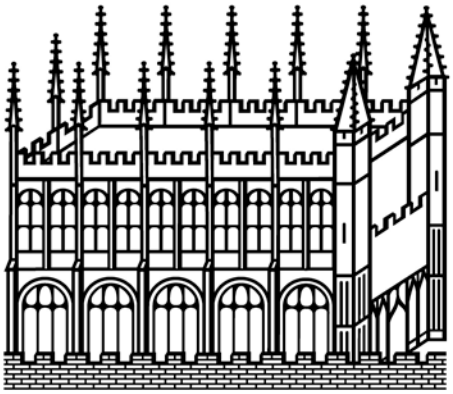

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Carnac

GILBERT PARKER

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Carnac

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CARNAC

By

GILBERT PARKER

Author of "The Seats of the Mighty," "The Right of Way," "The Judgment House," "No Defence," etc.

Hodder and Stoughton
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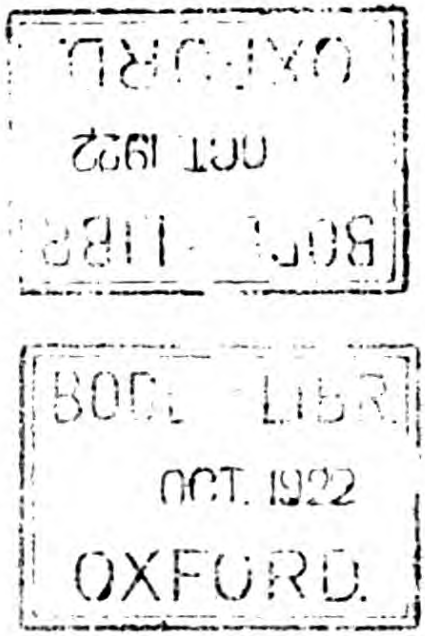

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Book I

"CARNAC! Carnac! Come and catch me, Carnac!"

It was a day of perfect summer and hope and happiness in the sweet, wild world behind the near woods and the far circle of sky and pine and hemlock. The voice that called was young and vibrant, and had in it the simple, true soul of things. It had the clearness of a bugle-call—ample and full of life and all life's possibilities. It laughed; it challenged; it decoyed.

Carnac heard the summons and did his best to catch the girl in the wood by the tumbling stream, where he had for many an hour emptied out his wayward heart; where he had seen his father's logs and timbers caught in jams, hunched up on rocky ledges, held by the prong of a rock, where man's purpose could, apparently, avail so little. Then he had watched the black-bearded river-drivers with their pike-poles and their levers loose the key-logs of the bunch, and the tumbling citizens of the woods and streams toss away down the current to the wider waters below. He was only a lad of fourteen, and the girl was only eight,

but she—Junia—was as spry and graceful a being as ever woke the echoes of a forest.

He was only fourteen, but already he had visions and dreamed dreams. His father—John Grier—was the great lumber-king of Canada, and Junia was the child of a lawyer who had done little with his life, but had had great joy of his two daughters, who were dear to him beyond telling.

Carnac was one of Nature's freaks or accidents. He was physically strong and daring, but, as a boy, mentally he lacked concentration and decision, though very clever. He was led from thing to thing like a ray of errant light, and he did not put a hand on himself, as old Denzil, the partly deformed servant of Junia's home, said of him on occasion; and Denzil was a man of parts.

Denzil was not far from the two when Junia made her appeal and challenge. He loved the girl exceedingly, and he loved Carnac little less, though in a different way. Denzil was French of the French, with habit of mind and character wholly his own.

Denzil's head was squat upon his shoulders, and his long, handsome body was also squat, because his legs were as short, proportionately, as his mind was long. His face was covered by a well-cared-for beard of dark brown, streaked with grey; his features were rugged and fine; and his eyes were like two coals burning under a

gnarled headland; for his forehead, ample and full, had lines which were not lines of age, but of concentration. In his motions he was quiet and free, yet always there was a kind of stealthiness in his movements, which made him seem less frank than he really was.

For a time, with salient sympathy in his eyes, he watched the two children playing. The whisking of their forms among the trees and over the rocks was fine, gracious, and full of life—life without alarm. At length he saw the girl falter slightly, then make a swift deceptive movement to avoid the boy who pursued her. The movement did not delude the boy. He had quickness of anticipation. An instant later the girl was in his arms.

As Denzil gazed, it seemed she was in his arms too long, and a sudden anxiety took hold of him. That anxiety was deepened when he saw the boy kiss the girl on the cheek. This act seemed to discompose the girl, but not enough to make drama out of an innocent, yet sensuous thing. The boy had meant nothing more than he had shown, and Denzil traced the act to a native sense of luxury in his nature. Knowing the boy's father and mother as he did, it seemed strange that Carnac should have such demonstration in his character. Of all the women he knew, Carnac's mother was the most exact and careful, though now and again he thought of her as being shrouded,

or apart; while the boy's father, the great lumber-king, cantankerous, passionate, perspicuous, seemed to have but one passion, and that was his business.

It was strange to Denzil that the lumber-king, short, thin, careless in his clothes but singularly clean in his person, should have a son so little like himself, and also so little like his mother. He, Denzil, was a Catholic, and he could not understand a man like John Grier who, being a member of the Episcopal Church, so seldom went to service and so defied rules of conduct suitable to his place in the world.

As for the girl, to him she was the seventh wonder of the earth. Wantonly alive, dexterously alert to all that came her way, sportive, indifferent, joyous, she had all the boy's sprightliness, but none of his weaknesses. She was a born tease; she loved bright and beautiful things; she was a keen judge of human nature, and she had buoyant spirits, which, however, were counterbalanced by moments of extreme timidity, or, rather, reserve and shyness. On a day like this, when everything in life was singing, she must sing too. Not a mile away was a hut by the river where her father had brought his family for the summer's fishing; not a half-mile away was a tent which Carnac Grier's father had set up as he passed northward on his tour of inspection. This particular river, and this par-

ticular part of the river, were trying to the river-man and his clans. It needed a dam, and the great lumber-king was planning to make one not three hundred yards from where they were.

The boy and the girl resting idly upon a great warm rock had their own business to consider. The boy kept looking at his boots with the brass-tipped toes. He hated them. The girl was quick to understand.

"Why don't you like your boots?" she asked.

A whimsical, exasperated look came into his face. "I don't know why they brass a boy's toes like that, but when I marry I won't wear them—that's all," he replied.

"Why do you wear them now?" she asked, smiling.

"You don't know my father."

"He's got plenty of money, hasn't he?" she urged.

"Plenty; and that's what I can't understand about him! There's a lot of waste in river-driving, timber-making, out in the shanties and on the river, but he don't seem to mind that. He's got fads, though, about how we are to live, and this is one of them." He looked at the brass-tipped boots carefully. A sudden resolve came into his face. He turned to the girl and flushed as he spoke. "Look here," he added, "this is the last day I'm going to wear these

boots. He's got to buy me a pair without any brass clips on them, or I'll kick."

"No, it isn't the last day you're going to wear them, Carnac."

"It is. I wonder if all boys feel towards their father as I do to mine. He don't treat me right. He——"

"Oh, look," interrupted Junia. "Look—Carnac!" She pointed in dismay.

Carnac saw a portion of the bank of the river disappear with Denzil. He ran over to the bank and looked down. In another moment he had made his way to a descending path which led him swiftly to the river's edge. The girl remained at the top. The boy had said to her: "You stay there. I'll tell you what to do."

"Is—is he killed?" she called with emotion.

"Killed! No. He's all right," he called back to her. "I can see him move. Don't be frightened. He's not in the water. It was only about a thirty-foot fall. You stay there, and I'll tell you what to do," he added.

A few moments later, the boy called up: "He's all right, but his leg is broken. You go to my father's camp—it's near. People are sure to be there, and maybe father too. You bring them along."

In an instant the girl was gone. The boy, left behind, busied himself in relieving the deformed broken-legged habitant. He brought some water

in his straw hat to refresh him. He removed the rocks and dirt, and dragged the little man out.

"It was a close call—*bien sûr*," said Denzil, breathing hard. "I always said that place wasn't safe, but I went on it myself. That's the way in life. We do what we forbid ourselves to do; we suffer the shames we damn in others—but yes."

There was a pause, then he added: "That's what you'll do in your life, M'sieu' Carnac. That's what you'll do."

"Always?"

"Well, you never can tell—but no."

"But you always can tell," remarked the boy. "The thing is, do what you feel you've got to do, and never mind what happens."

"I wish I could walk," remarked the little man, "but this leg of mine is broke—ah, bah, it is!"

"Yes, you mustn't try to walk. Be still," answered the boy. "They'll be here soon." Slowly and carefully he took off the boot and sock from the broken leg, and, with his penknife, opened the seam of the corduroy trouser. "I believe I could set that leg myself," he added.

"I think you could—bagosh," answered Denzil heavily. "They'll bring a rope to haul me up?"

"Junia has a lot of sense, she won't forget anything."

"And if your father's there, he'll not forget anything," remarked Denzil.

"He'll forget to make me wear these boots to-morrow," said the boy stubbornly, his chin in his hands, his eyes fixed gloomily on the brass-headed toes.

There was a long silence. At last from the stricken Denzil came the words: "You'll have your own way about the boots."

Carnac murmured, and presently said:

"Lucky you fell where you did. Otherwise, you'd have been in the water, and then I couldn't have been of any use."

"I hear them coming—holy, yes!"

Carnac strained his ears. "Yes, you're right. I hear them too."

A few moments later, Carnac's father came sliding down the bank, a rope in his hands, some workmen remaining above.

"What's the matter here?" he asked. "A fall, eh! Dang little fool—now, you *are* a dang little fool, and you know it, Denzil."

He nodded to his boy, then he raised the wounded man's head and shoulders, and slipped the noose over until it caught under his arms.

The old lumber-king's movements were swift, sure and exact. A moment later he lifted Denzil in his arms, and carried him over to the steep path up which he was presently dragged.

At the top, Denzil turned to Carnac's father.

" M'sieu', Carnac hates wearing those brass-toed boots," he said boldly.

The lumber-king looked at his boy acutely, and not very fondly. He blew his nose hard, with a bandana handkerchief. Then he nodded towards the boy.

" He can suit himself about that," he said.

With accomplished deftness, with some sacking and two poles, a hasty but comfortable ambulance was made under the skilful direction of the river-master. He had the gift of outdoor life. He did not speak as he worked, but kept humming to himself.

" That's all right," he said, as he saw Denzil on the stretcher. " We'll get on home now."

" Home ? " asked his son.

" Yes, Montreal—to-night," replied his father. " The leg has to be set."

" Why don't you set it ? " asked the boy.

The river-master gazed at him attentively. " Well, I might, with your help," he said. " Come along."

Chapter II — *Eleven Years Pass*

ELEVEN years had passed since Denzil's fall, and in that time much history had been made. Carnac Grier, true to his nature, had travelled from incident to incident, from capacity to capacity, apparently without system, yet actually with the keenest desire to fulfil himself; with an honesty as inveterate as his looks were good and his character filled with dark recesses. In vain had his father endeavoured to induce him to enter the lumber business; to him it seemed too conventional and fixed.

Yet, in his way, he knew the business well. By instinct, over the twenty-five years of his life, he had observed and become familiar with the main features of the work. He had once or twice even buried himself in the shanties of the back-woods, there to inhale and repulse the fetid air, to endure the untoward, half-savage life, the clean, strong food, the bitter animosities and the savage friendships. It was a land where sunshine travelled, and in the sun the bright, tuneful birds made lively the responsive world. Sometimes an eagle swooped down the stream; again and again,

hawks, and flocks of pigeons which frequented the lonely groves on the river-side, made vocal the world of air; flocks of wild ducks, or geese, went whirring down the long spaces of water between the trees on either banks; and some one with a fiddle or a concertina made musical the evening, while the singing voices of rough habitants rang through the air.

It was all spirited; it smelt good; it felt good; but it was not for Carnac. When he had a revolt against anything in life, the grim storm scenes of winter in the shanties under the trees and the snow-swept hills came to his mind's eye. The summer life of the river, and what is called "running the river," had for him great charms. The smell of hundreds of thousands of logs in the river, the crushed bark, the slimy ooze were all suggestive of life in the making. But the savage seclusion of the wild life in winter repelled his senses. Besides, the lumber business meant endless figures and measurements in stuffy offices and he retreated from it all.

He had an artistic bent. From a small child he had had it, and it grew with his years. He wanted to paint, and he painted; he wanted to sculp in clay, and he sculped in clay; but all the time he was conscious it was the things he had seen and the life he had lived which made his painting and his sculpture worth while. It was absurd that a man of his great outdoor capacity

should be the slave of a temperamental quality, and yet it was so. It was no good for his father to condemn, or his mother to mourn, he went his own way.

He had seen much of Junia Shale in these years and had grown fond of her, but she was away much with an aunt in the West, and she was sent to boarding-school, and they saw each other only at intervals. She liked him and showed it, but he was not ready to go farther. As yet his art was everything to him, and he did not think of marriage. He was care-free. He had a little money of his own, left by an uncle of his mother, and he had also an allowance from his mother—none from his father—and he was satisfied with life.

His brother, Fabian, being the elder, by five years, had gone into his father's business as a partner, and had remained there. Fabian had at last married an elder sister of Junia Shale and settled down in a house on the hill, and the lumber-king, John Grier, went on building up his splendid business.

At last, Carnac, feeling he was making small headway with his painting, determined to go again to New York and Paris. He had already spent a year in each place and it had benefited him greatly. So, with that sudden decision which marked his life, he started for New York. It was immediately after the New Year and the ground

was covered with snow. He looked out of the window of the train, and there was only the long line of white country broken by the leafless trees and rail-fences and the mansard-roofs and low cottages with their stoops, built up with earth to keep them warm; and the sheds full of cattle; and here and there a saw-mill going hard, and factories pounding away and men in fur coats driving the small Indian ponies; and the sharp calls of the men with the sleigh bringing wood, or meat, or vegetables to market. He was by nature a queer compound of Radical and Conservative, a victim of vision and temperament. He was full of pride, yet fuller of humility of a real kind. As he left Montreal he thought of Junia Shale, and he recalled the day eleven years before when he had worn brass-toed boots, and he had caught Junia in his arms and kissed her, and Denzil had had his accident. Denzil had got unreasonably old since then; but Junia remained as she was the joyous day when boyhood took on the first dreams of manhood.

Life was a queer thing, and he had not yet got his bearings in it. He had a desire to reform the world and he wanted to be a great painter or sculptor, or both; and he entered New York with a new sense developed. He was keen to see, to do, and to feel. He wanted to make the world ring with his name and fame, yet he wanted to do the world good also, if he could. It was a

curious state of mind for the English boy, who talked French like a native and loved French literature and the French people, and was angry with those English-Canadians who were so selfish they would never learn French.

Arrived in New York he took lodgings near old Washington Square, where there were a few studios near the Bohemian restaurants and a life as nearly continental as was possible in a new country. He got in touch with a few artists and began to paint, doing little scenes in the Bowery and of the night-life of New York, and visiting the Hudson River and Long Island for landscape and seascape sketches.

