the first long rays of a full moon streamed across a dreaming sea, that the door that led out of the

conservatory at The Ship softly opened, and a slim figure, clad in a long, dark garment, flitted forth. Neither to right nor left did it glance, but, closing the door without sound, slipped out over the grass almost as if it moved on wings, and so down to the beach-path that wound steeply to the shore.

The tide was rising with the moon; the roar of it swelled and sank like the mighty breathing of a giant. The waters shone in the gathering light in a vast silver shimmer almost too dazzling for the eye to endure. In another hour it would be as light as day. A few dim clouds were floating over the stars, filmy wisps that had escaped from the ragged edges of a dark curtain that had veiled the sun before its time. The breeze that had blown them free wandered far overhead; below, especially on the shore, it was almost tropically warm, and no breath of air seemed to stir.

Swiftly went the flitting figure, like a brown moth drawn by the glitter of the moonlight. There was no other living thing in sight.

All the lights of Spear Point village had gone out long since. Rufus's cottage, with its slip of garden on the shelf of the cliff, was no more than a faint blur of white against the towering sandstone behind. No light had shone there all the evening, for the daylight had not died till ten, and he was often in bed at that hour. The fishing fleet would be out again with the dawn if the weather held, or even earlier; and the hours of sleep were precious.

Down on the rocks on the edge of the sleeping pool a grey shadow lurked amidst darker shadows. A faint scent of cigarette smoke hung about the silver beach—a drifting suggestion intangible as the magic of the night.

Could it have been this faint, floating fragrance that drew the flitting brown moth by way of the quicksand, swiftly, swiftly, along the moonlit shore travelling with mysterious certainty, irresistibly attracted? There was no pause in its rapid progress, though the course it followed was tortuous. It pursued, with absolute confidence, an invisible, winding path. And ever the roar of the sea grew louder and louder.

Across the pool, carved in the blackness of the outstretched curving scimitar of rock, there was a ledge, washed smooth by every tide, but a foot or more above the water when the tide was out. It was inaccessible save by way of the pool itself, and yet it had the look of a pathway cut in the face of the Spear Point Rock. The moonlight gleamed upon its wet surface. In the very centre of the great curving rock there was a deeper darkness that might have been a cave.

It must have been after midnight when the little brown figure that had flitted so securely through the quicksand came with its noiseless feet over the tumble of rocks that lay about the pool, and the shadow that lurked in the shadows rose up and became a man.

They met on the edge of the pool, but there was about the lesser form a hesitancy of movement, a shyness, almost a wildness, that seemed as if it would end in flight.

But the man remained quite motionless, and in a moment or two the impulse passed or was controlled. Two quivering hands came forth to him as if in supplication.

"So you are waiting!" a low voice said.

He took the hands, bending to her. The moonlight made his eyes gleam with a strange intensity.

"I have been waiting a long time," he said.

Even then she made a small, fluttering movement backward, as if she would evade him. And then with a sharp sob she conquered her reluctance again. She gave herself into his arms.

He held her closely, passionately. He kissed her face, her neck, her bosom, as if he would devour the sweetness of her in a few mad moments of utter abandonment.

But in a little he checked himself. "You are so late, sweetheart. The tide won't wait for us. There will be time for this—afterward." She lay burning and quivering against his heart. "There is tomorrow," she whispered, clinging to him.

He kissed her again. "Yes, there is tomorrow. But who can tell what may happen then? There will never be such a night as this again, sweet. See the light against that rock! It is a marvel of black and white, and I swear that the pool is green. There is magic abroad tonight. Let me catch it! Let me catch it! afterward!—when the tide comes up—we will drink our fill of love."

He spoke as if urged by strong excitement, and having spoken his arms relaxed. But she clung to him still.

"Oh, darling, I am frightened—I am frightened! I couldn't come sooner. I had a feeling—of being watched. I nearly—very nearly—didn't come at all. And now I am here—I feel—I feel—afraid." He bent his face to hers again. His hand rested lightly, reassuringly upon her head. "No, no! There is nothing to frighten you, my passion-flower. If you had only come to me sooner it would have made it easier for you. But now there is no time." The soothing note in his voice sounded oddly strained, as though an undernote of fever throbbed below it. "You're not going to fail me," he urged softly. "Think how much it means to you—to me! And there is only half an hour left, dear. Give me that half-hour to catch the magic! Then—when the tide comes up"—his voice sank, he whispered deeply into her ear—"I will teach you the greatest magic this old world knows." She thrilled at his words, thrilled through her trembling. She lifted her face to the moonlight. "I love you!" she said. "Oh, I love you!"

"And you will do this one thing for me?" he urged.

She threw her arms wide. "I would die for you," she told him

passionately.

A moment she stood so, then with a swift movement that had in it something of fierce surrender she sprang away from him on to the flat rock above the pool where but two nights before the gates of love's wonderland had first opened to her.

Here for a second she stood, motionless it seemed. And then strangely, amazingly, she moved again. The brown garment slipped from her, and like a streak of light, she was gone, and the still pool received her with a rippling splash as of fairy laughter.

The man on the brink drew a short, hard breath, and put his hand to his eyes as if dazed. And from beyond the Spear Point there sounded the deep tolling of the bell-buoy as it rocked on the rising tide.

## VII: THE DEATH CURRENT

The pool was still again, still as a sheet of glass, reflecting the midnight glory of the moon. It was climbing high in the sky, and the cloud-wreaths were mounting towards it as incense smoke from an altar. The thick, black curtain that hung in the west was growing like a monstrous shadow, threatening to overspread the whole earth.

Down on the silver beach, crouched on one of the rocks that bordered the shining pool, Knight worked with fevered intensity to catch the magic of the hour. The light was wonderful. The pool shone strangely, deeply green; the rocks about it might have been delicately carved in ivory. And across the pool, clear-cut against the utter darkness of the Spear Point Rock, stood Aphrodite the Beautiful, clad in some green translucent draperies, her black hair loose about her, her white arms outstretched to the moonlight, her face—exquisite as a flower—upturned to meet the glory. She was like a dream too wonderful to be true, save for the passion that lived in her eyes. That was vivid, that was poignant—the fire of sacrifice burning inwardly.

The man worked on as one driven by a ruthless force. His teeth were clenched upon his lower lip. His hands were shaking, and yet he knew that what he did was too superb for criticism. It was the work of genius—the driving force within that would not let him pause to listen to the wild urgings of his heart. That might come after. But this—this power that compelled was supreme. While it gripped him he was not his own master. He was, as he himself had said, a slave.

And while he worked at its behest, watching the wonderful thing that inspiration was weaving by his hand, scarcely conscious of effort, though the perspiration was streaming down his face, he whispered over and over between his clenched teeth the title of the picture that was to astonish the world—"The Goddess Veiled in Foam."

There was no foam as yet on the pool, but he remembered how

two nights before he had seen the breaking of the first wave that had turned it into a seething cauldron of surf. That was what he wanted now—just the first great wave washing over her exquisite feet and flinging its garment of spray like a flimsy veil over her perfect form. He wanted that as he wanted nothing else on earth. And then—then—he would catch his dream, he would chain for ever the fairy vision that might never be granted again.

There came a boom like a distant gunshot on the other side of the Spear Point Rock, and again, but very far away, there sounded the tolling of the bell beyond the reef. The man's heart gave a great leap. It was coming!

