

tory glance at the jovial face of the author of her disillusionment, and then brought his eyes back to their soothing feast upon hers. "I can easily understand why you expected more," he pursued in a tone that he, somehow, enjoyed modulating to suit her own softness of speech. "When I was a boy and first thought of studying art it was all a golden glow; nothing was to go wrong; every hand was a jeweled helping one; every voice had the timbre of heaven inviting me upward by invisible steps, but now"—he shrugged his shoulders—"destiny has a way of putting a harness on one and hitching us to burdens which we are to draw over unexplored roads—whither? God knows. It is for our good, they say, the strengthening of our spiritual bones, sinews, and muscles; but I sometimes think we get through only with dead hearts in our breasts."

"I try to have more faith than that, Mr. Graham," she said. "I am afraid Bohemians neglect their early faith in worshiping art. When I am—homesick and feel blue I go to the little church round on the avenue and kneel down there and pray as I used to do at home; then a different feeling comes over me and I come away happier."

"Do you really, Mrs. Innes? I seldom go to church now. It used to comfort me more than anything else, but the habit was wiped off in the Latin Quarter. I should feel queer in a pew now."

"Then you ought to begin again."

"Perhaps I shall." He smiled sadly. "Will you believe it if I tell you this little talk has already made me take a—a more hopeful view ahead? I feel a little more like tugging at my bur-

den, you know, somehow it helps one to stand shoulder to shoulder with another toiler, and you are such a frail, young one—"

He broke off, for she had cast her eyes down at her plate and it was as if she had suddenly realized that they had both been disregarding the admonition of discretion in tacitly admitting so much to each other.

"I hope I have not offended you, my dear Mrs. Innes," he started anew. "I really—"

"No, you have not offended me at all," she assured him gently.

Graham felt a strange elation in his proximity to her. For the first time since he had been brought to see the wreck of his life, he felt himself freed from bondage to the woman who had wrought his downfall. The scales had dropped completely from his eyes. He felt like laughing out as the idea struck him that his wife had met her mate in the shallow, flippant Innes. They were speaking French and now and then a risqué bit of slang came across the table. Graham caught the curiously studious look of his wife once or twice, but he did not dream that it was because of a new light in his eyes.

At this juncture a slight commotion was heard in the restaurant adjoining the room. The waiters were expostulating mildly with some intruder.

"It is Mr. Gordon," cried Irma, in alarm. "I heard him call my name."

Then old Gordon managed to elude the grasp of the waiters and came into the room, his eyes glaring insanely as he looked over the faces at the table. His abstract gaze became concrete as it steadied itself on Irma's face.

To be concluded in the July Number.



In which the celebrated Captain Plum, Seeker of Lost Ships, figures in an exciting adventure of peril and love on the Great Lakes.



CAPTAIN PLUM came down Vint Street. About and behind him followed a rabble of small boys, awed and silent. Still behind them, massed about the Federal Building, was that heterogeneous crowd which is always made up of the idly curious. The crowd had made way for Captain Plum.

At his full six feet he swung down between two human seas, looking neither to the right nor to the left, but straight ahead to where he fancied he could see the smoke of his ship curling up to the sky. One armless sleeve fluttered out behind him; clouds of smoke from a blackened brier rose

above him; his strong, thick face was as immobile as a stone. His chilling silence and the lack of friendliness in his eyes hushed voices that would have offered him congratulations. Young women, admiring, gazed at him wonderingly; boys, filled with the enthusiastic romance of youth, crowded as close to him as they dared.

Captain Plum had been acquitted. Almost before the crowd had broken, reporters were hurrying the news to a score of papers, in the city and out, for this was the climax of one of the most picturesque trials that had ever come within the jurisdiction of a government court. The accusation against Captain Plum had not, in itself, been

startling. An attempt had been made to convict him of smuggling Chinese into the United States, and of being an agent of the Canadian Underground Railway. The attempt had failed, but it had made Captain Plum famous. The papers of lake cities had awakened to the possibilities of this unusual individual, and in one way or another they had uncovered the most striking parts of his history. These accounts disclosed Captain Plum as an adventurer of a most picturesque kind. One editor, in a column analysis of the man, stated boldly that a century and a half back he would have been a pirate or the captain of a vessel under letters of marque.

He had lost an arm in the war with Spain; government records showed that. A little later he had suffered trial with the crew of a South Pacific pearl-poacher, and had escaped by the use of his wits. He had sought treasure in the gold-fields of Alaska, and then had come to the Lakes. When brought to trial he was the captain of a tramp. His occupation, he said, was seeking for lost ships. He had discovered the *Northland*, with her treasure in copper, and had sold his knowledge to underwriters for the price of his tramp; he had located another long-lost fortune in the red metal, but at small profit to himself; he was now on the trail of a ship with a million aboard. He had never smuggled Chinamen; he had never smuggled opium; he had never done wrong—so he swore, and the jury brought a verdict which showed that no man could prove to the contrary.