One day he was going down Broadway, and near Madison Square he saved a girl from being killed by a street-car. She had slipped and fallen on the track and a car was coming. It was impossible for her to get away in time, and Carnac had sprung to her and got her free. She staggered to her feet, and he saw she was beautiful and foreign. He spoke to her in French and her eyes lighted, for she was French. She told him at once that her name was Luzanne Larue. He offered to get a cab and take her home, but she said no, she was fit to walk, so he went with her slowly to her home in one of the poor streets on the East side. They talked as they went, and Carnac saw she was of the lower middle-class, with more refinement than was common in that

class, and more charm. She was a fascinating girl with fine black eyes, black hair, a complexion of cream, and a gift of the tongue. Carnac could not see that she was very subtle. She seemed a marvel of guilelessness. She had a wonderful head and neck, and as he was planning a picture of an early female martyr, he decided to ask her to sit to him.

Arrived at her humble home, he was asked to enter, and there he met her father, Isel Larue, a French monarchist who had been exiled from Paris for plotting against the Government. He was handsome with snapping black eyes, a cruel mouth and a droll and humorous tongue. He was grateful to Carnac for saving his daughter's life. Coffee and cigarettes were produced, and they chatted and smoked while Carnac took in the surroundings. Everything was plain, but spotlessly clean, and he learned that Larue made his living by doing odd jobs in an electric firm. He was just home from his work. Luzanne was employed every afternoon in a milliner's shop, but her evenings were free after the housework was done at nine o'clock. Carnac in a burst of enthusiasm asked if she would sit to him as a model in the mornings. Her father instantly said, of course she would.

This she did for many days, and sat with her hair down and bared neck, as handsome and modest as a female martyr should. Carnac

painted her with skill. Sometimes he would walk with her to lunch and make her eat something sustaining, and they talked freely then, though little was said while he was painting her. At last one day the painting was finished, and she looked up at him wistfully when he told her he would not need another sitting. Carnac, overcome by her sadness, put his arms round her and kissed her mouth, her eyes, her neck ravenously. She made only a slight show of resistance. When he stopped she said : " Is that the way you keep your word to my father ? I am here alone and you embrace me—is that fair ? "

" No, it isn't, and I promise I won't do it again, Luzanne. I am sorry. I wanted our friendship to benefit us both, and now I've spoiled it all."

" No, you haven't spoiled it all," said Luzanne with a sigh, and she buttoned up the neck of her blouse, flushing slightly as she did so. Her breast heaved and suddenly she burst into tears. It was evident she wanted Carnac to comfort her, perhaps to kiss her again, but he did not do so. He only stood over her, murmuring penance and asking her to forget it.

" I can't forget it—I can't. No man but my father has ever kissed me before. It makes me, oh ! so miserable ! " but she smiled through her tears. Suddenly she dried her eyes. " Once a man tried to kiss me—and something more. He was rich and he'd put money into Madame Mar-

got's millinery business. He was brilliant, and married, but he had no rules for his morals—all he wanted was money and pleasures which he bought. I was attracted by him, but one day he tried to kiss me. I slapped his face, and then I hated him. So, when you kissed me to-day, I thought of that, and it made me unhappy—but yes."

"You did not slap my face, Luzanne?"

She blushed and hung her head. "No, I did not; you are not a bad man. He would have spoiled my life. He made it clear I could have all the luxuries money could buy—all except marriage!" She shrugged her shoulders.

Carnac was of an impressionable nature, but brought to face the possibility of marriage with Luzanne, he shrank. If ever he married it would be a girl like Junia Shale, beautiful, modest, clever and well educated. No, Luzanne could never be for him. So he forbore doing more than ask her to forgive him, and he would take her to lunch—the last lunch of the picture—if she would. With features in chagrin, she put on her hat, yet when she turned to him, she was smiling.

He visited her home occasionally, and Luzanne's father had a friend, Ingot by name, who was sometimes present. This man made himself almost unbearable at first; but Luzanne pulled Ingot up acridly, and he presently behaved well. Ingot disliked all men in better positions than

himself, and was a revolutionary of the worst sort—a revolutionary and monarchist. He was only a monarchist because he loved conspiracy and hated the Republican rulers who had imprisoned him—" those bombastics," he called them. It was a constitutional quarrel with the world. However, he became tractable, and then he and Larue formed a plot to make Carnac marry Luzanne. It was hatched by Ingot, approved by Larue, and at length consented to by the girl, for so far as she could love anyone, she loved Carnac; and she made up her mind that if he married her, no matter how, she would make him so happy he would forgive all.

About four months after the incident in the studio, a picnic was arranged for the Hudson River. Only the four went. Carnac had just sold a picture at a good price—his Christian Martyr picture—and he was in high spirits. They arrived at the spot arranged for the picnic in time for lunch, and Luzanne prepared it. When the lunch was ready, they sat down. There was much gay talk, compliments to Carnac came from both Larue and Ingot, and Carnac was excited and buoyant. He drank much wine and beer, and told amusing stories of the French-Canadians which delighted them all. He had a gift of mimicry and he let himself go.

" You got a pretty fine tongue in your head—but of the best," said Ingot with a burst of

applause. "You'd make a good actor, a holy good actor. You got a way with you. Coquelin, Salvini, Bernhardt! Voilà, you're just as good! Bagosh, I'd like to see you on the stage."

"So would I," said Larue. "I think you could play a house full in no time and make much cash—I think you could. Don't you think so, Luzanne?"

Luzanne laughed. "He can act very first-class, I'm sure," she said, and she turned and looked Carnac in the eyes. She was excited, she was handsome, she was slim and graceful, and Carnac felt towards her as he did the day at the studio, as though he'd like to kiss her. He knew it was not real, but it was the man in him and the sex in her.

For an hour and a half the lunch went on, all growing gayer, and then at last Ingot said: "Well, I'm going to have a play now here, and Carnac Grier shall act, and we all shall act. We're going to have a wedding ceremony between M'sieu' Grier and Luzanne—but, hush, why not!" he added, when Luzanne shook her finger at him, and said she'd do nothing of the kind, having, however, agreed to it beforehand. "Why not! There's nothing in it. They'll both be married some day and it will be good practice for them. They can learn now how to do it. It's got to be done—but yes. I'll find a Judge in the village. Come now, hands up, those that will do it."

With a loud laugh Larue held up his hand, Carnac, who was half-drunk, did the same, and after a little hesitation Luzanne also.

" Good—a gay little comedy, that's what it is. I'm off for the Judge," and away went Ingot hard afoot, having already engaged a Judge, called Grimshaw, in the village near to perform the ceremony. When he had gone, Larue went off to smoke and Luzanne and Carnac cleared up the lunch-things and put all away in the baskets. When it was finished, Carnac and Luzanne sat down under a tree and talked cheerfully, and Luzanne was never so effective as she was that day. They laughed over the mock ceremony to be performed.

" I'm a Catholic, you know," said Luzanne, " and it isn't legal in my church with no dispensation to be married to a Protestant like you. But as it is, what does it matter ! "

" Well, that's true," said Carnac. " I suppose I ought to be acting the lover now ; I ought to be kissing you, oughtn't I ? "

" As an actor, yes, but as a man, better not unless others are present. Wait till the others come. Wait for witnesses, so that it can look like the real thing. See, there they come now." She pointed, and in the near distance Ingot could be seen approaching with a short, clean-shaven, roly-poly sort of man who did not look legal, but was a real magistrate. He came waddling along

in good spirits and rather pompously. At that moment Larue appeared. Presently Ingot presented the Judge to the would-be bride and bridegroom. "You wish to be married—you are Mr. Grier?" said Judge Grimshaw.

"That's me and I'm ready," said Carnac. "Get on with the show. What's the first thing?"

"Well, the regular thing is to sign some forms, stating age, residence, etc., and here they are all ready. Brought 'em along with me. Most unusual form of ceremony, but it'll do in the circumstances. It's all right. Here are the papers to sign."

Carnac hastily scratched in the needed information, and Luzanne doing the same, the magistrate pocketed the papers.

"Now we can perform the ceremony," said the Judge. "Mr. Larue, you go down there with the young lady and bring her up in form, and Mr. Carnac Grier waits here."

Larue went away with Luzanne, and presently turned, and she, with her arm in his, came forward. Carnac stood waiting with a smile on his face, for it seemed good acting. When Luzanne came, her father handed her over, and the marriage ceremony proceeded. Presently it concluded, and Grimshaw, who had had more drink than was good for him, wound up the ceremony with the words, "And may the Lord have mercy on you!"

Every one laughed, Carnac kissed the bride, and the Judge handed her the marriage certificate duly signed. It was now Carnac's duty to pay in the usual way for the ceremony, and he handed the Judge ten dollars; and Grimshaw rolled away towards the village, Ingot having also given him ten.

"That's as good a piece of acting as I've ever seen," said Larue with a grin. "It beats Coquelin and Henry Irving."

"I didn't think there was much in it," said Carnac, laughing, "though it was real enough to cost me ten dollars. One has to pay for one's fun. But I got a wife cheap at the price, and I didn't pay for the wedding ring."

"No, the ring was mine," said Larue. "I had it a long time. It was my engagement ring, and I want it back now."

"Luzanne took it off her finger—it was much too large—and gave it to him. "It's easy enough to get another," she said in a queer voice.

"You did the thing in style, young man," said Ingot to Carnac with a nod.

"I'll do it better when it's the real thing," said Carnac. "I've had my rehearsal now, and it seemed almost real."

"It was almost real," said Ingot, with his head turned away from Carnac, but he winked at Larue and caught a furtive look from Luzanne's eye.

"I think we'd better have another hour hereabouts, then get back to New York," said Larue. "There's a circus in the village—let us go to that."

At the village, they did the circus, called out praise to the clown, gave the elephant some buns, and at five o'clock started back to New York. Arrived at New York, they went to a hotel off Broadway for dinner, and Carnac signed names in the hotel register as "Mr. and Mrs. Carnac Grier." When he did it, he saw a furtive glance pass from Luzanne's eyes to her father. It was disconcerting to him. Presently the two adjourned to the sitting-room, and there he saw that the table was only laid for two. That opened his eyes. The men had disappeared and he and Luzanne were alone. She was sitting on a sofa near the table, showing to good advantage. She was composed, while Carnac was embarrassed. Carnac began to take a grip on himself.

The waiter entered. "When shall I serve dinner, sir?" he said.

Carnac realized that the dinner had been ordered by the two men, and he said quietly: "Don't serve it for a half-hour yet—not till I ring, please. Make it ready then. There's no hurry. It's early."

The waiter bowed and withdrew with a smile, and Carnac turned to Luzanne. She smiled, got up, came over, laid a hand on his arm, and said:

"It's quiet and nice here, Carnac dear," and she looked up ravishingly in his face.

"It's too quiet and it's not at all nice," he suddenly replied. "Your father and Ingot have gone. They've left us alone on purpose. This is a dirty game and I'm not going to play it any longer. I've had enough of it. I've had my fill. I'm going now. Come, let's go together."

She looked a bit smashed and overdone. "The dinner!" she said in confusion.

"I'll pay for that. We won't wait any longer. Come on at once, please."

She put on her things coolly, and he noticed a savage stealthiness as she pushed the long pins through her hat and hair. He left the room. Outside the hotel, Carnac held out his hand.

"Good night and good-bye, Luzanne," he said huskily. "You can get home alone, can't you?"

She laughed a little, then she said: "I guess so. I've lived in New York some years. But you and I are married, Carnac, and you ought to take me to your home."

There was something devilish in her smile now. Then the whole truth burst upon Carnac. "Married—married! When did I marry you? Good God!"

"You married me this afternoon after lunch at Shipton. I have the certificate and I mean to hold you to it."

"You mean to hold me to it—a real marriage

to-day at Shipton! You and your father and Ingot tricked me into this."

"He was a real Judge, and it was a real marriage."

"It is a fraud, and I'll unmask it," Carnac declared in anger.

"It would be difficult to prove. You signed our names in the hotel register as Mr. and Mrs. Carnac Grier. I mean to stick to that name —Mrs. Carnac Grier. I'll make you a good wife, Carnac—do believe it."

"I'll believe nothing but the worst of you ever. I'll fight the thing out, by God!"

She shook her head and smiled. "I meant you to marry me, when you saved my life from the street-car. I never saw but one man I wanted to marry, and you are that man, Carnac. You wouldn't ask me, so I made you marry me. You could go farther and fare worse. Come, take me home—take me home, my love. I want you to love me."

"You little devil!" Carnac declared. "I'd rather cut my own throat. I'm going to have a divorce. I'm going to teach you and the others a lesson you won't forget."

"There isn't a jury in the United States you could convince after what you've done. You've made it impossible. Go to Judge Grimshaw and see what he will say. Go and ask the hotel people and see what they will say. You're my

husband, and I mean you shall live with me, and I'll love you better than any woman on earth can love you. . . . Won't you?" She held out her hand.

With an angry exclamation, Carnac refused it, and then she suddenly turned on her heel, slipped round a corner and was gone.

Carnac was dumbfounded. He did not know what to do. He went dazedly home, and slept little that night. The next day he went out to Shipton and saw Judge Grimshaw and told him the whole tale. The Judge shook his head.

"It's too tall a story. Why, you went through the ceremony as if it was the real thing, signed the papers, paid my fee, and kissed the bride. You could not get a divorce on such evidence. I'm sorry for you, if you don't want the girl. She's very nice, and'd make a good wife. What does she mean to do?"

"I don't know. She left me in the street and went back to her home. I won't live with her."

"I can't help you anyhow. She has the certificate. You are validly married. If I were you, I'd let the matter stand."

So they parted, and Carnac sullenly went back to his apartments. The next day he went to see a lawyer, however. The lawyer opened his eyes at the story. He had never heard anything like it.

"It doesn't sound as if you were sober when

you did it. Were you, sir? It was a mad prank, anyhow!"

"I had been drinking, but I wasn't drunk. I'd been telling them stories and they used them as a means of tempting me to act in the absurd marriage ceremony. Like a fool I consented. Like a fool—but I wasn't drunk."

"No, but when you were in your right mind and sober you signed your names as Mr. and Mrs. Carnac Grier in the register of a hotel. I will try to win your case for you, but it won't be easy work. You see the Judge himself told you the same thing. But it would be a triumph to expose a thing of that kind, and I'd like to do it. It wouldn't be cheap, though. You'd have to foot the bill. Are you rich?"

"No, but my people are," said Carnac. "I could manage the cash, but suppose I lost!"

"Well, you'd have to support the woman. She could sue you for cruelty and desertion, and the damages would be heavy."

Carnac shook his head, paid his fee and left the office.

He did not go near Luzanne. After a month he went to Paris for eight months, and then back to Montreal.