In the same moment the girl's voice came to him across the pool, mingling with the rushing of great waters.

"The tide is coming up fast. It won't be safe much longer."

"Don't move! Don't move!" he cried back almost frantically. "It is absolutely safe. I will swim across and help you if you are afraid. But wait—wait just a few moments more!" She did not urge him. Her surrender had been too complete. Perhaps his promise reassured her, or perhaps she did not fully realise the danger. She waited motionless and the man worked on.

Again there came that sound that was like the report of a distant gun, and the roaring of the sea swelled to tumult.

"Don't move! Don't move!" he cried again.

But she could not have heard him in the overwhelming rush of the sea.

There came a sudden dimness. A cloud had drifted over the moon, and Knight looked up and cursed it with furious impatience. It passed, and he saw her again—his vision, the goddess of his dream, still as the rock behind her, yet splendidly alive. He bent himself again to his work. Would that wave never come to veil her in sparkling raiment of foam?

Ah! At last! The peace of the pool was shattered. A shining wave, curved, green, transparent, gleamed round the corner, ran, swift as a flame, along the rock, and broke with a thunderous roar in a torrent of snow-white surf. In a moment the pool was a seething tumult of water, and in that moment Knight saw his goddess as the artist in him had yearned to see her, her beauty half-veiled and half-revealed in a shimmering robe of foam.

The vision vanished. Another cloud had drifted over the moon. Only the swirling water remained.

Again he lifted his head to curse the fate that baffled him, and as he did so a hand came suddenly from the darkness behind and gripped him by the shoulder. A voice that was like the angry bellow of a bull roared in his ear.

What it said he did not hear; so amazed was he by the utter

unexpectedness of the attack. Before he had time to realise what was happening, he was shaken with furious force and flung aside. He fell—and his precious work fell with him—on the very edge of that swirling pool....

Seconds later, when the moon gleamed out again, he was still frantically groping for it on the stones. The roar of the sea was terrible and imminent, like the roar of a destroying monster racing upon its prey, and from the caves there came a hollow groaning as of chained spirits under the earth.

The light flashed away again just as he spied his treasure on the brink of the dashing water. He sprang to save it, intent upon naught else; but in that instant there came a roar such as he had not heard before—a sound so compelling, so nerve-shattering, that even he was arrested, entrapped as it were by a horror of crashing elements that made him wonder if all the fiends in hell were fighting for his soul. And, as he paused, the swirl of a great wave caught him in the darkness like the blow of a concrete thing, nearly flinging him backwards. He staggered, for the first time stricken with fear, and then in the howling uproar of that dreadful place there came to him like a searchlight wheeling inwards the thought of the girl. The water receded from him, leaving him drenched, almost dazed, but a voice within—an urgent, insistent voice—clamoured that his safety was at stake, his life a matter of mere moments if he lingered. This was the Death Current of which Rufus had warned him only that afternoon. Had not the bell-buoy been tolling to deaf ears for some time past? The Death Current that came like a tidal wave! And nothing could live in it. The girl—surely the girl had been washed off her ledge and overwhelmed in the flood before it had reached him. Possibly Rufus would manage to save her, for that it was Rufus who had so savagely sprung upon him he had no doubt; but he himself was powerless. If he saved his own life it would be by a miracle. Had not the fellow warned him that retreat by way of the cliff-path would be cut off in thirty seconds when the tide raced up like that? And if he failed to reach that, only the quicksand was left—the quicksand that dragged a man down quicker than hell!

He set his teeth and turned his face to the cliff. A light was shining half-way up it—that must come from the window of Rufus's cottage. He took it as a beacon, and began to stumble through the howling darkness towards it. He knew the cliff-path. He had come down it only that night to make sure that there was no one spying upon them. The cottage had been shut and dark then, the little garden empty. He had concluded that Rufus had gone early to rest after a long day with the nets, and had passed on securely to wait for Columbine on the edge of their magic pool. But what he did not know was exactly where the cliff-path ran out on to the beach. The opening was close to the

Caves and sheltered by rocks. Could he find it in this infernal darkness? Could he ever make his way to it in time? With the waves crashing behind him he struggled desperately towards the blackness of the cliffs.

The rocks under his feet were wet and slippery. He fought his way over them, feeling as if a hundred demons were in league to hold him back. The swirl of the incoming tide sounded in his ears like a monstrous chant of death. Again and again he slipped and fell, and yet again he dragged himself up, grimly determined to fight the desperate battle to the last gasp. The thought of Columbine had gone wholly from him, even as the thought of his lost treasure. Only the elemental desire of life gripped him, vital and urgent, forcing him to the greatest physical effort he had ever made. He went like a goaded animal, savage, stubborn, fiercely surmounting every obstacle, driven not so much by fear as by a furious determination to frustrate the fate that menaced him.

It must have been nearly a minute later that the moon shone forth again, throwing gleaming streaks of brightness upon the mighty breakers that had swallowed the magic pool. They were riding in past the Spear Point in majestic and unending procession, and the rocks that surrounded the pool were already deeply covered. The surf of one great wave was rushing over the beach to the Caves, and the spray of it blew over Knight, drenching him from head to foot. Desperately, by that passing gleam of moonlight, he searched for the opening of the path, the foam of the oncoming procession already swirling about his feet. He spied it suddenly at length, and in the same instant something within him—could it have been his heart?—dropped abruptly like a loosened weight to the very depths of his being. The way of escape in that direction was already cut off. In the darkness he had not taken a straight course, and it was too late.

Wildly he turned—like a hunted animal seeking refuge. With great leaps and gigantic effort, he made for the open beach. He reached it, reached the loose dry sand so soon to be covered by the roaring tumult of great waters. His eyes glared out over the level stretch that intervened between the Spear Point Rock and the harbour quay. The tide would not be over it yet.

He flung his last defiance to the fate that relentlessly hunted him as he took the only alternative, and set himself to traverse the way of the quicksand—that dragged a man down quicker than hell.

## VIII: THE BOON

Someone was mounting the steep cliff-path that led to Rufus's cottage—a man, square-built and powerful, who carried a burden. The moon shone dimly upon his progress through a veil of drifting



cloud. He was streaming with water at every step, but he moved as if his drenched clothing were in no way a hindrance—steadily, strongly, with stubborn fixity of purpose. The burden he carried hung limply in his arms, and over his shoulder there drifted a heavy mass of wet, black hair.

He came at length on his firm, bare feet to the little gate that led to the lonely cottage, and, without pausing, passed through. The cottage door was ajar. He pushed it back and entered, closing it, even as he did so, with a backward fling of the heel. Then, in the tiny living-room, by the light of the lamp that shone in the window, he laid his burden down.

White and cold, she lay with closed eyes upon the little sofa, motionless and beautiful as a statue recumbent upon a tomb, her drenched draperies clinging about her. He stood for a second looking upon her; then, still with the absolute steadiness of set purpose, he turned and went into the inner room.

He came back with a blanket, and stooping, he lifted the limp form and, with a certain deftness that seemed a part of his immovable resolution, he wrapped it in the rough grey folds.

It was while he was doing this that a sudden sigh came from between the parted lips, and the closed eyes flashed open.