So now he passed down Vint Street, puffing out odorless clouds of smoke, his empty sleeve flapping vindictively, and a curious mixture of elation and

ire struggling within him. He was glad that he was free, but he was enraged at the populace. For days it had scrutinized him as a curiosity. But this last—this assembling of a great crowd which stood aside and let him pass through as though he were an animal or a murderer—brought even his good humor to the breaking-point. He felt like kicking every man in the street. Involuntarily he clenched his one hand and was imagining what pleasure it would give him to use it upon some of the people behind him, when a timid little fist gripped the thumb of it from below. Captain Plum looked down. He encountered the pinched, hungry-looking face of a small urchin gazing up into his own.

"I'm—I'm awful glad they let you go, mister," he panted, as he trotted alongside.

There was honest reverence in his big eyes, which glowed with unusual brightness in a pallid face; and Captain Plum stopped. He forgot his anger. Here was real friendship, real sympathy. He saw the ragged poverty of the boy and the hunger in his eyes, and he shoved his hand into his pocket. It was a dollar bill that he drew out. He was not rich, but he thrust it down into the youngster's fingers, and when he strode onward, his head thrown up, his shoulders back, and smoke clouds trailing behind, there was a softer look in his face.

Aboard the *Loon* preparations had been made for Captain Plum's arrival. For seven weeks the *Loon* had lain silent and smokeless at her mooring. Now, as he came down over the cobblestone pavement to the water-front, the captain saw a heavy column of smoke rising from her funnel. His heart danced with the old joy. He took his

pipe from his mouth and whistled happily. Within a few hours he would be under sail, with the *Loon* pounding her way toward a wild, unfathomed, and unsailed stretch of the big North Lake nearly a thousand miles away, where he was sure that a treasure lay.

He forgot his grudge, he forgot the score of youngsters still trailing at his heels, and he waved his pipe arm high above his head when he saw Griggs, his mate, greeting him from the stern of the antiquated *Loon*. The crew—Wallace and the cook's husband—stood beside Griggs, grinning broadly and happily, and the cook herself, her ruddy face shining with good cheer, met him at the gangway.

"Thank th' Lord, cap'n!" she wheezed devoutly, for the good cook spoke at all times as though she lived in a constant struggle for breath. "We was so sure they'd let you go that I'm making a feast in the galley. We ain't forgot your birthday, which was day before yesterday, and we're goin' to celebrate to-night. I got a goose, 'n' plum puddin', 'n'—"

"I smell 'em!" laughed the captain, sniffing the air.

He shook her fat hand and almost embraced the three members of the crew who gathered about him.

"We'll have it outside of this dirty, fool-filled harbor," he said, noticing the crowd of curious idlers congregating on the wharf beside his ship. "Look at 'em, Griggs!" he growled. "They've followed me like a pack of yellow curs! I wish"—his eyes blazed angrily as he turned toward the wharf—"I wish I had those newspaper men—*here!* They've made an ass of me. You noticed as I came down that I'm a sort of small boys' hero. Soldier, pirate, pearl-

poacher, gold-seeker, treasure-hunter! Damn!"

He turned toward his cabin.

"If anybody attempts to come aboard, Griggs, murder 'em with a capstan-bar. And let's get under way—quick!" His good humor returned to him as he entered the cabin. What he saw there aroused the big, happy soul of him, and he laughed aloud with pleasure. His crew loved him, and everywhere about were signs of it. They had revarnished his room. There was a new rug upon the floor; new, spotlessly white curtains were hanging at the windows; and there was an open box of cigars upon the table.

He contemplated these things for a moment, and then thrust his head out of the door and roared his thanks to Griggs and the others. This was home. He threw off his coat, lighted a cigar, and paced back and forth. For several days past, during the final stage of his trial, the desire in him to regain his freedom that he might resume the study of a certain chart locked up in his cabin-chest had become almost feverish.

In the wretchedness of those days he had forgotten his birthday. But his crew had not; and now that they had reminded him of it he wondered how old he was. Unless he went back to a certain milestone in his career he was never sure of himself. He was rather proud of the fact that he had spent two years in college. He was in his twenty-second year when he gave up school for service in Cuba. In facetious moments he dubbed that particular year "Anno Christopher Plum, r." It marked the beginning of his history. From that time he lived a curiously picturesque life. He did not go over that now, but arrived at his

agt, which he concluded to be thirty-one. By the time he had finished some one knocked at his door, and Griggs stuck in his head.

"There's somebody wants to come aboard, sir," he began.

"Murder 'im!" snapped the captain, smiling.

"But it ain't an 'im, sir," urged the mate. "It's a lady!"

"A woman! For the love o'—"

Captain Plum stared at his officer. He lacked words and stood glaring. He knew no woman who for any possible reason would come aboard the *Loon*.

"She's pretty—and perlite," soothed the mate, "and—"

He jumped as though he had been shot in the back. A sweet voice behind him had asked his pardon, a small hand had pushed him gently aside, and Captain Plum, veteran and adventurer, stood with a cold sweat on his brow, face-to-face with his visitor. Griggs had proclaimed her pretty. She was exceedingly so. She had pushed up a veil, revealing a pair of dark eyes which looked timidly and anxiously at Captain Plum, and a face overcome for the moment with evident fright.