Chapter III — *Carnac's Return*

ARRIVED in Montreal, there were attempts by Carnac to settle down to ordinary life of quiet work at his art, but it was not effective, nor had it been in Paris, though the excitement of working in the great centre had stimulated him. He ever kept saying to himself, "Carnac, you are a married man—a married man, by the tricks of rogues!" In Paris, he could more easily obscure it, but in Montreal, a few hundred miles from the place of his tragedy, pessimism seized him. He now repented he did not fight it out at once. It would have been courageous and perhaps successful. But whether successful or not, he would have put himself right with his own conscience. That was the chief thing. He was straightforward, and back again in Canada, Carnac flung reproaches at himself.

He knew himself now to be in love with Junia Shale, and because he was married he could not approach her. It galled him. He was not fond of Fabian, for they had little in common, and he had no intimate friends. Only his mother was always sympathetic to him, and he loved her.

He saw much of her, but little of anyone else, He belonged to no clubs, and there were few artists in Montreal. So he lived his own life, and when he met Junia he cavilled at himself for his madness with Luzanne. The curious thing was he had not had a word from her since the day of the mock marriage. Perhaps she had decided to abandon the thing! But that could do no good, for there was the marriage recorded in the registers of New York State.

Meanwhile, things were not going well with others. There befell a day when matters came to a crisis in the Grier family. Since Fabian's marriage with Junia Shale's sister, Sybil, he had become discontented with his position in his father's firm. There was little love between him and his father, and that was chiefly the father's fault. One day, the old man stormed at Fabian because of a mistake in the management, and was foolish enough to say that Fabian had lost his grip since his marriage.

Fabian, enraged, demanded freedom from the partnership, and offered to sell his share. In a fit of anger, the old man offered him what was at least ten per cent more than the value of Fabian's share. The sombre Fabian had the offer transferred to paper at once, and it was signed by his father—not without compunction, because, difficult as Fabian was, he might go

farther and fare worse. As for Fabian's dark-haired, brown-faced, brown-eyed wife, to John Grier's mind, it seemed a good thing to be rid of her.

When Fabian left the father alone in his office, however, the stark temper of the old man broke down. He had had enough. He muttered to himself. Presently he was roused by a little knock at the door. It was Junia, brilliant, buoyant, yellow haired, with bright brown eyes, tingling cheeks, and white laughing teeth that showed against her red lips. She held up a finger at him.

"I know what you've done, and it's no good at all. You can't live without us, and you mustn't," she said.

The old man glowered still, but a reflective smile crawled to his lips. "No, it's finished," he replied. "It had to come, and it's done. It can't be changed. Fabian wouldn't alter it, and I shan't."

His face was stern and dour. He tangled his short fingers in the hair on top of his head.

"I wouldn't say that, if I were you," she responded cheerily. "Fabian showed me the sum you offered for his share. It's ridiculous. The business isn't worth it."

"What do you know about the business?" remarked the other.

"Well, whatever it was worth an hour ago, it's worth less now," she answered with suggestion. "It's worth much less now," she added.

"What do you mean by that?" he asked sharply, sitting upright, his hands clasping his knees almost violently, his clean-shaven face showing lines of trouble.

"I mean he's going to join the enemy," she answered quickly.

"Join the enemy!" broke from the old man's lips with a startled accent.

"Yes, the firm of Belloc."

The old man did not speak, but a curious whiteness stole over his face. "What makes you say that!" he exclaimed, anger in his eyes.

"Well, Fabian has to put money into something," she answered, "and the only business he knows is lumber business. Don't you think it's natural he should go to Belloc?"

"Did he ever say so?" asked the old man with savage sullenness. "Tell me. Did he ever say so?"

The girl shook back her brave head with a laugh. "Of course he never said so, but I know the way he'll go."

The old man shook his head. "I don't believe it. He's got no love for Belloc."

The girl felt like saying, "He's got no love for you," but she refrained. She knew that

Fabian had love for his father, but he had inherited a love for business, and that would overwhelm all other feelings. She therefore said: "Why don't you get Carnac to come in? He's got more sense than Fabian—and he isn't married!"

She spoke boldly, for she knew the character of the man. She was only nineteen. She had always come in and gone out of Grier's house and office freely and much more since her sister had married Fabian.

A storm gathered between the old man's eyes; his brow knitted. "Carnac's got brains enough, but he goes monkeying about with pictures and statues till he's worth naught in the business of life."

"I don't think you understand him," the girl replied.

"I've been trying to understand him for twenty-five years," the other said malevolently. "He might have been a big man. He might have bossed this business when I'm gone. It's in him, but he's a fly-away—he's got no sense. The ideas he's got make me sick. He talks like a damn fool sometimes."

"But if he's a 'damn fool'—is it strange?" She gaily tossed a kiss at the king of the lumber world. "The difference between you and him is this: he doesn't care about the things of this world, and you do; but he's one of the ablest

men in Canada. If Fabian won't come back, why not Carnac? "

"We've never hit it off."

Suddenly he stood up, his face flushed, his hands outthrust themselves in rage, his fingers opened and shut in abandonment of temper.

"Why have I two such sons!" he exclaimed. "I've not been bad. I've squeezed a few; I've struck here and there; I've mauled my enemies, but I've been good to my own. Why can't I run square with my own family?" He was purple to the roots of his hair. Savagery possessed him. Life was testing him to the n^{th} degree. "I've been a good father, and a good husband! Why am I treated like this?"

She watched him silently. Presently, however, the storm seemed to pass. He appeared to gain control of himself.

"You want me to have in Carnac?" he asked, with a little fleck of foam at the corners of his mouth.

"If you could have Fabian back," she remarked, "but you can't! It's been coming for a long time. He's got your I.O.U. and he won't return; but Carnac's got plenty of stuff in him. He never was afraid of anything or anybody, and if he took a notion, he could do this business as well as yourself by and by. It's all a chance, but if he comes in he'll put everything else aside.

"Where is he?" the old man asked.

"He's with his mother at your home."

The old man took his hat from the window-sill. At that moment a clerk appeared with some papers.

"What have you got there?" asked Grier sharply.

"The Belloc account for the trouble on the river," answered the clerk.

"Give it me," Grier said, and he waved the clerk away. Then he glanced at the account, and a grim smile passed over his face. "They can't have all they want, and they won't get it. Are you coming with me?" he asked of the girl, with a set look in his eyes.

"No. I'm going back to my sister," she answered.

"If he leaves me—if he joins Belloc!" the old man muttered, and again his face flushed.

A few moments afterwards the girl watched him till he disappeared up the hill.

"I don't believe Carnac will do it," she said to herself. "He's got the sense, the brains, and the energy; but he won't do it."

She heard a voice behind her, and turned. It was the deformed but potent Denzil. He was greyer now. His head, a little to one side, seemed sunk in his square shoulders, but his eyes were bright.

"It's all a bad scrape—that about Fabian Grier," he said. "You can't ever tell about such things, how they'll go—but no, bagosh!"

JOHN GRIER'S house had a porch with Corinthian pillars. Its elevation was noble, but it was rather crudely built, and it needed its grove of maples to make it pleasant to the eye. It was large but not too ample, and it had certain rooms with distinct character.

Inside the house, John Grier paused a moment before the door of the sitting-room where his wife usually sat. All was silent. He opened the door. A woman rose to meet him. She was dressed in black. Her dark hair, slightly streaked with grey, gave her distinction. Her eyes had soft understanding; her lips had a reflective smile. There was, however, uneasiness in her face; her fingers slightly trembled on the linen she was holding.

"You're home early, John," she said in a gentle, reserved voice.

He twisted a shoulder. "Yes, I'm home early," he snapped. "Your boy Fabian has left the business, and I've bought his share." He named the sum. "Ghastly, ain't it? But he's gone, and there's no more about it. It's a bad

thing to marry a woman that can't play fair."

He noted the excessive paleness of his wife's face; the bright eyes stared and stared, and the lips trembled.

"Fabian—Fabian gone!" she said brokenly.

"Yes, and he ain't coming back."

"What's he going to do?" she asked in a bitter voice.

"Join Belloc—fight his own father—try to do me in the race," growled the old man.

"Who told you that?"

"Junia, she told me."

"What does she know about it? Who told her that?" asked the woman with faded lips.

"She always had sense, that child. I wish she was a man."

He suddenly ground his heel, and there was distemper in face and voice; his shoulders hunched; his hands were thrust down in his pockets. He wheeled on her. "Where's your other boy? Where's Carnac?"

The woman pointed to the lawn. "He's catching a bit of the city from the hill just beyond the pear-tree."

"Painting, eh? I heard he was here. I want to talk to him."

"I don't think it will do any good," was the sad reply. "He doesn't think as you do."

"You believe he's a genius," snarled the other.

"You know he is."

"I'll go and find him."

She nodded. "I wish you luck," she said, but there was no conviction in her tone. Truth was, she did not wish him luck in this. She watched him leave by the French window and stride across the lawn. A strange, troubled expression was in her face.

"They can't pull it off together," she said to herself, "and Carnac is too full of independence. He wants nothing from anybody. He needs no one; he follows no one—except me. Yes, he follows—he loves me."

She watched her husband till he almost viciously thrust aside the bushes staying his progress, and broke into the space by the pear-tree where Carnac sat with palette and brush, gazing at the distant roofs on which the sun was leaving its last kiss.

Carnac got to his feet with a smile, and with a courage in his eye equal to that which had ever been in his father's face—in the face of John Grier. It was strange that the other's presence troubled him, that even as a small child, to be in the same room for any length of time vexed him. Much of that had passed away. The independence of the life he lived, the freedom from resting upon the financial will of the lumber-king had given him light, air and confidence. He loved his mother. What he felt for John Grier was respect and admiration. He knew he was

not spoken to now with any indolent purpose.

They had seen little of each other of late years. His mother had given him the money to go to New York and Paris, which helped out his own limited income. He wondered what should bring his father to him now. There was interested reflection in his eye. With his habit of visualization, he saw behind John Grier, as he came on now, the long procession of logs and timbers which had made his fortune, stretch back on the broad St. Lawrence, from the Mattawan to the Madawaska, from the Richelieu to the Marmora. Yet, what was it John Grier had done? In a narrow field he had organized his life perfectly, had developed his opportunities, had safeguarded his every move. The smiling inquiry in his face was answered by the old man saying abruptly:

"Fabian's gone. He's deserted the ship."

The young man had the wish to say in reply, "At last, eh!" but he avoided it.

"Where has he gone?"

"I bought him out to-day, and I hear he's going to join Belloc."

"Belloc! Belloc! Who told you that?" asked the young man.

"Junia Shale—she told me."

Carnac laughed. "She knows a lot, but how did she know that?"

"Sheer instinct, and I believe she's right."

"Right—right—to fight you, his own father!"

was the inflammable reply. "Why, that would be a low-down business!"

"Would it be lower down than your not helping your father, when you can?"

Somehow he yearned over his wayward, fantastic son. The wilful, splendid character of the youth overcame the insistence in the other's nature.

"You seem to be getting on all right," remarked Carnac with the faint brown moustache, the fine, showy teeth, the clean-shaven cheeks, and auburn hair hanging loosely down.

"You're wrong. Things aren't doing as well with me as they might. Belloc and the others make difficult going. I've got too much to do myself. I want help."

"You had it in Fabian," remarked Carnac dryly.

"Well, I've lost it, and it never was enough. He hadn't vision, sense and decision."

"And so you come to me, eh? I always thought you despised me," said Carnac.

A half-tender, half-repellent expression came into the old man's face. He spoke bluntly. "I always thought you had three times the brains of your brother. You're not like me, and you're not like your mother; there's something in you that means vision, and seeing things, and doing them. If fifteen thousand dollars a year and a share in the business is any good to you——"

For an instant there had been pleasure and wonder in the young man's eyes, but at the sound of the money and the share in the business he shrank back.

"I don't think so, father. I'm happy enough. I've got all I want."

"What the devil are you talking about!" the other burst out. "You've got all you want! You've no home; you've no wife; you've no children; you've no place. You paint, and you sculp, and what's the good of it all? Have you ever thought of that? What's there in it for you or anyone else? Have you no blood and bones, no sting of life in you? Look what I've done. I started with little, and I've built up a business that, if it goes all right, will be worth millions. I say, if it goes all right, because I've got to carry more than I ought."

Carnac shook his head. "I couldn't be any help to you. I'm not a man of action. I think, I devise, but I don't act. I'd be no good in your business—no, honestly, I'd be no good. I don't think money is the end of life. I don't think success is compensation for all you've done and still must do. I want to stand out of it. You've had your life; you've lived it where you wanted to live it. I haven't, and I'm trying to find out where my duty and my labour lies. It is Art; no doubt. I don't know for sure."

"Good God!" broke in the old man. "You

don't know for sure—you're twenty-five years old, and you don't know where you're going!"

"Yes, I know where I'm going—to Heaven by and by!" This was his satirical reply.

"Oh, fasten down; get hold of something that matters. Now, listen to me. I want you to do one thing—the thing I ought to do and can't. I must stay here now that Fabian's gone. I want you to go north to the Madawaska River."

"No, I won't go to the Madawaska," replied Carnac after a long pause, "but"—with sudden resolution—"if it's any good to you, I'll stay here in the business, and you can go to the Madawaska. Show me what to do here; tell me how to do it, and I'll try to help you out for a while—if it can be done," he added hastily. "You must go, but I'll stay. Let's talk it over at supper."

He sighed, and turned and gazed warmly at the sunset on the roofs of the city; then turned to his father's face, but it was not the same look in his eyes.

CARNAC was installed in the office, and John Grier went to the Madawaska. Before he left, however, he was with Carnac for near a week, showing the procedure and the main questions that might arise to be solved.

"It's like this," said Grier in their last talk, "you've got to keep a stiff hand over the foremen and overseers, and have strict watch of Belloc & Co. Perhaps there will be trouble when I've gone, but, if it does, keep a stiff upper lip, and don't let the gang do you. You've got a quick mind and you know how to act sudden. Act at once, and damn the consequences! Remember, John Grier's firm has a reputation, and deal justly, but firmly, with opposition. The way it's organized, the business almost runs itself. But that's only when the man at the head keeps his finger on the piston-rod. You savvy, don't you?"

"I savvy all right. If the Belloc firm cuts up rusty, I'll think of what you'd do and try to do it in the same way."

The old man smiled. He liked the spirit in

Carnac. It was the right kind for his business. "I predict this: if you have one fight with the Belloc lot, you'll hate them too. Keep the flag flying. Don't get rattled. It's a big job, and it's worth doing in a big way."

"Yes, it's a big job," said Carnac. "I hope I'll pull it off."

"You'll pull it off, if you bend your mind to it. But there won't be any time for your little pictures and statues. You'll have to deal with the real men, and they'll lose their glamour. That's the thing about business—it's death to sentimentality."

Carnac flushed with indignation. "So you think Titian and Velasquez and Goyot and El Greco and Watteau and Van Dyck and Rembrandt and all the rest were sentimentalists, do you? The biggest men in the world worship them. You aren't just to the greatest intellects. I suppose Shakespeare was a sentimentalist!"

The old man laughed and tapped his son on the shoulder.

"Don't get excited, Carnac. I'd rather you ran my business well, than be Titian or Rembrandt, whoever they were. If you do this job well, I'll think there's a good chance of our working together."