They gazed upon him in bewilderment, but he continued his ministrations with grim persistence and an almost bovine expression of countenance. Only when two hands came quivering out of the enveloping blanket and pushed him desperately away did he desist. He straightened himself then and turned away.

"You'll be—all right," he said in his deep voice.

Then Columbine started up on her elbow, clutching wildly at the blanket, drawing it close about her. The cold stillness of her was gone, as though a sudden flame had scorched her. Her face, her neck, her whole body were burning, burning.

"What—what happened?" she gasped. "You—why have you brought me—here?"

He did not look at her.

"It was the nearest place," he said. "The Death Current caught you, and you were stunned. I got you out." "You—got me—out!" she repeated, saying the words slowly as if she were teaching herself a lesson.

He nodded his great head.

"Yes. I came up in time. I saw what would happen. There's often a tidal wave about now. I thought you knew that—thought Adam would have told you. He"—his voice suddenly went a tone deeper—"knew it. I told him this morning."

"Ah!" She uttered the word upon a swift intake of breath; her startled eyes suddenly dilated. "Where is he?" she said.

The man's huge frame stiffened at the question; she saw his hands clench. But he kept his head turned from her; she could not see his face. There followed a pause that seemed to her fevered imagination to have something deadly in it. Then: "I hope he's gone where he belongs," said Rufus, with terrible deliberation.

Her cry of agony cut across his last word like the severing of a taut string. She leapt to her feet, in that moment of anguish supremely forgetful of self.

"Rufus!" she cried, and wildly gripped his arm, "You've never—left him—to be—killed!"

She felt his muscles harden in grim resistance to her grasp. She saw that his averted face was set like a stone mask.

"It's none of my business," he said, speaking through rigid lips.

She turned from him with a gasp of horror and sprang for the door. But in an instant he wheeled, thrust out a great arm, and caught her. His fingers closed upon her bare shoulder.

"Columbine!" he said.

She resisted him frantically, bending now this way, now that. But he held her in spite of it, held her, and slowly brought her nearer to him.

"Stand still!" he said.

His voice came upon her like a blow. She flinched at the sound of it—flinched and obeyed.

"Let me go!" she gasped out. "He—may be drowning—at this moment!"

"Let him drown!" said Rufus.

She lifted her tortured face in frenzied protest, but it died upon her lips. For in that moment she met his eyes, and the blazing blue of them made her feel as though spirit had been poured upon her flame, consuming her. Words failed her utterly. She stood palpitating in his hold, not breathing—a wild thing trapped.

Slowly he bent towards her. "Let him drown!" he said again. "Do you think I'm going to let you throw your life away for a cur like that?" There was uncloaked ferocity in the question. His hold was merciless.

"I saved you," he said. "It wasn't especially easy. But I did it. For the matter of that, I'd have gone through hell for you. And do you think I'm going to let you go again—now?" She did not answer him. Only her lips moved stiffly, as though they formed words she could not utter. She could not take her eyes from his, though his looks seared her through and through.

He went on, deeply, with gathering force. "He'd have let you be swept away. He didn't care. All he wanted was to get you for his picture. That was all he made love to you for. He'd have sacrificed you to the devil for that. You don't believe me, maybe, but I know—I

know!"

There was savage certainty in the reiterated words, and the girl recoiled from them, her face like death. But he held her still, implacably, relentlessly.

"That's all he wants of you," he said. "To use you for his purpose, and then—to throw you aside. Why"—and he suddenly showed his clenched teeth—"he dared—damn him!—he dared to tell me so!"

"He—told you!" Her lips spoke the words at last, but they seemed to come from a long way off.

"Yes." With suppressed violence he answered her. "He didn't put it that way—being a gentleman! But he took care to make me understand that he only wanted you for the sake of his accursed picture. That's the only thing that counts with him, and he's the sort not to care what he does to get it. He wouldn't have got you—like this—if he hadn't made you love him first. I know that too—as well as if you'd told me."

The passion in his voice was rising, and it was as if the heat of it rekindled her animation. With a jerky movement she flung up both her hands, grasping tensely the arms that held her so rigidly.

"Yes, I love him!" she said, and her voice rang wildly. "I love him! I don't care what he is! Rufus—Rufus—oh, for the love of Heaven, don't let him drown!" The words rushed out desperately; it was as if her whole nature, all her pride, all her courage, were flung into that frantic appeal. She clung to the man with straining entreaty. "Oh, go down and save him!" she begged. "I'll do anything for you in return—anything you like to ask! Only do this one thing for me! He may have escaped the tide. If so, he'll try the quicksand, and he don't know the lie of it! Rufus, you wouldn't want—your worst enemy—to die like that!"

She broke off, wildly sobbing, yet still clinging to him in agonised entreaty. The man's face, with its crude ferocity, the untamed glitter of its fiery eyes, was still bent to hers, but she no longer shrank from it. The power that moved her was too immense to be swayed by lesser things. His attitude no longer affected her, one way or another. It had ceased to count, so that she only wrenched from him this one great boon.

And Rufus must have realised the fact, for he stood up sharply and backed against the door, releasing her.

"You don't know what you're saying," he said gruffly.

"I do—I do!" With anguished reiteration she answered him. "I'm not the sort that offers and then doesn't pay. Oh, don't waste time talking! Every moment may be his last. Go down—go down to the shore! You're so strong. Save him—save him!"

She beat her clasped hands against his broad chest, till abruptly he put up his own again and held them still.

"Columbine!" For the second time he uttered her name, and for the second time the command in his voice caught and compelled her. "Just you listen a minute!" he said, and as he spoke his look swept her with a mastery that dominated even her agony. "If I go and save the cur, you've done with him for ever—you swear that?"

"Yes!" she cried. "Yes! Only go—only go!"

But he remained square and resolute against the door. "And you'll stay here—you swear to stay here till I come back?"

"Yes!" she cried again.

He bent to her once more; his gaze possessed her. "And—afterward?" he said, his voice deep and very low.

Her eyes had been raised to his; they closed suddenly and sharply, as if to shut him out. "I will give you—all I have," she said, and shivered, violently, uncontrollably.

The next instant his hands were gone from hers, and she was free.

Trembling, she sank upon the sofa, hiding her face; and even as she did so the banging of the cottage door told her he was gone.

Thereafter she sat crouched for a long, long time in the paralysis of a great fear.

## IX: THE VISION

Down on the howling shore the great waves were hurling themselves in vast cataracts of snow-white surf that shone, dimly radiant, in the fitful moonlight. The sky was covered with broken clouds, and a rising storm-wind blew in gusts along the cliffs. The peace of the night was utterly shattered, the shining glory had departed. A wild and desolate grandeur had succeeded it.

"Shouldn't wonder if there was some trouble tonight," said Adam, awaking to the tumult.

"Lor' bless you!" said Mrs. Peck sensibly. "Wait till it comes."

The hint of impatience that marked her speech was not without reason, for a gale was to Adam as the sound of a gun to a sporting-dog. It invariably aroused him, even from the deepest slumber, to a state of alert expectation that to a woman as hard-working as Mrs. Peck was most exceptionally trying. When Adam scented disaster at sea there was no peace for either. As she was wont to remark, being the wife of the lifeboat coxswain wasn't all jam, not by any manner of means it wasn't. She knew now, by the way Adam turned, and checked his breathing to listen, that the final disturbance was not far off.