"I—I—beg a thousand pardons!" she stammered, "I would have remained on deck—I wouldn't have intruded—if there weren't so many people down there, and all watching me! Oh, dear, I'm afraid—"

Captain Plum's face relaxed, and a flush came into his cheeks, paled by the weeks of his enforced vacation ashore.

"My business was so important that I didn't think of what *they* might say when I came aboard," hurried the girl, not waiting for him to speak. "I feared that you might leave very soon."

"I would have been under way with in half an hour," replied the captain, recovering himself. "Won't you have a chair?" He drew a newly cushioned rocker to her, and smiled in the broad, honest way that made men confide in him, and would have made women love him had he mingled among them.

The girl smiled back at him as she seated herself. It was a sweet, apologetic smile, and paved the way straight into Captain Plum's confidence. It also made him ill at ease. Once he had sought the companionship of women, as other men seek it; but the loss of an arm had changed all that. He thought of his misfortune now, and regretted that he had taken off his coat.

"I'm in trouble," said the girl softly. "And you can help me if you will." Her dark eyes pleaded with him as she looked up into his face. "I want to hire your boat for to-night!"

She anticipated his surprise, and held out a card.

"I am Miss Genevieve Redmond, of Pleasure Cove," she added quickly. "My father is Captain Redmond, of the *Christy Fleet*. I had arranged for a tug, but I have been disappointed. I thought—perhaps—"

She stopped. A dash of crimson colored her cheeks; but she laughed squarely in Captain Plum's face, openly acknowledging her embarrassment.

"You thought I would be tickled to death to get a job after my trouble ashore," he assisted, the humor of the situation twinkling in his eyes. "Well, I am. Only—" He slipped on his coat, laughing down at her. "You know a three-hundred-ton barge is rather an expensive thing to hire."

"I've got a hundred dollars."

"And what do you want me to do?" "Bring a passenger over from Wal-

lacetown, Canada," replied the girl. "A very important passenger, if you please, Captain Plum; a poor, dear little thing who is now marooned in Wallacetown without a hope of getting to this side by rail for a day and a half! And the horror of it is—she's due to be married at my home to-morrow morning at seven o'clock!"

Captain Plum bowed with a gallant sweep of his empty sleeve.

"I'm at your service, Miss Redmond!"

He fell to figuring upon the back of an envelope, and the girl watched him in silence. Suddenly he looked up.

"Are you going?" he asked.

"If you will let me," she replied, coloring.

"Then on account of the pleasure I shall find in your presence at my birthday-spread to-night I'm going to make you an especially cheap rate. You see we don't carry passengers, haven't even got a license. I'm a—let's see—" He pulled a newspaper out of his coat-pocket, "This is the latest," he laughed, pointing to a row of two-column head-lines. "See!—I'm a soldier, pearl-poacher, gold-seeker, treasure-hunter—and a pirate if I'd had the chance! Lord, but you're brave, Miss Redmond! How do you know but what I may hold you for ransom? By George, you're a brick, and I'll just charge you for the coal!"

Then came a knock, and Griggs' face appeared at the door.

"We're ready, sir!"

Captain Plum glanced at the girl. Her eyes met his own, laughing, daring.

"So am I!" she nodded.

"All right, Griggs; get under way!" called the master of the *Loon*. "And send Mrs. Tompkins here directly, will

you?" Mrs. Tompkins is our cook," he explained to his passenger as the mate turned away. "She's a good old soul, and will make things pleasant for you in her cabin."

A few minutes later, as Miss Redmond was following the cook through the door, she paused for a moment and held out her hand to the captain.

"It's impossible for me to tell you how much I thank you," she said, her eyes glowing upon him softly. "But I can't let you do it for that! You must take it all—the hundred dollars. That was what I was going to pay the tug—"

Suddenly she caught herself; her breath came in two or three quick, frightened little gasps, and without another word she hastened after Mrs. Tompkins. For a few moments Captain Plum stood as if transfixed. He watched the slender figure of the girl as she half ran across the deck. At the galley she turned and smiled at him, and waved her hand, and when she had disappeared the master of the *Loon* closed the door of his cabin, a look of supreme perplexity in his face.

A hundred dollars—for a tug! It sounded suspicious. And more—the tug-captain had evidently backed out even at that price! The suddenness of the incident had astonished him; but now, the longer he thought of it, the more perplexed he became. Was it possible that he had launched himself in the service of an adventuress? It had not occurred to him until the girl had let slip the price she was to have paid for the tug. Perhaps the "bride-to-be" on the other side was to carry diamonds or opium. Perhaps—

He went to the door and called loudly for Griggs.

"Griggs," he asked when the mate

came up, "did you ever hear of Captain Redmond, of the Christy Line?"

Griggs scratched his head, and thought deeply.

"Never did, sir," he said, after a minute.