Carnac nodded, but the thought that he could not paint or sculp when he was on this work vexed him, and he only set his teeth to see it through.

"All right, we'll see," he said, and his father went away.

Then Carnac's time of work and trial began. He was familiar with the routine of the business, he had adaptability, he was a quick worker, and for a fortnight things went swimmingly. There was elation in doing work not his regular job, and he knew the eyes of the commercial and river world were on him. He did his best and it was an effective best. Junia had been in the City of Quebec, but she came back at the end of a fortnight, and went to his office to get a subscription for a local charity. She had a gift in this kind of work.

It was a sunny day in the month of June, and as she entered the office a new spirit seemed to enter with her. The place became distinguished. She stood in the doorway for a moment, radiant, smiling, half embarrassed, then she said: "Please may I for a moment, Carnac?"

Carnac was delighted. "For many moments, Junia. I'm not as busy as usual. I'm glad as glad to see you."

She said with restraint: "Not for many moments. I'm here on business. It's important. I wanted to get a subscription from John Grier for the Sailors' Hospital which is in a bad way. Will you give something for him?"

Carnac looked at the subscription list. "I see you've been to Belloc first and they've given

a hundred dollars. Was that wise—going to them first? You know how my father feels about Belloc. And we're the older firm."

The girl laughed. "Oh, that's silly! Belloc's money is as good as John Grier's, and it only happened he was asked first because Fabian was present when I took the list, and it's Fabian's writing on the paper there."

Carnac nodded. "That's all right with me, for I'm no foe to Belloc, but my father wouldn't have liked it. He wouldn't have given anything in the circumstances."

"Oh, yes, he would! He's got sense with all his prejudices. I'll tell you what he'd have done. He'd have given a bigger subscription than Belloc."

Carnac laughed. "Well, perhaps you're right; it was clever planning it so."

"I didn't plan it. It was accident, but I had to consider everything and I saw how to turn it to account. So, if you are going to give a subscription for John Grier you must do as he would do."

Carnac smiled, put the paper on his desk, and took the pen.

"Make it measure the hate John Grier has to the Belloc firm," she said ironically.

Carnac chuckled and wrote. "Will that do?" He handed her the paper.

"One hundred and fifty dollars—oh, quite, quite good!" she said. "But it's only a half

hatred after all. I'd have made it a whole one."

"You'd have expected John Grier to give two hundred, eh? But that would have been too plain. It looks all right now, and it's got to go at that."

She smiled. "Well, it'll go at that. You're a good business man. I see you've given up your painting and sculping to do this! It will please your father, but are you satisfied?"

"Satisfied—of course, I'm not; and you know it. I'm not a money-grabber. I'm an artist if I'm anything, and I'm not doing this permanently. I'm only helping my father while he's in a hole."

The girl suddenly grew serious. "You mean you're not going to stick to the business, and take Fabian's place in it? He's been for a week with Belloc and he's never coming back here. You have the brains for it; and you could make your father happy and inherit his fortune—all of it."

Carnac flushed indignantly. "I suppose I could, but it isn't big enough for me. I'd rather do one picture that the Luxembourg or the London National Gallery would buy than own this whole business. That's the turn of my mind."

"Yes, but if you didn't sell a picture to the Luxembourg or the National Gallery. What then?"

"I'd have a good try for it, that's all. Do you want me to give up Art and take to commerce? Is that your view?"

"I suggested to John Grier the day that Fabian sold his share that you might take his place; and I still think it a good thing, though, of course, I like your painting. But I felt sorry for your father with none of his own family to help him; and I thought you might stay with him for your family's sake."

"You thought I'd be a martyr for love of John Grier—and cold cash, did you? That isn't the way the blood runs in my veins. I think John Grier might get out of the business now, if he's tired, and sell it and let some one else run it. John Grier is not in want. If he were, I'd give up everything to help him, and I'd not think I was a martyr. But I've a right to make my own career. It's making the career one likes which gets one in the marrow. I'd take my chances of success as he did. He has enough to live on, he's had success; let him get down and out, if he's tired."

The girl held herself firmly. "Remember John Grier has made a great name for himself—as great in his way as Andrew Carnegie or Pierpont Morgan—and he's got pride in his name. He wants his son to carry it on, and in a way he's right."

"That's good argument," said Carnac, "but if his name isn't strong enough to carry itself, his son can't carry it for him. That's the way of life. How many sons have ever added to their

father's fame? The instances are very few. In the modern world, I can only think of the Pitts in England. There's no one else."

The girl now smiled again. The best part in her was stirred. She saw. Her mind changed. After a moment she said: "I think you're altogether right about it. Carnac, you have your own career to make, so make it as it best suits yourself. I'm sorry I spoke to your father as I did. I pitied him, and I thought you'd find scope for your talents in the business. It's a big game, but I see now it isn't yours, Carnac."

He nodded, smiling. "That's it; that's it. I hate the whole thing."

She shook hands. As his hand enclosed her long slim fingers, he felt he wished never to let them go, they were so thrilling; but he did, for the thought of Luzanne came to his mind.

"Good-bye, Junia, and don't forget that John Grier's firm is the foe of the Belloc business," he said satirically.

She laughed, and went down the hill quickly, and as she went Carnac thought he had never seen so graceful a figure.

"What an evil Fate sent Luzanne my way!" he said.

Two days later there came an ugly incident on the river. There was a collision between a gang of John Grier's and Belloc's men and one of

Grier's men was killed. At the inquest, it was found that the man met his death by his own fault, having first attacked a Belloc man and injured him. The Belloc man showed the injury to the jury, and he was acquitted. Carnac watched the case closely, and instructed his lawyer to contend that the general attack was first made by Belloc's men, which was true; but the jury decided that this did not affect the individual case, and that the John Grier man met his death by his own fault.

"A shocking verdict!" he said aloud in the Court when it was given.

"Sir," said the Coroner, "it is the verdict of men who use their judgment after hearing the evidence, and your remark is offensive and criminal."

"If it is criminal, I apologize," said Carnac.

"You must apologize for its offensiveness, or I will have you arrested, sir."

This nettled Carnac. "I will not apologize for its offensiveness," he said firmly.

"Constable, arrest this man," said the Coroner, and the constable did so.

"May I be released on bail?" asked Carnac with a smile.

"I am a magistrate. Yes, you may be released on bail," said the Coroner.

Carnac bowed, and at once a neighbour became security for three thousand dollars. Then Carnac

bowed again and left the Court with—it was plain—the goodwill of most people present.

Carnac returned to his office with angry feelings at his heart. The Belloc man ought to have been arrested for manslaughter, he thought. In any case, he had upheld the honour of John Grier's firm by his protest, and the newspapers spoke not unfavourably of him in their reports. They said he was a man of courage to say what he did, though it was improper, from a legal standpoint. But human nature was human nature!

The trial took place in five days, and Carnac was fined twenty-five cents, which was in effect a verdict of not guilty; and so the newspapers said. It was decided that the offence was only legally improper, and it was natural that Carnac expressed himself strongly.

Junia was present at the trial. After it was over, she saw Carnac for a moment. "I think your firm can just pay the price and exist!" she said. "It's a terrible sum, and it shows how great a criminal you are!"

"Not a 'thirty-cent' criminal, anyhow," said Carnac. "It is a moral victory, and tell Fabian so. He's a bit huffy because I got into the trouble, I suppose."

"No, he loathed it all. He's sorry it occurred."

There was no further talk between them, for a subordinate of Carnac's came hurriedly to him and said something which Junia did not hear.

Carnac raised his hat to her, and hurried away.

"Well, it's not so easy as painting pictures," she said. "He gets fussed over these things."

It was later announced by the manager of the main mill that there was to be a meeting of workers to agitate for a strike for higher pay. A French-Canadian who had worked in the mills of Maine and who was a red-hot socialist was the cause of it. He had only been in the mills for about three months and had spent his spare time inciting well-satisfied workmen to strike. His name was Luc Baste—a shock-haired criminal with a huge chest and a big voice, and a born filibuster. The meeting was held and a deputation was appointed to wait on Carnac at his office. Word was sent to Carnac, and he said he would see them after the work was done for the day. So in the evening about seven o'clock the deputation of six men came, headed by Luc Baste.

"Well, what is it?" Carnac asked calmly.

Luc Baste began, not a statement of facts, but an oration on the rights of workers, their downtrodden condition and their beggarly wages. He said they had not enough to keep body and soul together, and that right well did their employers know it. He said there should be an increase of a half-dollar a day, or there would be a strike.

Carnac dealt with the matter quickly and quietly. He said Luc Baste had not been among

them a long time and evidently did not know what was the cost of living in Montreal. He said the men got good wages, and in any case it was not for him to settle a thing of such importance. This was for the head of the firm, John Grier, when he returned. The wages had been raised two years before, and he doubted that John Grier would consent to a further rise. All other men on the river seemed satisfied and he doubted these ought to have a cent more a day. They were getting the full value of the work. He begged all present to think twice before they brought about catastrophe. It would be a catastrophe if John Grier's mills should stop working and Belloc's mills should go on as before. It was not like Grier's men to do this sort of thing.

The men seemed impressed, and, presently, after one of them thanking him, the deputation withdrew, Luc Baste talking excitedly as they went. The manager of the main mill, with grave face, said:

"No, Mr. Grier, I don't think they'll be satisfied. You said all that could be said, but I think they'll strike after all."

"Well, I hope it won't occur before John Grier gets back," said Carnac.

That night a strike was declared.

Fortunately, only about two-thirds of the men came out, and it could not be called a complete

success. The Belloc people were delighted, but they lived in daily fear of a strike in their own yards, for agitators were busy amongst their workmen. But the workers waited to see what would happen to Grier's men.

Carnac declined to reconsider. The wages were sufficient and the strike unwarranted! He kept cool, even good-natured, and with only one-third of his men at work, he kept things going, and the business went on with regularity, if with smaller output. The Press unanimously supported him, for it was felt the strike had its origin in foreign influence, and as French Canada had no love for the United States there was journalistic opposition to the strike. Carnac had telegraphed to his father when the strike started, but did not urge him to come back. He knew that Grier could do nothing more than he himself was doing, and he dreaded new influence over the strikers. Grier happened to be in the backwoods and did not get word for nearly a week; then he wired asking Carnac what the present situation was. Carnac replied he was standing firm, that he would not yield a cent increase in wages, and that, so far, all was quiet.

It happened, however, that on the day he wired, the strikers tried to prevent the non-strikers from going to work and there was a collision. The police and a local company of volunteers intervened and then the Press condemned unsparingly

the whole affair. This outbreak did good, and Luc Baste was arrested for provoking disorder. No one else was arrested, and this was a good thing, for, on the whole, even the men that followed Luc did not trust him. His arrest cleared the air and the strike broke. The next day, all the strikers returned, but Carnac refused their wages for the time they were on strike, and he had triumphed.

On that very day John Grier started back to Montreal. He arrived in about four days, and when he came, found everything in order. He went straight from his home to the mill and there found Carnac in control.

"Had trouble, eh, Carnac?" he asked with a grin, after a moment of greeting. Carnac shrugged his shoulders, but said nothing.

"It's the first strike I ever had in my mills, and I hope it will be the last. I don't believe in knuckling down to labour tyranny, and I'm glad you kept your hand steady. There'll be no more strikes in my mills—I'll see to that!"

"They've only just begun, and they'll go on, father. It's the influence of Canucs who have gone to the factories of Maine. They get bitten there with the socialistic craze, and they come back and make trouble. This strike was started by Luc Baste, a French-Canadian, who had been in Maine. You can't stop these things by saying so. There was no strike among Belloc's men!"

"No, but did you have no trouble with Belloc's men?"

Carnac told him of the death of the Grier man after the collision, of his own arrest and fine of twenty-five cents and of the attitude of the public and the Press.

The old man was jubilant. "Say, you did the thing in style. It was the only way to do it. You landed 'em with the protest fair and easy. You're going to be a success in the business, I can see that."

Carnac for a moment looked at his father meditatively. Then, seeing the surprise in John Grier's face, he said: "No, I'm not going to be a success in it, for I'm not going on with it. I've had enough. I'm through."

"You've had enough—you're through—just when you've proved you can do things as well as I can do them! You ain't going on! Great Jehoshaphat!"

"I mean it; I'm not going on. I'm going to quit in another month. I can't stick it. It galls me. It ain't my job. I do it, but it's artificial, it ain't the real thing. My heart isn't in it as yours is, and I'd go mad if I had to do this all my life. It's full of excitement at times, it's hard work, it's stimulating when you're fighting, but other times it's deadly dull and bores me stiff. I feel as though I were pulling a train of cars."

Slowly the old man's face reddened with anger.

"It bores you stiff, eh? It's deadly dull at times! There's only interest in it when there's a fight on, eh? You're right; you're not fit for the job, never was and never will be while your mind is what it is. Don't take a month to go, don't take a week, or a day, go this morning after I've got your report on what's been done. It ain't the real thing, eh? No, it ain't. It's no place for you. Tell me all there is to tell, and get out; I've had enough too, I've had my fill. 'It bores me stiff'!"

John Grier was in a rage, and he would listen to no explanation. "Come now, out with your report!"

Carnac was not upset. He kept cool. "No need to be so crusty," he said.

Chapter VI — *Luke Tarboe has an Offer*

MANY a man behind his horses' tails on the country-side has watched the wild reckless life of the water with wonder and admiration. He sees a cluster of logs gather and climb, and still gather and climb, and between him and that cluster is a rolling waste of timber, round and square.

Suddenly, a being with a red shirt, with loose prairie kind of hat, knee-boots, having metal clamps, strikes out from the shore, running on the tops of the moving logs till he reaches the jam. Then the pike-pole, or the lever, reaches the heart of the difficulty, and presently the jam breaks, and the logs go tumbling into the main, while the vicious-looking berserker of the water runs back to the shore over the logs, safe and sound. It is a marvel to the spectator, that men should manipulate the river so. To him it is a life apart; not belonging to the life he lives—a passing show.

It was a stark surprise of the river which makes this story possible. There was a strike at Bunder's Boom—as it was called—between Bunder and

Grier's men. Some foreman of Grier's gang had been needlessly offensive. Bunder had been stupidly resentful. When Grier's men had tried to force his hand also, he had resisted. It chanced that, when an *impasse* seemed possible to be broken only by force, a telegram came to John Grier at Montreal telling him of the difficulty. He lost no time in making his way northwards.

But some one else had come upon the scene. It was Luke Tarboe. He had arrived at a moment when the Belloc river crowd had almost wrecked Bunder's Boom, and when a collision between the two gangs seemed inevitable. What he did remained a river legend. By good temper and adroitness, he reconciled the leaders of the two gangs ; he bought the freedom of the river by a present to Bunder's daughter ; he won Bunder by four bottles of " Three Star " brandy. When the police from a town a hundred miles away arrived at the same time as John Grier, it was to find the Grier and Belloc gangs peacefully prodding side by side.