She herself feigned sleep, possibly in the hope of provoking him to consideration for her weariness; but she knew the effort to be quite futile even as she made it. Adam the coxswain was considerate only for those who might be in peril. At the next heavy gust that rattled the

windows he flung the bedclothes back without the smallest thought for his companion's comfort, and tumbled on to his feet.

"Just going to have a look round," he said. "I'll lay the fire in the kitchen, and you be ready to light it in a jiffy if wanted!" That was so like Adam. He could think of nothing but possible victims of the storm. Mrs. Peck sniffed, and gathered the bedclothes back about her in expressive silence. It was quite useless to argue with Adam when he got the jumps. Experience had taught her that long since. She could only resume her broken rest and hope that it might not be again disturbed.

Adam pulled on his clothes with his usual brisk deftness of movement and went downstairs. The rising storm was calling him, and he could not be deaf to the call. He had belonged to the lifeboat ever since he had come to man's estate, and never a storm arose but he held himself ready for service.

His first, almost instinctive, action was to take the key of the lifeboat house from its nail in the kitchen. Then, whistling cheerily below his breath, he set about laying the fire. The kettles were already filled. Mrs. Peck always saw to that before retiring. There was milk in the pantry, brandy in the cupboard. According to invariable custom, all was in readiness for any possible emergency, and having satisfied himself that this was the case, he thrust his bare feet into boots and went to the door.

It had begun to rain. Great drops pattered down upon him as he emerged, and he turned back to clap his sou'wester upon his head. Then, without further preparation, he sallied forth.

As he went down the road that ran to the quay a terrible streak of lightning reft the dark sky, and the wild crash of thunder that followed drowned even the roaring babel of the sea.

It did not check his progress; he was never one to be easily daunted. It was contrary to his very nature to seek shelter in a storm. He went swinging on to the very edge of the quay, and there stood facing the violence of the waves, the fierce turmoil of striving elements.

The tide was extraordinarily high—such a tide as he believed he had never seen before in summer. He stood in the pouring rain and looked first one way, then the other, with a quick birdlike scrutiny, but as far as his eyes could pierce he saw only an empty desolation of waters. There seemed none in need of his help that night.

"I wonder if Rufus is awake," he speculated to the angry tumult.

Nearly three miles out from the Spear Point there was a lighthouse with a revolving light. That light shone towards him now, casting a weird radiance across the tossing water, and as if in accompaniment to the warning gleam he heard the deep toll of the bell-buoy that rocked upon the swell.

Adam turned about. "I'll go and knock up Rufus," he decided. "It'd be a shame to miss a night like this."

Again the lightning rent the sky, and the whole great outline of the Spear Point was revealed in one awful second of intolerable radiance. Adam's keen eye chanced to be upon it, and he saw it in such detail as the strongest sunlight could never have achieved. The brightness dazzled, almost shocked him, but there was something besides the brightness that sent an odd sensation through him—a curious, sick feeling as if he had suddenly received a blow between the shoulders. For in that fraction of time he had seen something which reason, clamouring against the evidence of his senses, declared to be the impossible. He had seen a human figure—the figure of his son—clinging to the naked face of the rock, hanging between sea and sky where scarcely a bird could have found foothold, while something—a grey, indistinguishable burden—hung limp across his shoulder, weighing him down.

The thunder was still rolling around him when with a great shake Adam pulled himself together.

"I'm dreaming!" he told himself angrily. "A man couldn't ever climb the Spear Point, let alone live on a ledge that wouldn't harbour a sea-gull if he did. I'll go round to Rufus. I'll go round and knock him up." With the words he tramped off through the rushing rain, and leaving the quay, struck upwards along the cliff in the direction of the narrow path that ran down to Rufus's dwelling above the Spear Point Caves.

Despite the sparseness of his frame, he climbed the ascent with a rapidity that made him gasp. The wind also was against him, blowing in strong gusts, and the raging of the sea below was as the roaring of a thousand torrents. The great waves boomed against the cliff far beyond the summer watermark. They had long since covered the quicksand, and he thought he felt the ground shake with the shock of them.

He reached at length the gap in the cliff that led down to the cottage, and here he paused; for the descent was sharp, and the light that still filtered through the dense storm-clouds was very dim. But in a few seconds another great flash lit up the whole wild scene. He saw again the Spear Point Rock standing out, scimitar-like, in the sea. The water was dashing all around it. It stood up, grim and unapproachable, the great waves flinging their mighty clouds of spray over its stark summit. But—possibly because he viewed it from above instead of from below—he saw naught beside that grand and futile struggle of the elements.

Reassured, he started in the rain and darkness down the twisting path that led to his old home. He knew every foot of the way, but even so, he stumbled once or twice in the gloom.

The roaring of the sea sounded terribly near when finally he reached the little garden-gate and caught the ray of the lamp in the window.

Evidently it had awakened Rufus also. Almost unconsciously he quickened his pace as he went up the path.

He reached the door and fumbled for the latch; but ere he found it, it was flung open, and a strange and tragic figure met him on the threshold.

"Ah!" cried a woman's voice. "It is you! Where—where is Rufus?"

Adam's keen and birdlike eyes nearly leapt from his head. "Why—Columbine?" he said.

She was dressed in Rufus's suit of navy serge. It hung about her in clumsy folds, and over her shoulders and about her snow-white throat her glorious hair streamed like a black veil, still wet and shining in the lamplight.

She flung out her hands to him in piteous appeal. "Oh, Adam!" she said. "Have you seen them? Have you seen Rufus? He went—he went an hour ago—to save Mr. Knight from the quicksand!" Adam's quick brain leapt to instant activity. The girl's presence baffled him, but it was no time for explanation. In some way she had discovered Knight in danger, and had rushed to Rufus for help. Then—then—that vision of his from the quay—that flash of revelation—had been no dream, after all! He had seen Rufus indeed—and probably for the last time in his life.

He stood, struck dumb for the moment, recalling every detail of the clinging figure that had hung above the leaping waves. Then the tragedy in Columbine's face made him pull himself together once more. He took her trembling hands.

"It's no good, my girl," he said. "I seen him. Yes, I seen him. I didn't believe my eyes, but I know now it was true. He was hanging on to a bit of rock half-way up the Spear Point, and t'other chap was lying across his shoulder. They've both been washed away by this, for the water's still coming up. There's not the ghost of a chance for 'em. I say it 'cos I know—not the ghost of a chance!"

A wild cry broke from the girl's lips. She wrenched her hands free and beat them upon her breast. Then suddenly a burst of wild tears came to her. She leaned against the cottage wall and sobbed in an agony that possessed her, soul and body.

Adam stood and looked at her. There was something terrible about the abandonment of her grief. It made him feel that his own was almost insignificant beside it. He had never seen any woman weep like that before. The anguish of it went through his heart.

He moved at length, laid a very gentle hand upon her shaking shoulder.

"My girl—my girl!" he said. "Don't take on so! I never thought as

you cared a ha'p'orth for poor Rufus, though o' course I always knew as he loved you like mad." She bowed herself lower under his hand. "And now I've killed him!" she gasped forth inarticulately. "I've killed him!"