Griggs was born of the Lake breed, and his reply was not reassuring. The captain gave him the course for Wallacetown. For half an hour thereafter he sat in his newly cushioned chair, smoking furiously as was his habit, and thinking as hard as he smoked. It struck him that he had only escaped from one very embarrassing situation, in which his liberty and property had been imperiled, to enmesh himself in another. So far as he could see it was simply a hop from the frying-pan into the fire; for the distress he began to experience in his present dilemma promised to be as poignant, if not as enduring, as that of the one which had preceded it. If the girl were innocent he would mortally offend her by hinting his suspicion; if she were not innocent how the devil would he discover that fact? He asked himself this with considerable emphasis.

After a little he came to the conclusion that he could at least casually question her about the tug-money; and with this in view he went out upon the deck, and made his way to the galley.

What happened there Captain Plum could never afterward quite satisfactorily explain to himself. He found the girl with her hat off and her sleeves tucked up, peeling potatoes. For half an hour he stood in the doorway of the kitchen, with the heat from the big range surging into his face, but he did not speak of the tug-money. When he walked away he was in a whirl of mental excitement, and he went amid-

ships, where the cool breeze of the open lake blew strong against him.

For a long time he had steeled himself against the natural yearning of men for the companionship of women: His empty sleeve had never during that time allowed him to forget what he considered this necessary struggle with himself. But during the brief interval in the galley Captain Redmond's girl had stirred a revolution within him. There were a dozen things about her that had gone straight to his heart; he acknowledged the fact half aloud, and in the next breath he called himself a fool. He strode up and down, and tried to straighten out matters satisfactorily with himself. But he failed. He decided to investigate no further. If the girl was an adventuress he did not care to know it; he would bring the passenger across even though he took a risk in doing so; he would land the two safely on the American side; and then, even that night, he would head the *Loon* up into the North, where his treasure-ship lay.

He went into the cabin and unlocked his chest. It was filled mostly with books and charts, and from among the latter he chose one and spread it out upon the table. He had worked upon this chart for months. Its margin was filled with columns and masses of figures. He had gone over these again and again; most of them he bore in his memory; but this afternoon he studied them anew. He was still working when a timid knock came at the door, and when he looked up he saw Miss Redmond standing there.

"May I come in?" she asked.

Not waiting for him to reply she hurried to the table and dropped a roll of bills upon the chart.

"There is the money, Captain Plum. If you won't accept it I—I want you to take me back!"

The flush of an hour before had left the girl's face; there were a tenseness about her mouth and an earnestness in her eyes which betrayed determination. In silence the captain looked up at her. He shoved the money to the edge of the table; the girl returned it to the chart. Her eyes were almost aggressive in their steadiness. But there came suddenly a little quiver of her mouth, and the master of the *Loon* pushed the bills back again, and dropped the end of his pencil upon the center of his treasure-key.

"Look at this, Miss Redmond," he said softly. "Here is Manitoulin Island—this red line—see? And this bay right across is on the Canada shore. Many years ago a ship started down from the big north mines by this way, and she was never heard of again. For a year I've been on her trail. I know the last point at which she was seen; I know where she would have been seen next had she lived; I've followed her foot by foot, and I know within the twentieth of a degree of where she lies. I will find her before autumn, and she's got half a million in copper aboard. I don't want *this* money, Miss Redmond!"

He offered her the bills, smiling, confident, but she backed from him a step, and her breath came quickly, in a sobbing, excited way.

"Will you take me back?" she whispered.

"No."

He laughed across at her in his honest way.

"But we won't quarrel any more about the money," he added. "I'll take

it, and buy a wedding-present for the bride. You won't object to—"

The girl interrupted him with a tearful, pleading cry.

"Please take me back; please, Captain Plum! I don't want to go to Wallacetown! I—oh, dear—"

The voice of Tompkins, the cook's husband, sounded from without.

"Supper is ready, sir!"

For an instant the captain turned away, his heart thumping with the excitement of his discovery. He was convinced; the adventuress had convicted herself. When he faced Miss Redmond again there was no anger in his face. He was greatly relieved, and greatly disappointed. The girl had helped him out of his dilemma, but now he knew what she was. Something of what he felt found its way into his voice.

"We'll go back, Miss Redmond!"

Mechanically the girl reached out and took the money, without dropping her anxious eyes from the man's face.

"I wish you would keep some of it—for your trouble," she said. The wretchedness went slowly out of her eyes, and they glowed softly and thankfully at him.

"No, nothing!"

He led her out upon the deck. Darkness had fallen, and the lake twinkled with the star-lamps of passing ships. Miles behind they could see the glow of the city.

"I will never forget your kindness—never!" she whispered.

She placed her hand upon his one arm, and allowed it to rest there for a moment. Captain Plum understood. The girl knew that he suspected her; she knew that he had guessed what was awaiting them at Wallacetown, and she was glad that he would take her back.

It flashed upon him that he would like to tell her how thankful he was, too. So he paused and pointed to the light in the sky which marked the distant city.

"Back there they held me in jail for seven weeks," he murmured, bending so near that he felt a tress of her hair blowing across his face. "They accused me of smuggling Chinamen, but I proved that they were wrong. They are watching me now, and if they ever caught me with anything aboard—*anything*, mind you—Heaven and earth couldn't save me!"