When the police had gone, John Grier looked Tarboe up and down. The brown face, the clear, strong brown eyes and the brown hatless head rose up eighteen inches above his own, making a gallant summit to a robust stalk.

" Well, you've done easier things than that in your time, eh ? " John Grier asked.

Tarboe nodded. "It was touch and go. I guess it was the hardest thing I ever tried since I've been working for you, but it's come off all right, hasn't it?" He waved a hand to the workmen on the river, to the tumbling rushes of logs and timber. Then he looked far up the stream, with hand shading his brown eyes to where a crib—or raft—was following the eager stream of logs. "It's easy going now," he added, and his face had a look of pleasure.

"What's your position, and what's your name?" asked John Grier.

"I'm head-foreman of the Skunk Nest's gang—that's this lot, and I got here—just in time! I don't believe you could have done it, Mr. Grier. No master is popular in the real sense with his men. I think they'd have turned you down. So it was lucky I came."

A faint smile hovered at his lips, and his eyes brooded upon the busy gangs of men. "Yes, I've had a lot of luck this time. There's nothing like keeping your head cool and your belly free from drink." Now he laughed broadly. "By gosh, it's all good! Do you know, Mr. Grier, I came out here a wreck eight years ago. I left Montreal then with a spot in my lungs, that would kill me, they said. I've never seen Montreal since, but I've had a good time out in the woods, in the shanties in the winters; on the

rivers in the summer. I've only been as far East as this in eight years."

"What do you do in the winter, then?"

"Shanties—shanties all the time. In the summer this; in the Fall taking the men back to the shanties. Bossing the lot; doing it from love of the life that's been given back to me. Yes, this is the life that makes you take things easy. You don't get fussed out here. The job I had took a bit of doing, but it was done, and I'm lucky to have my boss see the end of it."

He smiled benignly upon John Grier. He knew he was valuable to the Grier organization: he knew that Grier had heard of him under another name. Now Grier had seen him, and he felt he would like to tell John Grier some things about the river he ought to know. He waved a hand declining the cigar offered him by his great chief.

"Thanks, I don't smoke, and I don't drink, and I don't chew; but I eat—by gosh, I eat! Nothing's so good as good food, except good reading."

"Good reading!" exclaimed John Grier. "Good reading—on the river!"

"Well, it's worked all right, and I read a lot. I get books from Montreal, from the old library at the University."

"At what University?" struck in the lumber-king.

"Oh, Laval! I wouldn't go to McGill. I wanted to know French, so I went to Laval. There I came to know Father Labasse. He was a great man, Father Labasse. He helped me. I was there three years, and then was told I was going to die. It was Labasse who gave me this tip. He said, 'Go into the woods; put your teeth into the trees; eat the wild herbs, and don't come back till you feel well.' Well, I haven't gone back, and I'm not going back."

"What do you do with your wages?" asked the lumber-king.

"I bought land. I've got a farm of four hundred acres twenty miles from here. I've got a man on it working it."

"Does it pay?"

"Of course. Do you suppose I'd keep a farm that didn't pay?"

"Who runs it?"

"A man that broke his leg on the river. One of Belloc's men. He knows all about farming. He brought his wife and three children up, and there he is—making money, and making the land good. I've made him a partner at last. When it's good enough by and by, I'll probably go and live there myself. Anybody ought to make farming a success, if there's water and proper wood and such things," he added.

There was silence for a few moments. Then

John Grier looked Tarboe up and down sharply again, noting the splendid physique, the quizzical, mirth-provoking eye, and said: "I can give you a better job if you'll come to Montreal."

Tarboe shook his head. "Haven't had a sick day for eight years; I'm as hard as nails; I'm as strong as steel. I love this wild world of the woods and fields and——"

"And the shebangs and grog-shops and the dirty, drunken villages?" interrupted the old man.

"No, they don't count. I take them in, but they don't count."

"Didn't you have hard times when you first came?" asked John Grier. "Did you get right with the men from the start?"

A little bit of care is a good thing in any life. I told them good stories, and they liked that. I used to make the stories up, and they liked that also. When I added some swear words they liked them all the better. I learned how to do it."

"Yes, I've heard of you, but not as Tarboe."

"You heard of me as Renton, eh?"

"Yes, as Renton. I wonder I never came across you till to-day."

"I kept out of your way; that was the reason. When you came north, I got farther into the backwoods."

"Are you absolutely straight, Tarboe?" asked

John Grier eagerly. "Do you do these things in the Garden of Eden way, or can you run a bit crooked when it's worth while?"

"If I'd ever seen it worth while, I'd say so. I could run a bit crooked if I was fighting among the big ones, or if we were at war with—Belloc, eh!" A cloud came into the eyes of Tarboe. "If I was fighting Belloc, and he used a weapon to flay me from behind, I'd never turn my back on him!"

A grim smile came into Tarboe's face. His jaw set almost viciously, his eyes hardened. "You people don't play your game very well, Mr. Grier. I've seen a lot that wants changing."

"Why don't you change it, then?"

Tarboe laughed. "If I was boss like you, I'd change it, but I'm not, and I stick to my own job."

The old man came close to him, and steadily explored his face and eyes. "I've never met anybody like you before. You're the man can do things and won't do them."

"I didn't say that. I said what I meant—that good health is better than everything else in the world, and when you've got it, you should keep it, if you can. I'm going to keep mine."

"Well, keep it in Montreal," said John Grier. "There's a lot doing there worth while. Is

fighting worth anything to one that's got aught in him? There's war for the big things. I believe in war." He waved a hand. "What's the difference between the kind of thing you've done to-day, and doing it with the Belloc gang—with the Folson gang—with the Longville gang—and all the rest? It's the same thing. I was like you when I was young. I could do things you've done to-day while I laid the base of what I've got. How old are you?"

"I'm thirty—almost thirty-one."

"You'll be just as well in Montreal to-morrow as you are here to-day, and you'd be twice as clever," said John Grier. His eyes seemed to pierce those of the younger man. "I like you," he continued, suddenly catching Tarboe's arm. "You're all right, and you wouldn't run straight simply because it was the straight thing to do."

Tarboe threw back his head and laughed and nodded. The old man's eyes twinkled. "By gracious, we're well met! I never was in a bigger hole in my life. One of my sons has left me. I bought him out, and he's joined my enemy Belloc."

"Yes, I know," remarked Tarboe.

"My other son, he's no good. He's as strong as a horse—but he's no good. He paints, he sculps. He doesn't care whether I give him money or not. He earns his living as he wants to earn it. When Fabian left me, I tried Carnac.

I offered to take him in permanently. He tried it, but he wouldn't go on. He got out. He's twenty-six. The papers are beginning to talk about him. He doesn't care for that, except that it brings in cash for his statues and pictures. What's the good of painting and statuary, if you can't do the big things?"

"So you think the things you do are as big as the things that Shakespeare, or Tennyson, or Titian, or Van Dyck, or Watt, or Rodin do—or did?"

"Bigger—much bigger," was the reply.

The younger man smiled. "Well, that's the way to look at it, I suppose. Think the thing you do is better than what anybody else does, and you're well started."

"Come and do it too. You're the only man I've cottoned to in years. Come with me, and I'll give you twelve thousand dollars a year; and I'll take you into my business. I'll give you the best chance you ever had. You've found your health; come back and keep it. Don't you long for the fight, for your finger at somebody's neck? That's what I felt when I was your age, and I did it, and I'm doing it, but I can't do it as I used to. My veins are leaking somewhere." A strange, sad, faded look came into his eyes. "I don't want my business to be broken by Belloc," he added. "Come and help me save it."

"By gosh, I will!" said the young man after a moment, with a sudden thirst in his throat and bite to his teeth. "By gum, yes, I'll go with you."

Chapter VII — *"At our Price?"*

WEST of the city of Montreal were the works and the offices of John Grier. Here it was that a thing was done without which there might have been no real story to tell. It was a night which marked the close of the financial year of the firm.

Upon John Grier had come Carnac. He had brought with him a small statue of a riverman with flannel shirt, scarf about the waist, thick defiant trousers and well-weaponed boots. It was a real figure of the river, buoyant, daring, almost vicious. The head was bare; there were plain gold rings in the ears; and the stark, half-malevolent eyes looked out, as though searching for a jam of logs or some peril of the river. In the horny right hand was a defiant pike-pole, its handle thrust forward, its steel spike stabbing the ground.

At first glance, Carnac saw that John Grier was getting worn and old. The eyes were not so flashing as they once were; the lips were curled in a half-cynical mood. The old look of activity was fading; something vital had struck

soul and body. He had had a great year. He had fought Belloc and his son Fabian successfully; he had laid new plans and strengthened his position.

Tarboe coming into the business had made all the difference to him. Tarboe had imagination, skill and decision, he seldom lost his temper; he kept a strong hand upon himself. His control of men was marvellous; his knowledge of finance was instinctive; his capacity for organization was rare, and he had health unbounded and serene. It was hard to tell what were the principles controlling Tarboe—there was always an element of suspicion in his brown and brilliant eyes. Yet he loved work. The wind of energy seemed to blow through his careless hair. His hands were like iron and steel; his lips were quick and friendly, or ruthless, as seemed needed. To John Grier's eyes he was the epitome of civilization—the warrior without a soul.

When Carnac came in now with the statue tucked under his arm, smiling and self-contained, it seemed as though something had been done by Fate to flaunt John Grier.

With a nod, Carnac put the statue on the table in front of the old man, and said: "It's all right, isn't it? I've lifted that out of the river-life. That's one of the best men you ever had, and he's only one of a thousand. He doesn't belong anywhere. He's a rover, an adventurer, a wanton of

the waters. Look at him. He's all right, isn't he?" He asked this again.

The timber-man waved the statue aside, and looked at the youth with critical eyes. "I've just been making up the accounts for the year," he said. "It's been the best year I've had in seven. I've taken the starch out of Belloc and Fabian. I've broken the back of their opposition—I've got it like a twig in iron teeth."

"Yes, Tarboe's been some use, hasn't he?" was the suggestive response.

John Grier's eyes hardened. "*You* might have done it. You had it in you. The staff of life—courage and daring—were yours, and you wouldn't take it on. What's the result? I've got a man who's worth two of Fabian and Belloc. And you"—he held up a piece of paper—"see that," he broke off. "See that. It's my record. That's what I'm worth. That's what you might have handled!" He took a cigar from his pocket, cut off the blunt end, and continued: "You threw your chance aside." He tapped the paper with the point of the cigar. "That's what Tarboe has helped do. What have you got to show?" He pointed to the statue. "I won't say it ain't good. It's a live man from the river. But what do I want with that, when I can have the original man himself! My boy, the great game of life is to fight hard, and never to give in. If you

keep your eyes open, things'll happen that'll bring what you want."

He stood up, striking a match to light his cigar. It was dusk, and the light of the match gave a curious, fantastic glimmer to his powerful, weird, haggard face. He was like some remnant of a great life, loose in a careless world.

"I tell you," he said, the smoke leaking from his mouth like a drift of snow, "the only thing worth doing is making the things that matter in the commerce and politics of the world."

"I didn't know you were a politician," said Carnac.

"Of course I'm a politician," was the inflammable reply. "What's commerce without politics? It's politics that makes the commerce possible. There's that fellow Barouche—Barode Barouche—he's got no money, but he's a Minister, and he can make you rich or poor by planning legislation at Ottawa that'll benefit or hamper you. That's the kind of business that's worth doing—seeing into the future, fashioning laws that make good men happy and bad men afraid. Don't I know! I'm a master-man in my business; nothing defeats me. To me, a forest of wild wood is the future palace of a Prime Minister. A great river is a pathway to the palace, and all the thousands of men that work the river are the adventurers that bring the booty home——"

"That bring 'the palace to Paris,' eh!" interrupted Carnac, laughing.

"Paris be damned—that bring the forest to Quebec. How long did it take you to make that?" he added with a nod towards the statue.

"Oh, I did it in a day—six hours, I think; and he stood like that for three hours out of the six. He was great, but he'd no more sense of civilization than I have of Heaven."

"You don't need to have a sense of Heaven, you need to have a sense of Hell. That prevents you from spoiling your own show. You're playing with life's vital things."

"I wonder how much you've got out of it all, father," Carnac remarked with a smile. He lit a cigarette. "You do your job in style. It's been a great career, yours. You've made your big business out of nothing."

"I had something to start with. Your grandfather had a business worth not much, but it was a business, and the fundamental thing is to have machinery to work with when you start life. I had that. My father was narrow, contracted and a blunderer, but he made good in a small way."

"And you in a big way," said Carnac, with admiration and criticism in his eyes.

He realized that John Grier had summed him up fairly when he said he was playing with life's vital things. Somehow, he saw the other had a grip upon essentials lacking in himself; he had

his tooth in the orange, as it were, and was sucking the juice of good profit from his labours. Yet he knew how much trickery and vital evasion and harsh aggression there were in his father's business life.

As yet he had never seen Tarboe—he had been away in the country the whole year nearly—but he imagined a man of strength, abilities, penetration and deep power. He knew that only a man with savage instincts could work successfully with John Grier; he knew that Grier was without mercy in his business, and that his best year's work had been marked by a mandatory power which only a malevolent policy could produce. Yet, somehow, he had a feeling that Tarboe had a steadying influence on John Grier. The old man was not so uncontrolled as in bygone days.

"I'd like to see Tarboe," Carnac said suddenly.

"He ain't the same as you," snapped John Grier. "He's bigger, broader, and buskier." A malicious smile crossed over his face. "He's a bandit—that's what he is. He's got a chest like a horse and lungs like the ocean. When he's got a thing, he's got it like a nail in a branch of young elm. He's a dandy, that fellow."

Suddenly passion came to his eyes. "You might have done it, you've got the brains, and the sense, but you ain't got the ambition. You keep feeling for a thousand things instead of

keeping your grip on one. The man that succeeds fastens hard on what he wants to do—the one big thing, and he does it, thinking of naught else."

"Well, that's good preaching," remarked Carnac coolly. "But it doesn't mean that a man should stick to one thing, if he finds out he's been wrong about it? We all make mistakes. Perhaps some day I'll wish I'd gone with you."

Grimness came into the old man's face. Something came into his eyes that was strange and revealing. "Well, I hope you will. But you had your chance with me, and you threw it down like a piece of rotten leather."

"I don't cost you anything," returned Carnac. "I've paid my own way a long time—with mother's help."

"And you're twenty-six years old, and what have you got? Enough to give you bread from day to day—no more. I was worth seventy thousand dollars when I was your age. I'm worth enough to make a prince rich, and if I'd been treated right by those I brought into the world I'd be worth twice as much. Fabian was good as far as he went, but he was a coward. You"—a look of fury entered the dark eyes—"you were no coward, but you didn't care a damn. You wanted to paddle about with muck of imagination——" he pointed to the statue on the table.

"Why, your business has been great because

of your imagination," was the retort. "You saw things ahead with the artist's eye. You planned with the artist's mind; and brought forth what's to your honour and credit—and the piling up of your bank balance. The only thing that could have induced me to work in your business is the looking ahead and planning, seeing the one thing to be played off against the other, the fighting of strong men, the politics, all the forces which go to make or break your business. Well, I didn't do it, and I'm not sorry. I have a gift which, by training and development, will give me a place among the men who do things, if I have good luck—good luck!"