"No, no, no!" protested Adam. "That ain't reasonable. Come, now—you're distraught! You don't know what you're saying. My Rufus is a fine chap. He'd take most any risk to save a life. He's got a big heart in him, and he don't stop to count the cost." She uncovered her face sharply and looked at him, so that he clearly saw the ravages that her distress had wrought. "That wasn't what made him go," she said. "He wouldn't have gone but for me. It was I as made him go. But I thought he'd be in time. I hoped he'd be in time." Her voice rose wildly; she wrung her hands. "Oh, can't you do anything? Can't you take out the lifeboat? There must be some way—surely there must be some way—of saving them!" But Adam shook his head. "He's past our help," he said. "There's no boat could live among them rocks in such a tide as this. We couldn't get anywhere near. No—no, there's nothing we can do. The lad's gone—my Rufus—finest chap along the shore, if he was my son. Never thought as he'd go before me—never thought—never thought!" The loud roll of the waves filled the bitter silence that followed, but the battering of the rain upon the cottage roof was decreasing. The storm was no longer overhead.

Adam leaned on the back of a chair with his head in his hands. All the wiry activity seemed to have gone out of him. He looked old and broken.

The girl stood motionless behind him. A strange impassivity had succeeded her last fruitless appeal, as though through excess of suffering her faculties were numbed, animation itself were suspended. She leaned against the wall, staring with wide, tragic eyes at the flame of the lamp that stood in the window. Her arms hung stiffly at her sides, and the hands were clenched. She seemed to be gazing upon unutterable things.

There was nothing to be done—nothing to be done! Till the waves had spent their fury, till that raging sea went down, they were as helpless as babes to stay the hand of Fate. No boat could live in that fearful turmoil of water. Adam had said it, and she knew that what he said was true, knew by the utter dejection of his attitude, the completeness of his despair. She had never seen Adam in despair before; probably no one had ever seen him as he was now. He was a man to strain every nerve while the faintest ray of hope remained. He had faced many a furious storm, saved many a life that had been given up for lost by other men. But now he could do nothing, and he crouched there—an old and broken man—for the first time realising his helplessness.

A long time passed. The only sound within the cottage was the



ticking of a grandfather-clock in a corner, while without the great sound of the breaking seas filled all the world. The storm above had passed. Now the thunder-blast no longer shook the cottage. A faint greyness had begun to show beyond the lamp in the window. The dawn was drawing near.

As one awaking from a trance of terrible visions, the girl drew a deep breath and spoke:

"Adam!"

He did not stir. He had not stirred for the greater part of an hour.

She made a curiously jerky movement, as if she wrenched herself free from some constricting hold. She went to the bowed, despairing figure.

"Adam, the day is breaking. The tide must be on the turn. Shan't we go?"

He stood up with the gesture of an old man. "What's the good?" he said. "Do you think I want to see my boy's dead body left behind by the sea?" She shivered at the question. "But we can't stay here," she urged. "Aunt Liza, you know—she'll be wondering." "Ah!" He passed his hand over his eyes. He was swaying a little as he stood. She supported his elbow, for he seemed to have lost control of his limbs. He stared at her in a dazed way. "You'd better go and tell your Aunt Liza," he said. "I think I'll stay here a bit longer. Maybe my boy'll come and talk to me if I'm alone. We're partners, you know, and we lived here a good many years alone together. He wouldn't leave me—not for the long voyage—without a word. Yes, you go, my dear, you go! I'll stay here and wait for him." She saw that no persuasion of hers would move him, and it seemed useless to remain. An intolerable restlessness urged her, moreover, to be gone. The awful inertia of the past two hours had turned into a fevered desire for action. It was the swing of the pendulum, and she felt that if she did not respond to it she would go mad.

Her knees were still trembling under her, but she controlled them and turned to the door. As she lifted the latch she looked back and saw Adam drop heavily into the chair upon which he had leaned for so long. His attitude was one of almost stubborn patience, but it was evident that her presence had ceased to count with him. He was waiting—she saw it clearly in every line of him—waiting to bid his boy Godspeed ere he fared forth finally on the long voyage from which there is no return.

A sharp sob rose in her throat. She caught her hand to it, forcing it back. Then, barefooted, she stepped out into the grey dimness that veiled all things, and left the door of Rufus's cottage open behind her.

## X: THE LONG VOYAGE

She never remembered afterward how she accomplished the homeward journey. The rough stones cut her feet again and again, but she never felt the pain. She went as one who has an urgent mission to perform, though what that mission was she scarcely knew.

The night—that night of dreadful tragedy—had changed her. Columbine, the passionate, the impulsive had turned into a being that was foreign to herself. All the happy girlhood had been stamped out of her as by the cruel pressure of a hot iron. She had ceased to feel the agony of it; somehow she did not think that she ever could feel pain again. The nerve tissues had been destroyed and all vitality was gone. The creature that passed like a swift shadow through the twilight of the dawn was an old and withered woman who had lived beyond her allotted time.

She reached the old Ship Inn, meeting no one. She entered by the door of the conservatory through which she had flitted æons and æons before to meet her lover. She went to her room and changed into her own clothes. The suit that had belonged to Rufus so long ago she laid away with an odd reverence, still scarcely knowing what she did, driven as it were by a mechanism that worked without any volition of hers.

Then she went to the glass and began to coil up her hair. It was dank and heavy yet with the seawater, but she wound it about her head without noticing. The light was growing, and she peered at herself with a detached sort of curiosity, till something in her own eyes frightened her, and she turned away.

She went to the window and opened it wide. The sound of the sea yet filled the world, but it was not so insistent as it had been. The waves, though mountainous still, were gradually receding from the shore. It was as though the dawn had come just in time to prevent the powers of darkness from triumphing.

She heard someone moving in the house and turned back into the room. Aunt Liza must be told.

Through the spectral dawnlight she went down the stairs and took her way to the kitchen. The door stood half open; she heard the cheery crackling of the newly lighted fire before she entered. And hearing it, she was aware of a great coldness that clung like a chain, fettering her every movement.

Someone moved as she pushed open the door. An enormous shadow leaped upon the wall like a fantastic monster of the deep. She recoiled for a second, then, as if drawn against her will, she entered.

By the ruddy glow of the fire she saw a man's broad-chested figure, she saw the gleam of tawny hair above a thick bull-neck. He was bending slightly over the fire at her entrance, but, hearing her, he

turned. And in that moment every numbed nerve in Columbine's body was pierced into quivering life.

She stood as one transfixed, and he stood motionless also in the flickering light of the flames, gazing at her with eyes of awful blue that were as burning spirit. But he spoke not a word—not a word. How could a dead man speak?

And as they stood thus, facing each other, the floor between them began suddenly to heave, became a mass of seething billows that rocked her, caught her, engulfed her. She went down into them, and as the tossing darkness received her, her last thought was that Rufus had come back indeed—not to say farewell, but to take her with him on the long voyage from which there is no return....

## XI: DEEP WATERS

Wild white roses that grew in the sandy stubble above the shore, little orange-scented roses that straggled through the grass—they called to something that ran in Columbine's blood, they spoke to her of the South. She was sure that she would find those roses all about her feet when she came to the end of the long voyage. She would see their golden hearts wide open to the sun. For their fragrance haunted her day by day as she floated down the long glassy stretches and rocked on the waveless swells.

Sometimes she had a curious fancy that she was lying dead, and they had strewn the sweet flowers all about her. She hoped that they might not be buried with her; they were too beautiful for that.