He could feel the girl's hand tremble as it sought his arm again. She let it rest there until they reached the mess-room door, and the touch of it thrilled him with pleasure, even though he knew it to be the hand of a woman turned against the law. And later that night, when the *Loon* felt her way cautiously back into harbor, and the girl stood beside him for the last five minutes, there welled up a feeling within him now and then which made him know that her going would cause him pain. It seemed to him that he had known her for weeks instead of hours, and at one of these times he almost brought himself to the point of telling her that he would miss her when she was gone. But he knew that she would laugh at him afterward, so he fought back the desire.

At the last moment, when he had led her over the gang-plank, the girl turned and held out her hand to him. He was startled by the look in her face. The flush of excitement had ebbed from her cheeks and her eyes glowed with a strange fire. Tense lines had gathered round the soft mouth, and in every line of her beautiful face Captain Plum saw a white terror that held him for a moment transfixed.

"I'm so glad—so glad!" she whispered brokenly. "Oh, I am wicked, wicked, but I haven't done wrong to you!"

Her throat trembled with a sob which she tried to hold back, but Nathaniel Plum saw the quiver of it, saw the despair in her sweet face, and his heart leaped out to her with all its throbbing love, and catching her extended hand in both his own he bowed his head close down to hers and said softly:

"This trip to Wallacetown—means much—to you—"

He caught her quick, hot, up-turned breath.

"It means everything!"

He felt her little fingers tighten convulsively about his own, and their pressure sent a swift, thrilling joy through his blood.

"It means more than—more than—life—or death—to me!" she panted, and he felt the muscles of her arm tighten as she sought to pull away her hand.

"What does it mean?" he insisted.

"It means that I was wicked enough to—to think of saving my honor by sacrificing yours!" she cried, freeing herself and hesitating for a moment, death-white, before him. "It is a matter of honor—of disgrace—of—"

She turned, and the sob burst from her throat, but in a single stride Captain Plum had overtaken her and caught her by the arm. As if she had been but a child he whirled her about and led her quickly over the gang-plank. His laugh rose clear and exhilarating. He was smiling when her frightened face stared up into his own.

"If it's a matter of honor," he said, "a matter of your honor against mine, why—I guess there's just one thing to do! We'll go to Wallacetown!"

II

Captain Plum walked so swiftly across the deck of his ship that the girl at his side almost ran to keep up with him. As he passed the astonished Griggs, still retaining her arm, he called out to him to get under way for Wallacetown, and without further explanation entered his little cabin with Miss Redmond.

As the door closed behind them the two faced each other. Miss Redmond was as white as the sprig of hyacinth that trembled upon her bosom and her small gloved hands clenched themselves fiercely as for a moment her glowing eyes met those of Captain Plum in unflinching challenge. A flush had come into Captain Plum's pale cheeks, strangely in contrast with his companion's terrified pallor. There were the loyalty and honesty that made people love him in the warm laughter of his eyes as he smiled down upon her.

The girl's lips quivered, she caught her breath in two or three quick little sobs, and Captain Plum knew that she was struggling bravely to keep back the tears. So he turned away from her and began loading his pipe at the table.

"If it means very much to you we'll go to Wallacetown," he repeated, and he was startled by the tremor in his own voice. "Only—I wish you'd tell me—"

He heard the girl come close beside him and felt the touch of her hand on his empty sleeve.

"I've lied to you!" she whispered. "I've lied to you—lied to you—*terribly!*"

He did not lift his head.

"I know it, Miss Redmond!"

There was an instant's silence, and then a stifled, sobbing cry, and Captain Plum dropped his pipe and turned to the girl, his face as white as her own now, his one arm stretched out to her, and his voice was filled with a pleading tenderness as he said:

"You won't lie to me any more?"

"N-n-never!"

"We're going to Wallacetown for—"

He paused questioningly. The girl caught her breath, struggling hard to speak, and as Captain Plum's great, gentle smile came into his face again she looked straight into his eyes, and said, so softly that he barely heard:

"A little box."

"A little box."

He repeated the words, and picked up his pipe. Then he turned slowly toward the door.

"Make yourself comfortable, Miss—Redmond." He spoke her name haltingly, still smiling, and put on his hat. In an instant she was at his side, clasping his one arm in the excited grip of her two little hands, her beautiful eyes shining up at him in pleading glory that set his heart throbbing in a way that was strange and new to him.

"I have lied to you, but when you know you will forgive me!" she breathed, so close that he felt the warm touch of her breath. "I did not come to you because I thought you were that—*that kind* of a man, but because I knew you were *brave!* I have read all about you, and I saw you to-day when you gave some money to a little boy in the street!"

Her eyes drooped and a flush shot into her cheeks as she made the confession. Captain Plum felt a choking something, like a great fist, rise in his throat, and silently he held out his

hand. For a moment the girl took it in both her own, and in her eyes there shone the sweet softness of a light of which he had dreamed, but which he had never dared hope to see.

"You will forgive me when you know," she said again. "Shall I—tell you?"

Her lips quivered, and her fingers tightened around the big hand she still held. The pressure thrilled Captain Plum. It had been ages since he had known that gentle clasp of a woman's hand, and he straightened himself, and his head rose high above her, and he knew that whatever this girl might be he would love her until the end of time for the sweetness that she had given to him.