He dwelt upon these last words with an intensity which dreaded something. There was retrospection in his eyes. A cloud seemed to cross his face.

A strong step crunching the path stopped the conversation, and presently there appeared the figure of Tarboe. Certainly the new life had not changed Tarboe, had not altered his sturdy, strenuous nature. His brown eyes under the rough thatch of his eyebrow took in the room with lightning glance, and he nodded respectfully, yet with great friendliness, at John Grier. He seemed to have news, and he glanced with doubt at Carnac.

John Grier understood. "Go ahead. What's happened?"

"Nothing that can't wait till I'm introduced to your son," rejoined Tarboe.

With a friendly look, free from all furtiveness, Carnac reached out a hand, small, graceful, firm. As Tarboe grasped it in his own big paw, he was conscious of a strength in the grip which told him that the physical capacity of the "painter-fellow," as he afterwards called Carnac, had points worthy of respect. On the instant, there was admiration on the part of each—admiration and dislike. Carnac liked the new-comer for his healthy bearing, for the iron hardness of his head, and for the intelligence of his dark eyes. He disliked him, however, for something that made him critical of his father, something covert and devilishly alert. Both John Grier and Tarboe were like two old backwoodsmen, eager to reach their goal, and somewhat indifferent to the paths by which they travelled to it.

Tarboe, on the other hand, admired the frank, pleasant face of the young man, which carried still the irresponsibility of youth, but which conveyed to the watchful eye a reckless independence, a fervid, and perhaps futile, challenge to all the world. Tarboe understood that this young man had a frankness dangerous to the business of life, yet which, properly applied, might bring great results. He disliked Carnac for his uncalculating candour; but he realized

that, behind all, was something disturbing to his life.

"It's a woman," Tarboe said to himself, "it's a woman. He's made a fool of himself."

Tarboe was right. He had done what no one else had done—he had pierced the cloud surrounding Carnac: it was a woman.

"I hear you're pulling things off here," remarked Carnac civilly. "He says"—pointing to John Grier—"that you're making the enemy squirm."

Tarboe nodded, and a half-stealthy smile crept across his face. "I don't think we've lost anything coming our way," he replied. "We've had good luck——"

"And our eyes were open," intervened John Grier.

"You push the brush and use the chisel, don't you?" asked Tarboe in spite of himself with slight scorn in his tone.

"I push the chisel and use the brush," answered Carnac, smilingly correcting him.

"*That's* a good thing. Is it yours?" asked Tarboe, nodding and pointing to the statue of the riverman.

Carnac nodded. "Yes, I did that one day. I'd like to do you, if you'd let me."

The young giant waved a brawny hand and laughed. He looked down at his knee-boots, with their muddied soles, and then at the statue

again on the table. "I don't mind you're doing me. Turn about is fair play. I've done you out of your job." Then he added to the old man, "It's good news I've got. I've made the contract with the French firm at our price."

"At our price!" remarked the other with a grim smile. "For the lot?"

"Yes, for the lot, and I've made the contracts with the ships to carry it."

"At our price?" again asked the old man.

Tarboe nodded. "Just a little better."

"I wouldn't have believed those two things could have been done in the time." Grier rubbed his hands cheerfully. "That's a good day's work. It's the best you've done since you've come."

Carnac watched the scene with interest. No envy moved him, his soul was free from malice. Evidently Tarboe was a man of power. Ruthless he might be, ruthless and unsparing, but a man of power.

At that instant a clerk entered with a letter in his hand. "Mrs. Grier said to give you this," he remarked to Carnac, handing it to him.

Carnac took it and the clerk departed. The letter had an American postmark, and the handwriting on the letter brought trouble to his eyes. He composed himself, however, and tore off the end of the envelope, taking out the letter.

It was brief. It contained only a few lines,

but as Carnac read them the colour left his face. "Good God!" he said to himself. Then he put the paper in his pocket, and, with a forced smile and nod to his father and Tarboe, left the office.

"That's queer. The letter seemed to get him in the vitals," said John Grier with surprise.

Tarboe nodded, and said to himself, "It's a woman all right." He smiled to himself also. He had wondered why Carnac and Junia Shale had not come to an understanding. The letter which had turned Carnac pale was the interpretation.

"Say, sit down, Tarboe," said John Grier. "I want to talk with you."

Chapter VIII *John Grier makes another Offer*

"I'VE been keeping my eye on you, Tarboe," John Grier said presently, his right hand clutching unconsciously the statue which his boy had left with him.

"I didn't suppose you'd forget me when I was making or breaking you."

"You're a winner, Tarboe. You've got sense and judgment, and you ain't afraid to get your own way by any route."

He paused, and gripped the statue closely in his hands.

Tarboe nodded. In the backwoods he had been without ambition save to be master of what he was doing and of the men who were part of his world of responsibility. Then John Grier had pulled him back into industry and he had since desired to ascend, to "make good." Also, he had seen Junia often, and for her an aspiration had sprung up in him like a fire in a wild place.

When he first saw her, she was standing in the doorway through which Carnac had just passed. The brightness of her face, the wonder of her eyes, the glow of her cheek, had made his pulses

throb as they had never throbbed before. He had put the thought of her away from him, but it had come back constantly until he had found himself looking for her in the street, and on the hill that led to John Grier's house.

Tarboe realized that the girl was drawn towards Carnac, and that Carnac was drawn towards the girl, but that some dark depths lay between. The letter Carnac had just received seemed to him the plumb-line of that abyss. Carnac and the girl were suited to each other—that was clear; and the girl was enticing, provoking and bewildering—that was the modelling fact. He had satisfaction that he had displaced Carnac in this great business, and there was growing in him a desire to take away the chances of the girl from Carnac also. With his nature it was inevitable. Life to him was now a puzzle towards the solution of which he moved with conquering conviction.

From John Grier's face now, he realized that something was to be said affecting his whole career. It would, he was sure, alter his footsteps in the future. He had a profound respect for the little wiry man, with the firm body and shrivelled face.

Tarboe watched the revealing expression of the old man's face and the motions of his body. He noticed that the tight grip of the hand on the little statue of the riverman had made the fingers

pale. He realized how absorbed was the lumber-king, who had given him more confidence than he had given to anyone else in the world. As near as he could come to anyone, he had come to John Grier. There had been differences between them, but he, Tarboe, fought for his own idea, and, in nine cases out of ten, had conquered. John Grier had even treated Tarboe's solutions as though they were his own. He had a weird faith in the young giant. He saw now Tarboe's eyes fixed on his fingers, and he released his grip.

"That's the thing between him and me, Tarboe," he said, nodding towards the virile bronze. "Think of my son doing that when he could do all this!" He swept his arm in a great circle which included the horizon beyond the doors and the windows. "It beats me, and because it beats me, and because he defies me, I've made up my mind what to do."

"Don't do anything you'd be sorry for, boss. He ain't a fool because he's not what you are." He nodded towards the statue. "You think that's pottering. I think it's good stuff. It will last, perhaps, when what you and I do is forgotten."

There was something big and moving in Tarboe. He was a contradiction. A lover of life, he was also reckless in how he got what he wanted. If it could not be got by the straight means, then

it must be by the crooked, and that was where he and Grier lay down together, as it were. Yet he had some knowledge that was denied to John Grier. The soul of the greater things was in him.

"Give the boy a chance to work out his life in his own way," he said manfully. "You gave him a chance to do it in your way, and you were turned down. Have faith in him. He'll probably come out all right in the end."

"You mean he'll come my way?" asked the old man almost rabidly. "You mean he'll do the things I want him to do here, as you've done?"

"I guess so," answered Tarboe, but without conviction in his tone. "I'm not sure whether it will be like that or not, but I know you've got a son as honest as the stars, and the honest man gets his own in the end."

There was silence for some time, then the old man began walking up and down the room, softly, noiselessly.

"You talk sense," he said. "I care for that boy, but I care for my life's work more. Day in, day out, night in, night out, I've slaved for it, prayed for it, believed in it, and tried to make my wife and my boys feel as I do about it, and none of them cares as I care. Look at Fabian—over with the enemy, fighting his own father; look at Carnac, out in the open, taking his own way." He paused.

"And your wife?" asked Tarboe almost furtively, because it seemed to him that the old man was most unhappy in that particular field.

"She's been a good wife, but she don't care as I do for success and money."

"Perhaps you never taught her," remarked Tarboe with silky irony.

"Taught her! What was there to teach? She saw me working; she knew the life I had to live; she was lifted up with me. I was giving her everything in me to give."

"You mean money and a big house and servants and comfort," said Tarboe sardonically.

"Well, ain't that right?" snapped the other.

"Yes, it's all right, but it don't always bring you what you want. It's right, but it's wrong too. Women want more than that, boss. Women want to be loved—sky high."

All at once Grier felt himself as far removed from Tarboe as he had ever been from Carnac, or his wife. Why was it? Suddenly Tarboe understood that between him and John Grier there must always be a flood. He realized that there was in Grier some touch of the insane thing; something apart, remote and terrible. He was convinced of it, when he saw Grier suddenly spring up, and pace the room again like a tortured animal.

"You've got great influence with me," he said. "I was just going to tell you something that'd

give you pleasure, but what you've said about my boy coming back has made me change what I was going to do. I don't need to say I like you. We were born in the same nest almost. We've got the same ideas."

"Almost," intervened Tarboe. "Not quite, but almost."

"Well, this is what I've got to say. You've got youth, courage, and good sense, and business ability, and what more does a man want in life, I ask you that?"

Tarboe nodded, but made no reply.

"Well, I don't feel as strong as I used to do. I've been breaking up this last year, just when we've been knitting the cracks in the building. What was in my mind is this—to leave you when I die the whole of my business to keep it a success, and get in the way of Belloc, and pay my wife so much a year to live on."

"That wouldn't be fair to your wife or your sons."

"As for Carnac, if I left him the business it'd be dead in two years. Nothing could save it. He'd spoil it, because he don't care for it. I bought Fabian out. As for my wife, she couldn't run it, and——"

"You could sell it," interrupted Tarboe.

"Sell it! Sell it!" said Grier wildly. "Sell it to whom?"

"To Belloc," was the malicious reply.

The demon of anger seized the old man.

"You say that to me—you—that I should sell to Belloc! By hell, I'd rather burn every stick and board and tree I've got—sweep it out of existence, and die a beggar than sell it to Belloc!" Froth gathered at the corners of his mouth, there was tumult in his eyes. "Belloc! Knuckle down to him! Sell out to him!"

"Well, if you got a profit of twenty per cent. above what it's worth it might be well. That'd be a triumph, not a defeat."

"I see what you mean," said John Grier, the passion slowly going from his eyes. "I see what you mean, but that ain't my way. I want this business to live. I want Grier's business to live long after John Grier has gone. That's why I was going to say to you that in my will I'm going to leave you this business, you to pay my wife every year twenty thousand dollars."

"And your son, Carnac?"

"Not a sou—not a sou—not a sou—nothing—that's what I meant at first. But I've changed my mind now. I'm going to leave you the business, if you'll make a bargain with me. I want you to run it for three years, and take for yourself all the profits over the twenty thousand dollars a year that goes to my wife. There's a lot of money in it, the way you'd work it."

"I don't understand about the three years," said Tarboe, with rising colour.

"No, because I haven't told you, but you'll take it in now. I'm going to leave you the business as though you were going to have it for ever, but I'll make another will dated a week later, in which I leave it to Carnac. Something you said makes me think he might come right, and it will be playing fair to him to let him run himself alone, maybe with help from his mother, for three years. That's long enough, and perhaps the thought of what he might have had will work its way with him. If it don't—well, it won't; that's all; but I want you to have the business long enough to baulk Belloc and Fabian the deserter. I want you for three years to fight this fight after I'm gone. In that second secret will, I'll leave you two hundred thousand dollars. Are you game for it? Is it worth while?"

The old man paused, his head bent forward, his eyes alert and searching, both hands gripping the table.

There was a long silence, in which the ticking of the clock upon the wall seemed unduly loud and in which the buzz of cross-cut saws came sounding through the evening air. Yet Tarboe did not reply.

"Have you nothing to say?" asked Grier at last. "Won't you do it—eh?"

"I'm studying the thing out," answered Tarboe

quietly. "I don't quite see about these two wills. Why shouldn't the second will be found first?"

"Because you and I will be the only ones that'll know of it. That shows how much I trust you, Tarboe. I'll put it away where nobody can get it except you or me."

"But if anything should happen to me?"

"Well, I'd leave a letter with my bank, not to be opened for three years, or unless you died, and it would say that the will existed, where it was, and what its terms were."

"That sounds all right," but there was a cloud on Tarboe's face.

"It's a great business," said Grier, seeing Tarboe's doubt. "It's the biggest thing a man can do—and I'm breaking up."

The old man had said the right thing—"It's a great business!" It was the greatness of the thing that had absorbed Tarboe. It was the bigness made him feel life could be worth living, if the huge machinery were always in his fingers. Yet he had never expected it, and—life was a problem. Who could tell! Perhaps—perhaps, the business would always be his in spite of the second will! Perhaps, he would have his chance to make good. He got to his feet; he held out his hand.

"I'll do it."

"Ain't it worth any thanks?"

"Not between us," declared Tarboe. "When are you going to do it?"

"To-night—now." He drew out some paper and sat down with a pen in his hand.

"Now," John Grier repeated.

Chapter IX — *The Puzzle*

ON his way home, with Luzanne's disturbing letter in his pocket, Carnac met Junia. She was supremely Anglo-Saxon; fresh, fervid and buoyant with an actual buoyancy of the early spring. She had tact and ability, otherwise she could never have preserved peace between the contending factions, Belloc and Fabian, old John Grier, the mother and Carnac. She was as though she sought for nothing, wished nothing but the life in which she lived. Yet her wonderful pliability, her joyful boyishness, had behind all a delicate anxiety which only showed in flashes now and then, fully understood by no one except Carnac's mother and old Denzil. These two having suffered strangely in life had realized that the girl was always waiting for a curtain to rise which did not rise, for a voice to speak which gave no sound.

Yet since Carnac's coming back there had appeared a slight change in her, a bountiful, eager alertness, a sense of wonder and experiment, adding new interest to her personality. Carnac was conscious of this increased vitality, was

impressed and even provoked by it. Somehow he felt—for he had the telepathic mind—that the girl admired and liked Tarboe. He did not stop to question how or why she should like two people so different as Tarboe and himself.

The faint colour of the crimsoning maples was now in her cheek ; the light of the autumn evening was in her eyes ; the soft vitality of September was in her motions. She was attractively alive. Her hair waved back from her forehead with natural grace ; her small feet, with perfect ankles, made her foothold secure and sedately joyous. Her brown hand—yet not so brown after all—held her hat lightly, and was, somehow, like a signal out of a world in which his hopes were lost for the present.