At other times she thought of them as a bridal wreath, purer than the purest orange-blossom that ever decked a bride. Once, too—this was when she was nearing the end of the voyage—there came to her a magic whiff of wet bog-myrtle that made her fancy that she must be a bride indeed.

At last, just when it seemed to her that her boat was gently grounding upon the sand where the little white roses grew, she opened her eyes widely, wondering, and realised that the voyage was over.

She was lying in her own little room at The Ship, and Mrs. Peck, with motherly kindness writ large on her comely, plump face, was bending over her with a cup of steaming broth in her hand.

Columbine gazed at her with a bewildered sense of having slept too long.

Mrs. Peck nodded at her cheerily. "There, my dear! You're better, I can see. A fine time you've given us. I thought as I should never see your bright eyes again." Columbine put forth a trembling hand with a curious feeling that it did not belong to her at all. "Have I been ill?" she said.

Mrs. Peck nodded again cheerily. "Why, it's more than a week you've been lying here, and how I have worried about you! Prostration following severe shock was what the doctor called it, but it looked to me more like a touch of brain fever. But there, you're better! Drink this like a good girl, and you'll feel better still!"

Meekly, with the docility of great weakness, Columbine swallowed the proffered nourishment. She wanted to recall all that had happened, but her brain felt too clogged to serve her. She could only lie and gaze and gaze at a little vase of wild white roses that faced her upon the mantelpiece. Somehow those roses seemed to her to play an oddly important part in her awakening.

"Where did they come from?" she suddenly asked.

Mrs. Peck glanced up indifferently. "They're just those little common things that grow with the pinks on the cliff," she said.

But that did not satisfy Columbine. "Who brought them in?" she said. "Who gathered them?"

Mrs. Peck hesitated momentarily, almost as if she did not want to answer. Then, half defiantly, "Why, Rufus, to be sure," she said.

"Rufus!" A great hot wave of crimson suddenly suffused Columbine's face—a pitiless, burning blush that spread tingling over her whole body.

She lay very still while it lasted, and Mrs. Peck set down the cup and, rising energetically, began to tidy the room.

At length, faintly, the girl spoke again: "Aunt Liza!"

Mrs. Peck turned. There was a curious look in her eyes, a look half stern and yet half compassionate. "There, my dear, that'll do," she said. "I think you've talked enough. The doctor said as I was to keep you very quiet, especially when you began to get back your senses. Shut your eyes, do, and go to sleep!"

But Columbine's eyes remained open. "I'm not sleepy," she said. "And I must speak to you. I want to know—I must know"—she faltered painfully, but forced herself to continue—"Rufus—did he—did he really come back—that night?"

Mrs. Peck's compassion perceptibly diminished and her severity increased. "Oh, if you want the whole story," she said, "you'd better have it and have done; that is, so far as I know it myself. There are certain ins and outs that I don't know even yet, for Rufus can be very secretive if he likes. Well then, yes, he did come back, and he brought Mr. Knight with him. They were washed up by a great wave that dropped 'em high and dry near the quay. Mr. Knight was half drowned, and Rufus left him at Sam Jefferson's cottage and came on here for brandy and hot milk and such. He wasn't a penny the worse himself, but I suppose you thought it was his ghost. You behaved like as if you did, anyway. That's all I can tell you. Mr. Knight he got better in a day or two, and he's gone, said he'd had enough of it, and I

don't blame him neither. Now that'll do for the present. By and by, when you're stronger, maybe I'll ask you to tell me something. But the doctor says as I'm not to let you talk at present."

Mrs. Peck took up the empty cup with the words, and turned with decision to the door.

Columbine did not attempt to detain her. She had read the doubt in the good woman's eyes, and she was thankful at that moment for the reprieve that the doctor's fiat had secured her.

She lay for a long, long time without moving after Mrs. Peck's departure. Her brain felt unutterably weary, but it was clear, and she was able to face the situation in all its grimness. Mr. Knight had gone. Mr. Knight had had enough of it. Had he really left without a word? Was she, then, so little to him as that? She, who had clung to him, had offered him unconditionally and without stint all that was hers!

She remembered how he had said that it would not last, that love was moonshine, love would pass. And how passionately—and withal how fruitlessly!—had she revolted against that pronouncement of his! She had declared that such was not love, and he—he had warned her against loving too well, giving too freely. With cruel distinctness it all came back to her. She felt again those hot kisses upon brow and lips and throat. Though he had warned her against giving, he had not been slow to take. He had revelled in the abandonment of that first free love of hers. He had drained her of all that she held most precious that he might drink his fill. And all for what? Again she burned from head to foot, and, groaning, hid her face. All for the making of a picture that should bring him world-wide fame! His love for her had been naught but small change flung liberally enough that he might purchase therewith the desire of his artist's soul. It had been just a means to an end. No more than that! No more than that!

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Time passed, but she knew naught of its passing. She was in a place of bitterness very far removed from the ordinary things of life. She shed no tears. The misery and shame that burned her soul were beyond all expression or alleviation. She could have laughed over the irony of it all more easily than she could have wept.

That she—the proud and dainty, for whom no one had been good enough—should have fallen thus easily to the careless attraction of a man to whom she was nothing, nothing but a piece of prettiness to be bought as cheaply as possible and treasured not at all. Some whim of inspiration had moved him. He had obeyed his Muse. And he had been ready—he had been ready—even to offer her life in sacrifice to his idol. She did not count with him in the smallest degree. He had never cared—he had never cared!

She lifted her face at last. The torture was eating into her soul. It

was more than she could bear. All the tender words he had spoken, the caresses he had lavished upon her, were as burning darts that pierced her whichever way she turned. Her surrender had been so free, so absolute, and in return he had left her in the dark. He had gone his careless way without a single thought for all the fierce devotion she had poured out to him. It had only appealed to him while the mood lasted. And now he had had enough of it. He had gone.

The murmur of the summer sea came to her as she lay, and she thought of the Death Current. Why—ah, why—had it been cheated of its prey? She shivered violently as the memory of that awful struggle in deep waters came to her. She had been saved, how she scarcely realised, though deep within her she knew—she knew!

Her burning eyes fell upon the little wild white roses on the shelf. Why had he brought them to her? Why had he chosen them? She felt as if they held a message for her, but it was a message she did not dare to read. And then again she quivered as the dread memory of that night swept over her anew, and the eyes of flaming blue that had looked into hers.

Somewhere—somewhere outside herself, it seemed to her—a voice was speaking, very articulate and persistent, and she could not shut out the words it uttered. She lacked the strength.

“I always knew,” it said, and it averred it over and over again, “as he loved you like mad.”

Love! Love! But what was Love? Was any man capable of it? Was it ever anything more than brutal passion or callous amusement? And hearts were broken and lives were ruined to bring men sport.

She clenched her hands, still gazing at the wild white roses with their orange scent of purity. Why had he sent them? What had moved him to gather them? He who had bargained with her, had wrung from her submission to his will as it were at the sword’s point! He who had forced her to promise herself to him! What was love—or the making of love—to such as he?

The sweetness of the flowers seemed to pierce her. Ah, if they had only been Knight’s gift, how different—how different—had been all things.

But they had come from Rufus. And so somehow their message passed her by. The blackness of utter misery, utter hopelessness, closed in like a prison-cell around her soul.