"No, you need not tell me!" he cried, and his voice rang strong with the thrilling joy that was in him. "And if you have done wrong, or are doing wrong, I forgive you—now!"

He opened the door and went out into the night, his head throbbing, his face burning, the blood leaping through his veins in a joyous excitement. The *Loon* was under way and the lights were already falling behind. Unobserved by Griggs he went forward and leaned over the bow, with his eyes turned across the lake.

His fears of an hour or two before were gone. He was fighting now, not for himself, but for the little girl in the cabin, and the muscles of his one arm were tense with his desire for action. To-night, for just one night, the girl belonged to him. She had given herself into his keeping, and more than that, her honor. For he believed all that she had said, as he might have believed the words of an angel, and he guessed at those things which she had not said. Perhaps he

reasoned and thought differently than other men would have reasoned and thought. But he was different from other men, and chiefly because of his missing arm. A woman had come into his life. She had brought to him beauty and gentleness and confidence, and she had looked into his eyes in a way that no other woman in the world had ever looked—since the day he lost his arm.

Perhaps he was a fool. Vaguely that idea came to him again. But it quickly vanished before other visions, and when he returned to his cabin it was with the feeling that for a brief time he had come into that heritage which is the happiness of all mankind.

The girl sat in his rocking-chair. She had taken off her hat, and it lay upon the table. A bit of color had returned into her cheeks, and as Captain Plum came in she looked at him eagerly and a little anxious smile softened the tenseness of her face. It was a half-trustful, inquiring, pleading smile, as spontaneous as the honest warmth which gleamed back at her from Captain Plum's eyes, and for a full half-dozen breaths they looked in this way without speech, and each moment added to the strength of the growing faith between them. There was something sweetly dependent in the little figure that had taken possession of the big rocking-chair, and as Miss Redmond still smiled up at him in the timid assurance of his friendship Captain Plum strode quickly to her side and held out his big brown hand.

"I believe that I've wronged you, Miss Redmond," he said frankly. "And I want to ask your pardon. I took you for a—a—well, it was a sin! Will you—"

"You didn't wrong me," cried the girl quickly, her fingers tightening in his hand. "I am wicked. I lied to you, and I am going to—to—"

"Never mind about that," he interrupted gently, catching the pathetic quiver of her throat, again. "Sometimes the friend who lies is the only friend who is true," he added, drawing a chair near to her. "I've known such friends as that, and I love them. And as for being wicked, well, God didn't make the laws of men, and He didn't mean that a half of them ever should be made! I don't believe you are breaking a God law, and that is the only sin!"

She stared wide-eyed at him as if he had found for her a new commandment.

"For seven weeks I was in jail back there because I lived up to the Golden Rule," he persisted. "I did for a friend what that friend would have done for me, and he is happier—and I am happier because it all happened, and I believe the good Lord is mighty well pleased too. And you're going to do no worse."

For an hour after that Captain Plum talked as he had never before talked to a woman. The girl sat with her chin in the rounded cups of her hands, her eyes upon him softly, her lips parted, and her cheeks flushed as she listened to what he said. He seemed, now, to have known this girl from away back in the almost forgotten years of the past. It was the soft sheen of her brown hair that had been always with him in his dreams, and it was this light in her eyes that made him a sinless worshiper of women. And he told her of his broken ambitions, his shattered hopes, and spoke to her like a boy of what he

had meant to be before misfortune hung its millstone round his neck. It was the emptying of a heart long barred from all of his kind, and a mist came into the girl's eyes as she listened, and her bosom rose and fell with a quick-breathing sympathy which Captain Plum did not see. Suddenly he stopped, and looking at his watch, he said:

"We are very near to Wallacetown."

The girl had not spoken. Steadily she gazed at him still, and there was something so gloriously pure and clear in her eyes that Captain Plum's dropped before them.

"We are very near to Wallacetown," he repeated. "What are we going—to—do?"

A low cry brought his gaze back to her. She had drawn herself erect, and in her face he saw again the old lines of torture and fear. In an instant he was on his feet.

"Come, Miss Genevieve," he whispered, taking her gently by the arm. "Tell me, where am I to find the box?"

"They—they—will bring it—"

"And we must signal to them in some way?"

Captain Plum was startled by the change that came suddenly over the girl. She sprang to her feet and stood before him, quivering, her eyes flashing, the blood of excitement mounting into her cheeks.

"We must flash a lantern from the bow," she cried. "They will be waiting for us a mile outside of the harbor!"

She ran with him out upon the deck and Captain Plum shouted out his commands to Griggs in the pilot-house.

"Ease her down to dead slow,

Griggs," he called. "We're going to take something aboard!"

A lantern was burning low forward, and Captain Plum took it in his hand.

"We're within a mile of the harbor now, Miss Genevieve. Here goes!"

He leaned over the bow, but the girl clutched at his one arm fiercely.

"Not you!" she panted. "Not you, Captain Plum! I must wave the light—I must——"

He leaned far over, laughing back into her face, and the light swung back and forth. She strove to pull it in, and in the struggle one of her arms slipped about his shoulder, and for an instant the sweet pressure of her head rested against his breast.