She was dearer to him than all the rest of the world ; and he had in his hand what kept them apart—a sentence of death, unless he escaped from the wanton calling him to fulfil duties into which he had been tricked. Luzanne Larue had a terrible hold over him. He gripped the letter in his pocket as a Hopi Indian does the neck of a poisonous snake. The rosy sunset gave the girl's face a reflected spiritual glamour ; it made her, suddenly, a bewildering figure. Somehow, she seemed a great distance from him—as one detached and unfamiliar.

He suddenly felt she knew more than it was possible she should know. As she flashed an

inquiry into his eyes, it was as though she said: "Why don't you tell me everything, and I will help you?" Or, was it: "Why don't you tell me everything and end it all?" He longed to press her to his breast, as he had once done in the woods when Denzil had been injured, but that was not possible. The thought of that far-off day made him say to her, rather futilely:

"How is Denzil? How is Denzil?"

There was swift surprise in her face. She seemed dumbfounded, and then she said:

"Denzil! He's all right, but he does not like your Mr. Tarboe."

"*My* Mr. Tarboe! Where do I come in?"

"Well, he's got what you ought to have had," was the reply. "What you would have had, weren't you a foolish fellow."

"I still don't understand how he is *my* Mr. Tarboe."

"Well, he wouldn't have been in your father's life if it weren't for you; if you had done what your father wished you to do, had——"

"Had sold myself for gold—my freedom, my health, everything to help my father's business! I don't see why he should expect that what he's doing some one else should do——"

"That Belloc would do, that Belloc and Fabian would do," said the girl.

"Yes, that's it—what they two would do. There's no genius in it, though my father comes

as near being a genius as any man alive. But there's a screw loose somewhere. . . . It wasn't good enough for me. It didn't give me a chance—in things that are of the mind, the spirit—my particular gifts, whatever they are. They would have chafed against that life."

"In other words, you're a genius, which your father isn't," the girl said almost sarcastically.

A disturbed look came into Carnac's eyes. "I'd have liked my father to be a genius. Then we'd have hit it off together. I don't ever feel the things he does are the things I want to do; or the things he says are those I'd like to say. He's a strange man. He lives alone. He never was really near Fabian or me. We were his sons, but though Fabian is a little bit like him in appearance, I'm not, and never was. I always feel that——" He paused, and she took up the tale—

"That he wasn't the father you'd have made for yourself, eh!"

"I suppose that's it. Conceit, ain't it? Perhaps the facts are, I'm one of the most useless people that ever wore a coat. Perhaps the things I do aren't going to live beyond me."

"It seems as though your father's business is going to live after him, doesn't it?" the girl asked mockingly. "Where are you going *now*?" she added.

"Well, I'm going to take you home," he said,

as he turned and walked by her side down the hill.

"Denzil will be glad to see you. He almost thinks I'm a curse."

Carnac smiled. "All genius is at once a blessing or a curse. And what does Denzil think of me?"

"Oh—a blessing *and* a curse!" she said whimsically.

"I don't honestly think I'm a blessing to anybody in this world. There's no one belonging to me who believes in me."

"There's Denzil," she said. "He believes in you."

"He doesn't belong to me; he isn't my family."

"Who are your family? Is it only those who are bone of your bone and flesh of your flesh? Your family is much wider, because you're a genius. It's world-wide—of all kinds. Denzil belongs to you, because you helped to save him years ago; the Catholic Archbishop belongs to you, because he's got brains and a love of literature and art; Barode Barouche belongs to you, because he's almost a genius too."

"Barouche is a politician," said Carnac with slight derision.

"That's no reason why he shouldn't be a genius."

"He's a Frenchman."

"Haven't Frenchmen genius?" asked the girl.

Carnac laughed. "Why, of course. Barode Barouche—yes, he's a great one: he can think, he can write, and he can talk; and the talking's the best that he does—though I've not *heard* him speak, but I've read his speeches."

"Doesn't he make good laws at Ottawa?"

"He makes laws at Ottawa—whether they're good or not is another question. I shouldn't be a follower of his, if I had my chance though."

"That's because you're not French."

"Oh yes, I'm as French as can be! I felt at home with the French when I was in France. I was all Gallic. When I'm here I'm more Gallic than Saxon. I don't understand it. Here am I, with all my blood for generations Saxon, and yet I feel French. If I'd been born in the old country, it would have been in Limerick or Tralee. I'd have been Celtic there."

"Yet Barode Barouche is a great man. He gets drunk sometimes, but he's great. He gets hold of men like Denzil."

"Denzil has queer tastes."

"Yes—he worships you."

"That's not queer, it's abnormal," said Carnac with gusto.

"Then I'm abnormal," she said with a mocking laugh, and swung her hat on her fingers like a wheel.

Something stormy and strange swam in Carnac's eyes. All his trouble rushed back on him; the

hand in his pocket crushed the venomous letter he had received, but he said:

"No, you don't worship me!"

"Who was it said all true intelligence is the slave of genius?" she questioned, a little paler than usual, her eye on the last gleam of the sun.

"I don't know who said it, but if that's why you worship me, I know how hollow it all is," he declared sullenly, for she was pouring carbolic acid into a sore.

He wanted to drag the letter from his pocket and hand it her to read; to tell her the whole distressful story: but he dared not. He longed for her, and yet he dared not tell her so. He half drew the letter from his pocket, but thrust it back again. Tell this innocent girl the whole ugly story? It could not be done. There was but one thing to do—to go away, to put this world of French Canada behind him, and leave her free to follow her fancy, or some one else's fancy.

Or some one else's fancy! There was Tarboe. Tarboe had taken from him the place in the business which should be his; he had displaced him in his father's affections . . . and now Junia!

He held out a hand to the girl. "I must go and see my mother."

His eyes abashed her. She realized there was trouble in the face of the man who all her life

had been strangely near and dear to her. With impulsiveness, she said :

" You're in trouble, Carnac. Let me help you."

For one swift instant he almost yielded. Then he gripped her hand and said : " No—no—no. It can't be done—not yet."

" Then let Denzil help you. Here he is," she remarked, and she glanced affectionately at the greyish, tousled head of the habitant who was working in the garden of her father's house.

Carnac was master of himself again. " Not a bad idea," he said. " Denzil ! Denzil ! " he called.

The little man looked up. An instant later the figure of the girl fluttered through the doorway of her home, and Carnac stopped beside Denzil in the garden.

Chapter X — *Denzil tells his Story*

"YOU keep going, Denzil," remarked Carnac as he lighted his pipe and came close to the old servant.

The face of the toiler lighted, the eyes gazed kindly at Carnac. "What else is there to do? We must go on. There's no standing still in the world. We must go on—surelee."

"Even when it's hard going, eh?" asked Carnac, not to get an answer so much as to express his own feelings.

"Yes, that's right, m'sieu'; that's how it is. We can't stand still even when it's hard going—but no, bagosh!"

He realized that around Carnac there was a shadow which took its toll of light and life. He had the sound instinct of primitive man. Strangely enough in his own eyes was the look in those of Carnac, a past, hovering on the brink of revelation. His appearance was that of one who had suffered; his knotted hands, dark with warm blood, had in them a story of life's sorrows; his broad shoulders were stooped with the inertia of long regret; his feet clung to the ground as

though there was a great weight above them. But a smile shimmered at his mouth, giving to his careworn face something almost beautiful, lifting the darkness from his powerful, shaggy forehead. Many men knew Denzil by sight, few knew him in actual being. There was a legend that once he was about to be married, but the girl had suddenly gone mad and drowned herself in the river. No one thought it strange that a month later the eldest son of the Tarboe family had been found dead in the woods with a gun in his hand and a bullet through his heart. No one had ever linked the death of Denzil's loved one with that of Almeric Tarboe.

It was unusual for a Frenchman to give up his life to an English family, but that is what he had done, and of late he had watched Junia with new eager solicitude. The day she first saw Tarboe had marked an exciting phase in her life.

Denzil had studied her, and he knew vaguely that a fresh interest, disturbing, electrifying, had entered into her. Because it was Tarboe, the fifteen years younger brother of that Almeric Tarboe who had died a month after his own girl had left this world, his soul was fighting—fighting.

As the smoke of Carnac's pipe came curling into the air, Denzil put on his coat, and laid the hoe and rake on his shoulder.

"Yes, even when it's hard going we still have

to march on—name of God, yes!" he repeated, and he looked at Carnac quizzically.

"Where are you going? Don't you want to talk to me?"

"I'm going home, m'sieu'. If you'll come with me I'll give you a drink of hard cider, the best was ever made."

"I'll come. Denzil, I've never been in your little house. That's strange, when I've known you so many years."

"It's not too late to mend, m'sieu'. There ain't much in it, but it's all I need."

Carnac stepped with Denzil towards the little house, just in front of three pine-trees on the hill, and behind Junia's home.

"I always lock my door—always," said Denzil as he turned a key and opened the door.

They entered into the cool shade of a living-room. There was little furniture, yet against the wall was a kind of bunk, comfortable and roomy, on which was stretched the skin of a brown bear. On the wall above it was a crucifix, and on the opposite wall was the photograph of a girl, good-looking, refined, with large, imaginative eyes, and a face that might have been a fortune.

Carnac gazed at it for a moment, absorbed. "That was your girl, Denzil, wasn't it?" he asked.

Denzil nodded. "The best the world ever

had, m'sieu'," he replied, "the very best, but she went queer and drowned herself—ah, but yes!"

"She just went queer, eh!" Carnac said, looking Denzil straight in the eyes. "Was there insane blood in her family?"

"She wasn't insane," answered Denzil firmly. "She'd been bad used—terrible."

"That didn't come out at the inquest, did it?"

"Not likely. She wrote it me. I'm telling you what I've never told anyone." He shut the door, as though to make a confessional. "She wrote it me, and I wasn't telling anyone—but no. She'd been away down at Quebec City, and there a man got hold of her. Almeric Tarboe it was—the older brother of Luke Tarboe at John Grier's." Suddenly the face of the little man went mad with emotion. "I—I——" he paused.

Carnac held up his hand. "No—no—no, don't tell me. Tarboe—I understand, the Unwritten Law. You haven't told me, but I understand. I remember: he was found in the woods with his gun in his hand—dead. I read it all by accident long ago; and that was the story, eh!"

"Yes. She was young, full of imagination. She loved me, but he was clever, and he was high up, and she was low down. He talked her blind. and then in the woods it was, in the woods where he died, that he——"

Suddenly the little man wrung his fingers like one robbed of reason. "He was a strong man," he went on, "and she was a girl, weak, but not wanton . . . and so she died, telling me, loving me—so she died, and so he died, too, in the woods with his gun in his hand. Yes, 'twas done with his own gun—by accident—by accident! He stumbled, and the gun went off. That was the story at the inquest. No one knew I was there. I was never seen with him and I've never been sorry. He got what he deserved—*sacré*, yes!"

There was something overwhelming in the face of the little resolute, powerful man. His eyes were aflame. He was telling for the first time the story of his lifelong agony and shame.

"It had to be done. She was young, so sweet, so good, aye, she was good—in her soul she was good, ah, surelee! That's why she died in the pond. No one knew. The inquest did not bring out anything, but that's why he died; and ever since I've been mourning; life has no rest for me. I'm not sorry for what I did. I've told it you because you saved me years ago when I fell down the bank. You were only fourteen then, but I've never forgotten. And she, that sweet young lady, she—she was there too; and now when I look at this Tarboe, the brother of that man, and see her and know what I know—*sacré*!" He waved a hand. "No—no—no, don't think there's anything except what's in the soul. That

man has touched ma'm'selle—I don't know why, but he has touched her heart. Perhaps by his great bulk, his cleverness, his brains, his way of doing things. In one sense she's his slave, because she doesn't want to think of him, and she does. She wants to think of you—and she does—ah, bagosh, yes!"

"Yes, I understand," remarked Carnac morosely. "I understand."

"Then why do you let her be under Tarboe's influence? Why don't——"

Carnac thrust out a hand that said silence. "Denzil, I'll never forget what you've told me about yourself. Some day you'll have to tell it to the priest, and then——"

"I'll never tell it till I'm on my death-bed. "Then I'll tell it, *sacré baptême*, yes!"

"You're a bad Catholic, Denzil," remarked Carnac with emotion, but a smile upon his face.

"I may be a bad Catholic, but the man deserved to die, and he died. What's the difference, so far's the world's concerned, whether he died by accident, or died—as he died. It's me that feels the fury of the damned, and want my girl back every hour: and she can't come. But some day I'll go to M'sieu' Luke Tarboe, and tell him the truth, as I've told it you—bagosh, yes!"

"I think he'd try and kill you, if you did. That's the kind of man he is."

"You think if he knew the truth he'd try and kill me—he!"

Carnac paused. He did not like to say everything in his mind. "Do you think he'd say much and do little?"

"I dunno, I dunno, but I'll tell him the truth and take my chance." Suddenly he swung round and stretched out appealing hands. "Haven't you got any sense, m'sieu'? Don't you see what you should do? Ma'm'selle Junia cares for you. I know it—I've seen it in her eyes often—often."

With sudden vehemence Carnac caught the wrists of the other. "It can't be, Denzil. I can't tell you why yet. I'm going away. If Tarboe wants her—good—good; I must give her a chance."

Denzil shrank. "There's something wrong, m'sieu'," he said. Then his eyes fastened on Carnac's. Suddenly, with a strange, shining light in them, he added: "It will all come right for you and her. I'll live for that. If you go away, I'll take good care of her."

"Even if——" Carnac paused.

"Yes, even if he makes love to her. He'll want to marry her, surelee."

"Well, that's not strange," remarked Carnac.

CARNAC went slowly towards his father's house on the hill. Fixed, as his mind was, upon all that had just happened, his eye took fondly from the gathering dusk pictures which the artist's mind cherishes—the long roadway, with the maples and pines, the stump fences; behind which lay the garnered fields, where the plough had made ready the way for the Fall wheat; the robins twittering in the scattered trees; the cooing of the wood-pigeon; over all, the sky in its perfect purpling blue, and far down the horizon the evening-star slowly climbing. He noted the lizards slipping through the stones; he saw where the wheel of a wagon had crushed some wild flower-growth; he heard the far call of a milkmaid to the cattle; he caught the sweet breath of decaying verdure, and through all, the fresh, biting air of the new-land autumn, pleasantly stinging his face.

Something kept saying to his mind: "It's all good. It's life and light, and all good." But his nerves were being tried; his whole nature was stirred.

He took the letter from his pocket again, and read it in the fading light. It was native, naïve, brutal, and unconsciously clever—and the girl who had written it was beautiful. It had only a few lines. It asked him why he had deserted her, his wife. It said that he would find American law protected the deluded stranger. It asked if he had so soon forgotten the kisses he had given her, and did he not realize they were married? He felt that, with her, beneath all, there was more than malice; there was a passion which would run risks to secure its end.

A few moments later he was in the room where his mother, with her strong, fine, lonely face, sat sewing by the window. The door opened squarely on her, and he saw how refined and sad, yet self-contained, was the woman who had given him birth. The look in her eyes warmly welcomed him. Her own sorrows made her sensitive to those of others, and as Carnac entered she saw something was vexing him.