## XII: THE SAFE HAVEN

In the days that followed, Mrs. Peck’s honest soul was both vexed and anxious concerning her charge. She found Columbine extraordinarily reticent. As she herself put it, it was impossible to get

any sense out of her.

In compliance with the doctor's order and by the exercise of extreme self-restraint, she refrained from questioning her upon the matter of her behaviour on the night of the great tide. That Columbine would have enlightened her had she done so was exceedingly doubtful. But there was no doubt that something very unusual had taken place. The little white roses that Rufus presented as a daily offering would have told her that, apart from any other indications. She would have questioned Rufus, but something held her back; and Adam, when urged thereto, flatly refused to interfere.

Adam, rejuvenated and jubilant, went whistling about his work as of yore. His boy had come back to him in the flesh, and he was more than satisfied to leave things as they were.

"Leave 'em alone, Missus!" was his counsel "Rufus he knows what he's about. He'll steer a straight course, and he'll bring her into harbour sooner or later. You leave it to him, and be thankful that curly-topped chap has sheered off at last!"

Mrs. Peck had no choice but to obey, but her anxiety regarding Columbine did not diminish. The girl was so listless, so unlike herself, so miserable. It was many days before she summoned the energy to dress, and even then she displayed an almost painful reluctance to go downstairs. She seemed to live in continual dread of some approaching ordeal.

"I believe it's Rufus she's afraid of," was Mrs. Peck's verdict.

But Adam scouted the idea as absurd. "What will you think of next, woman? Why, any one can see as he's quiet and well-behaved enough for any lass. She's missing the curly-topped chap a bit maybe. But she'll get over that. Give her time! Give her time!"

So Mrs. Peck gave her time and urged her not at all. She was not very friendly with Columbine in those days. She disapproved of her, and her manner said as much. She kept all suspicions to herself, but she could not behave as if nothing had happened.

"There's wild blood in her," she said darkly. "I mistrust her."

And Columbine was fully aware of the fact, but she was too wretched to resent it. In any case, she would never have turned to Mrs. Peck for comfort.

She came downstairs at last one summer evening when Mrs. Peck was busy in the kitchen and no one was about. She had made no mention of her intention; perhaps she wanted to be unhampered by observation. It had been a soft, showery day, and there was the promise of more rain in the sky.

She moved wearily, but not without purpose; and soon she was walking with a hood drawn over her head in the direction of the cliff-edge where grew the sweet bog-myrtle and the little roses.

She met no one by the way. It was nearing the hour for the

evening meal, nearing the hour when Mrs. Peck usually entered her room with the daily offering of flowers that filled it with orange fragrance. Mrs. Peck was not very fond of that particular task, though she never expressed her reluctance. Well, she would not have it to accomplish tonight.

A bare-legged, blue-jerseyed figure was moving in a bent attitude along the slope that overlooked Rufus's cottage and the Spear Point. The girl stood a moment gazing out over the curving reef as if she had not seen it. The pool was smooth as a mirror, and reflecting the drifting clouds. The tide was out. But, stay! It must be on the turn, for as she stood, there came the deep, tolling note of the bell-buoy. It sounded like a knell.

As it struck solemnly over the water, the man straightened himself, and in a moment he saw her.

He did not move to meet her, merely stood motionless, nearly knee-deep in the bog-myrtle, and waited for her, the white roses in one great, clenched hand. And she, as if compelled, moved towards him, till at last she reached and stood before him, white, mute, passive as a prisoner in iron fetters.

It was the man who spoke, with an odd jerkiness of tone and demeanour that might have indicated embarrassment or even possibly some deeper emotion. "So you've come along at last!" he said.

She nodded. For an instant her dark eyes were raised, but they flashed downwards again immediately, almost before they had met his own.

Abruptly he thrust out to her the flowers he held. "I was getting these for you."

She took them in a trembling hand. She bent her face over them to hide the piteous quivering of her lips. "Why—do you get them?" she whispered almost inarticulately.

He did not answer for a moment. Then: "Come down to my place!" he said. "It's but a step."

She made a swift gesture that had in it something of recoil, but the next moment, without a word, she began to walk down the slope.

He trod through the growth beside her, barefooted, unfaltering. His blue eyes looked straight before him; they were unwavering and resolute as the man himself.

They reached the cottage. He made her enter it before him, and he followed, but he did not close the door. Instead, he stopped and deliberately hooked it back.

Then, with the low call of the sea filling the humble little room, he turned round to the girl, who stood with her head bent, awaiting his pleasure.

"Columbine," he said, and the name came with an unaccustomed



softness from his lips, "I've something to say to you. You've been hiding yourself from me. I know. I know. And you needn't. Them flowers—I gathered 'em and I sent 'em up to you every day, because I wanted you to understand as you've nothing to fear from me. I wanted you to know as everything is all right, and I mean well by you. I didn't know how to tell you, and then I saw the roses growing outside the door, and I thought as maybe they'd do it for me. They made me think of you somehow. They were so white—and pure."

"Ah!" The word was a wrung sound, half cry, half sob. His roses fell suddenly and scattered upon the floor between them. Columbine's hands covered her face.

She stood for a second or two in tense silence, then under her breath she spoke. "You don't believe—that—of me!"

"I do, then," asserted Rufus, in his deep voice a note that was almost aggressive.

She lifted her face suddenly, even fiercely, showing him the shamed blush that burned there. "You didn't believe it—that night!" she said.

His eyes met hers with a certain stubbornness. "All right. I didn't," he said.

Her look became a challenge. "Then why—how—have you come to change your mind?"

He faced her steadily. "Maybe I know you better than I knew you then," he said slowly.

She made a sharp gesture as if pierced by an intolerable pain. "And that—that has made a difference to your—your intentions!" He moved also at that. His red brows came together. "You're quite wrong," he said, his voice very low. "That night—I know—I was beyond myself, I was mad. But since then I've come to my senses. And—I love you too much to harm you. That's the truth. I'd love you anyway—whatever you were. It's just my nature to." His hands clenched with the words; he spoke with strong effort; but his eyes looked deeply into hers, and they held no passion. They were still and quiet as the summer sea below them.

Columbine stood facing him as if at bay, but she must have felt the influence of his restraint, for she showed no fear. "There's no such thing as love," she said bitterly. "You dress it up and call it that. But all the time it's something quite different. And I tell you this"—recklessly she flung the words—"that if it hadn't been for that tidal wave I'd be just what you took me for that night, what Aunt Liza thinks I am this minute. I wasn't keeping back—anything, and"—she uttered a sudden wild laugh—"if I've kept my virtue, I've lost my innocence. I know—I know now—just what the thing you call love is worth! And nothing will ever make me forget it!"

She stopped, quivering from head to foot, passionate protest in

every line.

But the blue eyes that watched her never wavered. The man's face was rock-like in its steadfast calm. He did not speak for a full minute after the utterance of her wild words. Then very steadily, very forcibly, he answered her. "I'll tell you, shall I, what the thing I call love is like?" He turned with a sweep of the arm and pointed out to the harbour beyond the quay. "It's just like that. It's a wall to keep off the storms. It's a safe haven where nothing hurtful can reach you. You're not bound to give yourself to it, but once given you're safe."

"Not bound!" Sharply she broke in upon him. "Not bound—when you made me promise—"

He dropped his arm to his side. "I set you free from that promise," he said.