"Please!" she sobbed. "Please!"

Then, as the lantern continued to swing, she was still for a moment, her arm still around his shoulder, her head touching his breast. Half a dozen quick, throbbing heartbeats and the arm fell from him, the girl drew her head back, and from an eighth of a mile out in the night there came an answering flash.

"They see us!" he said, and his voice sounded strange to him.

He called back to Griggs, and the rumble of the *Loon's* engines ceased. Five minutes later a dark object came slowly up out of the gloom and ran alongside. It was a small boat, and from it a heavy voice called up.

"Hello, above there! Are you looking for a passenger?"

The girl replied quickly.

"Yes; a young lady from Wallace-town who is to be married across the lake to-morrow."

"Sorry, ma'am," replied the same voice, "but she couldn't come. But we've got a box of hers, which she

wants you to take back with you. Look out, 'ere comes a rope!"

Captain Plum caught the end of the rope and the girl tugged with him until the box hove over the side. Then the small boat slipped silently off into the gloom.

"Get under way, Griggs. We're going back now!" And Captain Plum swung the box under his arm and re-entered the cabin, closely followed by Miss Redmond.

"So that's the thing that has been causing you all your misery, Miss Genevieve?" he cried happily, placing it upon the table. "Well, it doesn't look so awfully wicked, and——"

He stopped as suddenly as though some one had struck him a blow. Through the partly open door there came new and strange sounds; an excited shout from Griggs, a clear voice ringing out in sharp command, the tramp of feet! In a single bound Captain Plum was at the door.

"Mother of God!" he cried, whirling back. He stretched out his arm to the girl, and his face was as white as death. "Genevieve, my poor little girl; it's the revenue men!"

He leaped past her, and when he turned he held a long-barreled revolver in his hand.

"Thank God that I'm going to do this for you!" he whispered brokenly, pressing his lips close down in her hair. "I'm going to do this for you—because I love you!" The words shot from him, and he leveled his weapon toward the door.

The feet were tramping nearer, and there came again the mate's warning shout to the master of the *Loon*. For a few moments the girl had stood rooted in terror. She heard Captain Plum's words, felt his breath upon her

face as he spoke his words of love, and saw the gleaming pistol in his hand. Then she awakened into life.

With a passionate cry she flung herself upon the man's outstretched arm, and clutched the pistol to her breast. So quick was the movement that the weapon was wrenched from his grip and before he could recover himself she had darted behind the table and thrust it within the bosom of her dress.

"My God, it is an automatic—and cocked!" he cried in horror. "Give it to me!"

She backed from him, her eyes flashing beautifully defiant. Then she looked beyond him to the door and when Captain Plum turned the room was filling with men. He seized the back of a chair, but the girl's hand closed upon his own, and he stood silent, his face chalk-white, his breath coming in the sharp strong desire to fling himself at the throats of these vultures of the law who had swooped upon him in the one moment of all his life when he had found the love of a woman. But the hand held him. He heard the soft, sweet voice of the girl whispering to him. And then, with the clearness of a bell, her voice rose:

"Gentlemen, there is what you are after. That box is mine, and I am responsible for it being on board. No person on this ship knows what it contains but myself. I am the only guilty one!"

She stood erect and unafraid, her eyes turned unflinchingly upon the young lieutenant of marine who had already advanced to the table. The officer glanced from her to Captain Plum, and a smile which only the master of the *Loon* understood played suggestively about the corners of his mouth.

"I have had the pleasure of meeting Captain Plum before, when we thought he had Chinamen with him," he said. He shot an admiring look at the girl. "It is splendid of you to defend him, but—men, take Captain Plum to the cutter!"

He advanced a step, but the girl was before him in a flash.

"I swear that he is innocent!" she cried. "You have no right to arrest him. He does not know what is in the box!"

It was then that Captain Plum's voice sounded with stately coolness from behind her.

"Lieutenant, the girl is lying—lying to save me! She came aboard this vessel less than three hours ago. She is in no way mixed up in this affair, except in an effort to save me. If you will give me your word as a gentleman to let my men take her ashore I will make a full confession, and swear to it. I know what is in the box. You will find diamonds there!"

Slowly, as if for a moment his words had stunned her, Miss Redmond turned toward him, and it was as if life had suddenly gone from her face. She saw the look of love and triumph in Captain Plum's eyes, heard indistinctly the lieutenant commanding the opening of the box, and then she turned like a tigress upon the revenue men again, and the three who were advancing toward the master of the *Loon* stopped before the dull gleam of the revolver she was leveling at their breasts.

"Open the box—first!" she commanded. "I will tell you how many diamonds you find. I will tell you how much they are worth. I will tell you to whom they belong. But you shall not touch this man!"

The lieutenant stepped boldly in front of the weapon.

"Put down your gun," he said. "We will see what is in the box." As the pistol dropped to her side he added: "I am sorry. You deserve something better than this."

There was a rending of wood as the cover was torn from the box and Miss Redmond leaned eagerly over the table.

"They are mine!" she cried again. "He knows nothing about them! He has no claims upon them! They are mine—mine!"

She felt a hand upon her arm and lifted her white face to Captain Plum, who towered over her, staring down into the box. Involuntarily she clutched his one hand and a meaning sob fell from her lips as she held her eyes upon him. Then, as she looked, there came a strange change. There was a sudden flash in his eyes, his lips tightened, and in an instant a flood of blood surged into his thin cheeks as he raised his head—and laughed! In another instant she, too, had turned and was looking into the box. *It was empty!* She felt herself swaying, and blindly she reached up with her arms, and the revolver crashed to the floor as they fell limply about the man's shoulders. She heard his voice—clear, cool, laughingly defiant.

"Are we even now, lieutenant, for the nasty turn you did me in arresting me for a smuggler? A pretty good joke, eh? I knew that your boat was waiting for me out here. Pretty good stuff for the newspapers, eh?—with Lieutenant Watterson in the head-lines! Didn't the lady play her part beautifully?"

His laugh rose joyfully above the excited breathing of men and the shuffling of feet.

"Now, if you are satisfied, I shall ask you to leave my ship. And next time, Lieutenant Watterson, be a little more careful about your cue!"

His clear laugh sounded triumphant and thrilling again, and what the girl heard after that came to her as if in a dream. Voices seemed to come to her from a great distance, like faint echoes, and she tightened her arms about Captain Plum's shoulders to keep from sinking at his feet. It seemed an age before there was silence in the little cabin, and it was the passionate pressure of the man's face against her own that brought her back into a realization of what had happened. Dizzily she raised her head from his breast. The room was empty. The door was open, and through it she caught again the tramping of feet and the hoarse laughter of Griggs, the mate. Her eyes sought Captain Plum's.

"Genevieve," he whispered tensely, "Genevieve, what does it mean?"

She drew half-away from him, staring wildly into his face.

"I don't know!" she struggled. "I don't know—what it—means."

"There is nothing in the box," he persisted.

"I don't know why the box is empty," she repeated, her bosom rising and falling in quick-breathing excitement. "But I know what it means to me. It means—!" She caught her breath sobbingly. "It means that I have found the noblest and bravest man in the whole world!" And she reached out her arms, sobbing now like a child, and Captain Plum knew that the great dream of life had at last come true for him.

Half an hour later Captain Plum opened the door of his cabin and came

on deck. He found Griggs in the pilot-house.

"A mighty close shave, Griggs!" he laughed.

"Pretty close, sir!"

Captain Plum brought his head very near to the old mate's.

"You see it's this way, Griggs," he continued. "Captain Redmond is a retired master who lives at Pleasure Cove. He's an invalid. The girl has no mother, but she's got a brother, and—"

He shrugged his shoulders suggestively.

"He's been playing the Underground to the limit! Recently he staked his all, and a little more, on diamonds, and when the game seemed up with him over here he went to his sister and pleaded with her to help him, and swore with his hand on a Bible that he'd give up the game forever if she would help him out of this fix. She was between the devil and the deep sea, if you want to put it in that way, Griggs. Young Redmond's discovery and arrest meant—well, you can understand what it meant for her. So, at the last moment, she came to me! But tell me this, Griggs—where in the deuce are the diamonds that should have been in that box?"

Griggs lifted his face from the ship's compass and in the dim light of the pilot-house lamp Captain Plum saw that he was laughing.

"I was looking in at the door w'en it all 'appened," he chuckled. "And—Good Lord, cap'n, you don't mean to say you don't know where the diamonds are!"

"Griggs, I'll be—I'll be damned if I do!"

Humor went out of the mate's face

as he stared squarely at Captain Plum. Astonishment, incredulity almost, was stamped in every feature. Then the corners of his mouth quivered, and he grinned.

"No wonder, no wonder, cap'n, after what you've gone through during the past seven weeks—and to-night." He chuckled. "Ain't it struck you, cap'n, that it would be a brother worse'n a murderer who'd run his sister into a real fix of this sort? Good Lord, sir, the girl's been used as a decoy, that's all, and by this time her smart brother and the diamonds are safe on the other side, or my name ain't Griggs! Why, this is the oldest smuggling trick on earth, sir; and you mean to say you—don't—know—it?"

For a few moments Captain Plum stood as if the mate's words had struck him dumb. Then he said quietly:

"Griggs, we're going to Pleasure Cove. Set your course to lay offshore about twenty miles east of Buffalo. And, by the way, Griggs, by to-morrow morning we will have forgotten all about this, won't we?"

"Yes, sir!"

"And we're going to stay at Pleasure Cove for a—an indefinite time, Griggs. You and I will become very well acquainted with Miss Redmond's brother. I hope he got the diamonds across, and so do you, don't you, Griggs?"

"Yes, sir!"

"But there is no need of Miss Redmond ever guessing it, or the old father either, if we get hold of Brother Redmond first and let him into our little scheme of 'say nothing,' is there?"

Captain Plum's great, happy smile beamed upon Griggs, and silently they gripped hands over the wheel.

"God bless y' both, sir!" murmured Griggs. "I think I understand!"