Those few words, sombrely spoken, checked her wild outburst as surely as a hand upon her mouth. She stood gazing at him for a space in utter amazement, but gradually under his unchanging regard her look began to fail. She turned at length with a little gasp, and sat down on the old horsehair sofa, huddling herself together as if she desired to withdraw herself from his observation.

He did not stir, and a long, long silence fell between them, broken only by the ticking of the grandfather-clock in the corner and the everlasting murmur of the sea.

The deep, warning note of the bell-buoy floated presently through the summer silence, and as if in answer to a voice Rufus moved at last and spoke. "You'd better go, lass. They'll be wondering about you. But don't be afraid of me after this! I swear—before God—I'll give you no cause!"

She started a little at the sound of his voice, but she made no movement to go. Her face was hidden in her hands. She rocked herself to and fro, to and fro, as if in pain.

He stood looking down at her with troubled eyes, but after a while, as she did not speak, he moved to her side and stood there. At last, slowly and massively, he stooped and touched her.

"Columbine!"

She made no direct response, only suddenly, as if his action had released in her such a flood of emotion as was utterly beyond her control, she broke into violent weeping, her head bowed low upon her knees.

"My dear!" he said.

And then—how it came about neither of them ever knew—he was on his knees beside her, holding her close in his great arms, and she was sobbing out her agony upon his breast.

It lasted for many minutes that storm of weeping. All the torment of humiliation and grief, which till then had found no relief, was poured out in that burning torrent of tears. She clung to him

convulsively as though she even yet struggled in the deep waters, and he held her through it all with that sustaining strength that had borne her up safely against the Death Current on that night of dreadful storm.

Possibly the firm upholding of his arms brought back the memory of that former terrible struggle, for it was of that that she first spoke when speech became possible.

"Oh, why didn't you leave me to die? Why—why—why?"

He answered her in a voice that seemed to rise from the depths of the broad chest that supported her.

"I wanted you."

She buried her face deeper that he might not see the cruel burning of it. "So did he—then."

"Not he!" The deep voice held unutterable contempt. "He wanted to make his fortune out of you, that's all. He didn't care whether you lived or died, the damn' cur!" She shrank at the fierce words, and was instantly aware of the jealous closing of his arms about her.

"You aren't going to break your heart for a dirty swab like that," he said, with more of insistence than interrogation in his voice. "Look you here, Columbine! You're too honest to care for a beast like that. Why—though I pulled him out of the quicksand and saved him from the sea—I'd have wrung his neck if he'd stayed another day. I would that."

She started at the fiery declaration, and raised her head. "Oh, it was you who sent him away, then?"

Her look held almost desperate entreaty for a moment, but he met it with the utmost grimness and it quickly died.

"I didn't then," he said, with rough simplicity. "He made up his mind without any help from me. He knew he couldn't face you again. It's not a mite of good trying to deceive yourself now you know the truth. He's gone, and he won't come back. Columbine, don't tell me as you want him to!"

His expression for the moment was formidable. She caught an ominous gleam in the stern eyes, but almost immediately they softened. He uttered a sigh that ended in a groan. "Now I'm being a brute to you, when there's nothing that I wouldn't do for your sake." His voice shook a little. "You won't believe it, but it's true—it's true."

"Why shouldn't I believe it?" she said swiftly. She had begun to tremble in his hold.

He looked at her with an odd wistfulness. "Because I'm too big an oaf—to make you understand," he said.

"And that is why you have set me free?" she questioned.

He bent his head, almost as if the sudden question embarrassed him. "Yes, that," he said after a moment. "And because I care too much about you to—marry you against your will."

"And you call that love?" she said.

He made a slight gesture of surprise. "It is love," he said simply.

His arms were still around her, but she had only to move to be free. She did not move, save that she quivered like a vibrating wire, quivered and hid her face.

"Rufus!" she said.

"Yes?" His head was bent above hers, but he could only see her black hair, so completely was her face averted from him.

Her voice came, tensely whispering. "What if I were—willing to marry you?"

Something of her agitation had entered into him. A great quiver went through him also. But—"You're not," he said quietly, with conviction.

A trembling hand strayed upwards, feeling over his neck and throat, groping for his face. "Rufus"—again came the tense whisper—"how do you know that?" He took the wandering hand and pressed it softly against his cheek. "Because you don't love me, Columbine," he said.

"Ah!" A low sob escaped her; she lifted her head suddenly; the tears were running down her face. "But—but—you could teach me, Rufus. You could teach me what love—true love—is. I want the real thing—the real thing. Will you give it to me? I want it—more than anything else in the world." She drew nearer to him with the words, like a frozen creature seeking warmth, and in a moment her arms were slipping round his neck. "You are so true—so strong!" she sobbed. "I want to forget—I want to forget that I ever loved—any one but you."

His arms were close about her again. He pressed her so hard against his heart that she felt its strong beating against her own. His eyes gazed straight into hers, and in them she saw again that deep, deep blue as of flaming spirit.

"You mean it?" he said.

Breathlessly she answered him. "Yes, I mean it."

"Then"—he bent his great head to her, and for the fraction of a moment she saw the meteor-like flash of his smile—"yes, I'll teach you, Columbine," he said.

With the words he kissed her on the lips, kissed her closely, kissed her lingeringly, and in that kiss her torn heart found its first balm of healing.

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"Well, what did I say?" crowed Adam a little later. "Didn't I tell you if you left 'em alone he'd steer her safe into harbour? Wasn't I right, missus? Wasn't I right?"

"I'm not gainsaying it," said Mrs. Peck, with a touch of severity.

“And I’m sure I hope as all will turn out for the best.”

“Turn out for the best? Why, o’ course it will!” said Adam, with cheery confidence. “My son Rufus he may be slow, but he’s no fool. And he’s a good man, too, missus, a long sight better than that curly-topped chap. Him and me’s partners, so I ought to know.”

“To be sure you ought,” said Mrs. Peck tolerantly. “And it’s to be hoped that Columbine knows it as well.” And in the solitude of her own room Columbine bent her dainty head and kissed with reverence the little wild white roses that spoke to her of the purity of a good man’s love. Ω

# ABOUT THE AUTHORS

**The American Sunday-School Union** (1855) No books are published by the American Sunday-School Union without the sanction of the Committee of Publication, consisting of fourteen members, from the following denominations of Christians, viz. Baptist, Methodist, Congregational, Episcopal, Presbyterian, Lutheran, and Reformed Dutch. Not more than three of the members can be of the same denomination, and no book can be published to which any member of the Committee shall object.

**Fanny Barry's** stories for children have appeared in numerous collections since they were first published in the closing years of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. She is the author of *Soap Bubble Stories*, *The Fox Family*, *The Obstinate Elm Leaf*, and *The Bears of Wundermerk*, among others.

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**Frank Stockton** (1834-1902) was an American writer and humorist, the son of a Methodist minister. His published works were collected into 23 volumes after his death. "The Lady or the Tiger" is one of his most famous stories.

**Laura D. Thompson** is a 19 year old and lives in Lakeland, Florida. She attends Southeastern University as a freshman and is studying Theatre and Creative Writing. Although she has a great passion for acting, one of her aspirations in life is to write Christian romance (in an attempt to prove that you can write romance novels and keep it clean).

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