"Dear lad!" she said.

He was beside her now, and he kissed her cheek.

"Best of all the world," he said; and he did not see that she shrank a little.

"Are you in trouble?" she asked, and her hand touched his shoulder.

The wrong she had done him long ago vexed her. It was not possible this boy could fit in with a life where, in one sense, he did not belong.

It was not part of her sorrow that he had given himself to painting and sculpture. In her soul she believed this might be best for him in the end. She had a surreptitious, an almost anguished, joy in the thought that he and John Grier could not hit it off. It seemed natural that both men, ignorant of their own tragedy, believing themselves to be father and son, should feel for each other the torture of distance, a misunderstanding, which only she and one other human being understood.

John Grier was not the boy's father. Carnac was the son of Barode Barouche.

After a moment he said: "Mother, I know why I've come to you. It's because I feel when I'm in trouble, I get helped by being with you."

"How do I help, my boy?" she asked with a sad smile, for he had said the thing dearest to her heart.

"When I'm with you, I seem to get a hold on myself. I've always had a strange feeling about you. I felt when I was a child that you're two people; one that lives on some distant, lonely prairie, silent, shadowy and terribly loving; and the other, a vocal person, affectionate, alert, good and generous."

He paused, but she only shook her head. After a moment he continued: "I know you aren't happy, mother, but maybe you once were—at the start."

She got to her feet, and drew herself up.

"I'm happy in your love, but all the rest—is all the rest. It isn't your father's fault wholly. He was busy; he forgot me. Dear, dear boy, never give up your soul to things only, keep it for people."

She was naturally straight and composed; yet as she stood there, she had a certain lonely splendour like some soft metal burning. Among her fellow-citizens she had place and position, but she took no lead; she was always an isolated attachment of local enterprises. It was in her own house where her skill and adaptability had success. She had brought into her soul misery and martyrdom, and all martyrs are lonely and apart.

Sharp visions of what she was really flashed through Carnac's mind, and he said:

"Mother, there must be something wrong with you and me. You were naturally a great woman, and sometimes I have a feeling I might be a great man, but I don't get started for it. I suppose, you once had an idea you'd play a big part in the world?"

"Girls have dreams," she answered with moist eyes, "and at times I thought great things might come to me; but I married and got lost."

"You got lost?" asked Carnac anxiously, for there was a curious note in her voice.

She tried to change the effect of her words.

"Yes, I lost myself in somebody else's ambitions: I lost myself in the storm."

Carnac laughed. "Father *was* always a blizzard, wasn't he? Now here, now there, he rushed about making money, humping up his business, and yet why shouldn't you have ranged beside him. I don't understand."

"No, that's the bane of life," she replied. "We don't understand each other. I can't understand why you don't marry Junia. You love her. You don't understand why I couldn't play as big a part as your father—I couldn't. He was always odd—masterful and odd, and I never could do just as he liked."

There was yearning sadness in her eyes. "Dear Carnac, John Grier is a whirlwind, but he's also a still pool in which currents are secretly twisting, turning. His imagination, his power is enormous; but he's Oriental, a barbarian."

"You mean he might have had twenty wives?"

"He might have had twenty, and he'd have been the same to all of them, because they play no part, except to make his home a place where his body can live. That's the kind of thing, when a wife finds it out, that either kills her slowly, or drives her mad."

"It didn't kill you, mother," remarked Carnac with a little laugh.

"No, it didn't kill me."

"And it didn't drive you mad," he continued.

She looked at him with burning intensity. "Oh yes, it did—but I became sane again." She gazed out of the window, down the hillside. "Your father will soon be home. Is there anything you want to say before that?"

Carnac wanted to tell his tragic story, but it was difficult. He caught his mother's hand.

"What's the matter, Carnac? You are in trouble. I can see it in your eyes—I feel it. Is it money?" she asked. She knew it was not, yet she could not help but ask. He shook his head in negation.

"Is it business?"

She knew his answer, yet she must make these steps before she said to him: "Is it a woman?"

He nodded now. She caught his eyes and held them with her own. All the silence and sorrow, all the remorse and regret of the past twenty-six years gathered in her face.

"Yes and no," he answered with emotion.

"You've quarrelled with Junia?"

"No," he replied.

"Why don't you marry her?" she urged. "We all would like it, even your father."

"I can't."

"Why?" She leant forward with a slight burning of the cheek. "Why, Carnac?"

He had determined to keep his own secret, to hide the thing which had vexed his life, but a sudden feeling overcame his purpose. With

impulse he drew out the letter he had received in John Grier's office and handed it to her.

"Read that, and then I'll tell you all about it —all I can."

With whitening face, she took the letter and read its few lines. It was written in French, with savage little flourishes and twists, and the name signed at the end was "Luzanne." At last she handed it back, her fingers trembling.

"Who is Luzanne, and what does it mean?" What she had read was startling.

He slowly seated himself beside her. "I will tell you."

When Carnac had ended his painful story, she said to him: "It's terrible—oh, terrible. But there was divorce."

"Yes, but they told me I couldn't get a divorce. Yet I wish now I'd tried for it. I've never heard a word from the girl till I got that letter. It isn't strange she hasn't moved in the thing till now. It was I that should have acted; and she knew that. She means business, that's clear, and it'll be hard to prove I didn't marry her with eyes wide open. It gets between me and my work and my plans for the future; between——"

"Between you and Junia," she said mournfully. "Don't you think you ought to get a divorce for Junia's sake, if nothing else?"

"Yes, of course. But I'm not sure I could get a divorce—evidence is so strong against me, and

it was a year ago! If I can see Luzanne again perhaps I can get her to tear up the marriage-lines—that's what I want. She isn't all bad. I must go again to New York; and Junia can wait. I'm not much, I know—not worth waiting for, maybe, but I'm in earnest where Junia's concerned. I could make a little home for her at once, and a better one as time went on, if she would marry me."

After a moment of silence, Carnac added: "I'm going to New York. Don't you think I ought to go?"

The gaunt, handsome face of the woman darkened, and then she answered: "Yes."

There was silence again for a moment, deep and painful, and then Carnac spoke.

"Mother, I don't think father is well. I see a great change in him. He hasn't long to travel, and some day you'll have everything. He might make you run the business, with Tarboe as manager."

She shuddered slightly. "With Tarboe—I never thought of that—with Tarboe! . . . Are you going to wait for—your father? He'll be here presently."

"No, I'm off. I'll go down the garden, through the bushes," he said. . . . "Mother, I've got nearer you to-night than in all the rest of my life."

She kissed him fondly. "You're going away, but I hope you'll come back in time."

He knew she meant Junia.

"Yes, I hope I'll come back in time."

A moment later he was gone, out of the side-door, through the bushes, and down the hill, running like a boy. He had for the first time talked to his mother about the life of their home; the facts she told him stripped away the curtain that hid the secret things of life from his eyes.

John Grier almost burst upon his wife. He opened and shut the door noisily; he stamped into the dusky room.

"Isn't it time for a light?" he said with a quizzical nod towards her.

The short visit of Carnac had straightened her back.

"I like the twilight. I don't light up until it's dark, but if you wish——"

"You like the twilight; you don't light up until it's dark, but if I wish—ah, that's it! Have your own way. . . . I'm the breadwinner; I'm the breadwinner; I'm the fighter; I'm the man that makes the machine go; but I don't like the twilight, and I don't like to wait until it's dark, before I light up. So there it is!"

She said nothing at once, but struck a match, and lit the gas.

"It's easy to give you what you want," she answered after a little. "I'm used to it now."

There was something animal-like in the thrust

forward of his neck, in the anger that mounted to his eyes. When she had drawn down the blinds, he said to her:

"Who's been here?"

For an instant she hesitated. Then she said: "Carnac's been here, but that has naught to do with what I said. I've lived with you for over thirty years, and I haven't spoken my mind often, but I'm speaking it now."

"Never too late to mend, eh!" he gruffly interposed. "So Carnac's been here! Putting up his independent clack, eh? He leaves his old father to struggle as best he may, and doesn't care a damn. That's your son Carnac."

How she longed to say to him, "That's not your son Carnac!" but she could not. A greyness crossed over her face.

"Is Carnac staying here?"

She shook her head in negation.

"Well, now I'll tell you about Carnac," he said viciously. "I'm shutting him out of the business of my life. You understand?"

"You mean——" She paused.

"He's taken his course, let him stick to it. I'm taking my course, and I'll stick to it."

She came close and reached out a faltering hand. "John, don't do what you'll be sorry for."

"I never have."

"When Fabian was born, you remember what you said? You said, 'Life's worth living now.'"

"Yes, but what did I say when Carnac was born?"

"I didn't hear, John," she answered, her face turning white.

"Well, I said naught."

Chapter XII — *Carnac says Good-bye*

FABIAN GRIER'S house was in a fashionable quarter of a fashionable street, the smallest of all built there; but it was happily placed, rather apart from others, at the very end of the distinguished promenade. Behind it, a little way up the hill, was a Roman Catholic chapel.

The surroundings of the house were rural for a city habitation. Behind it were commendable trees, from one of which a swing was hung. In a corner, which seemed to catch the sun, was a bird-cage on a pole, sought by pigeons and doves. In another corner was a target for the bow and arrow—evidence of the vigorous life of the owners of the house.

On the morning after Carnac told his mother he was going away, the doors of the house were all open. Midway between breakfast and lunch, the voices of children sang through the dining-room bright with the morning sun. The children were going to the top of the mountain—the two youngsters who made the life of Fabian and his wife so busy. Fabian was a man of little speech. He was slim and dark and quiet, with a black

moustache and smoothly brushed hair, with a body lithe and composed, yet with hands broad, strong, stubborn.

As Junia stood by the dining-room table and looked at the alert, expectant children, she wished she also was going now to the mountain-top. But that could not be—not yet. Carnac had sent a note saying he wished to see her, and she had replied through Denzil that her morning would be spent with her sister.

"What is it?" she remarked to herself. "What is it? There's nothing wrong. Yet I feel everything upside down."

Her face turned slowly towards the wide mountain; it caught the light upon the steeple of the Catholic chapel. She shuddered slightly, and an expression came into her shadowed eyes not belonging to her personality, which was always buoyant.

As she stood absorbed, her mind in a maze of perplexity, a sigh broke from her lips. She suddenly had a conviction about Carnac; she felt his coming might bring a crisis; that what he might say must influence her whole life. Carnac —she threw back her head. Suddenly a sweet, appealing, intoxicating look crossed her face. Carnac! Yes, there was a man, a man of men.

Tarboe got his effects by the impetuous rush of a personality; Carnac by something that haunted, that made him more popular absent than present.

Carnac compelled thought. When he was away she wanted him; when he was near she liked to quarrel with him. When they were together, one moment she wanted to take his hands in her hands, and in the next she wanted to push him over some great cliff—he was so maddening. He provoked the devil in her; yet he made her sing the song of Eden. What was it?

As she asked the question she heard a firm step on the path. It was Carnac. She turned and stood waiting, leaning against the table, watching the door through which he presently came. He was dressed in grey. His coat was buttoned. He carried a soft grey hat, and somehow his face gave her a feeling that he had come to say good-bye. It startled her; and yet, though she was tempted to grip her breast, she did not. Presently she spoke.

"I think you're a very idle man. Why aren't you at work?"

"I am at work," Carnac said cheerfully.

"Work is not all paint and canvas of course. There has to be the thinking beforehand. Well, of what are you thinking now?"

"Of the evening train to New York."

His face was turned away from her at the instant, because he did not wish to see the effect of his words. He would have seen that apprehension came to her eyes. Her mouth opened in quick amazement. It was all too startling. He was going—for how long?

"Why are you going?" she asked, when she had recovered her poise.

"Well, you see I haven't quite learned my painting yet, and I must study in great Art centres where one isn't turned down by one's own judgment."

"Ananias!" she said at last. "Ananias!"

"Why do you say I'm a liar?" he asked, flushing a little, though there was intense inquiry in his eyes.

"Because I think it. It isn't your work only that's taking you away." Suddenly she laughed. "What a fool you are, Carnac! You're not a good actor. You're not going away for work's sake only."

"Not for work's sake only—that's true."

"Then why do you go?"

"I'm in a mess, Junia. I've made some mistakes in my life, and I'm going to try and put one of them right."

"Is anybody trying to do you harm?" she asked gently.

"Yes, somebody's trying to hurt me."

"Hurt *him*," she rejoined sharply, and her eyes fastened his.

He was about to say there was no *him* in the matter, but reason steadied him, and he said:

"I'll do my best, Junia. I wish I could tell you, but I can't. What's to be done must be done by myself alone."

"Then it ought to be done well."

With an instant's impulse he moved towards her.

She went to the window, however, and she said: "Here's Fabian. You'll be glad of that. You'll want to say good-bye to him and Sibyl." She ran from him to the front door. "Fabian—Fabian, here's a bad boy who wants to tell you things he won't tell me." With these words she went into the garden.

"I don't think he'll tell me," came Fabian's voice. "Why should he?"

A moment afterwards the two men met.

"Well, what's the trouble, Carnac?" asked Fabian in a somewhat challenging voice.

"I'm going away."

"Oh—for how long?" Fabian asked quizzically.

"I don't know—a year, perhaps. I want to make myself a better artist, and also free myself."

Now his eyes were on Junia in her summer-time recreation, and her voice, humming a light-opera air, was floating to him through the autumn morning.

"Has something got you in its grip, then?"

"I'm the victim of a reckless past, like you."

Something provocative was in his voice and in his words.

"Was my past reckless?" asked Fabian with sullen eyes.

"Never so reckless as mine. You fought,

quarrelled, hit, sold and bought again, and now you're out against your father, fighting him."

"I had to come out or be crushed."

"I'm not so sure you won't be crushed now you're out. He plays boldly, and he knows his game. One or the other of you must prevail, and I think it won't be you, Fabian. John Grier does as much thinking in an hour as most of us do in a month, and with Tarboe he'll beat you dead. Tarboe is young; he's got the vitality of a rhinoceros. He knows the business from the bark on the tree. He's a flyer, is Tarboe, and you might have been in Tarboe's place and succeeded to the business.

Fabian threw out his arms. "But no! Father might live another ten years—though I don't think so—and I couldn't have stood it. He was lapping me in the mud."

"He doesn't lap Tarboe in the mud."

"No, and he wouldn't have lapped you in the mud, because you've got imagination, and you think wide and long when you want to. But I'm middle-class in business. I've got no genius for the game. He didn't see my steady qualities were what was needed. He wanted me to be like himself, an eagle, and I was only a robin red-breast."

Suddenly his eyes flashed and his teeth set. "You couldn't stand him, wouldn't put up with his tyranny. You wanted to live your own life, and you're doing it. When he bought me out,

what was there for me to do but go into the only business I knew, with the only big man in the business, besides John Grier. I've as good blood as he's got in his veins. I do business straight. He didn't want me to do it straight. That's one of the reasons we fell out. John Grier's a big, ruthless trickster. I wasn't. I was for playing the straight game, and I played it."

"Well, he's got his own way now. He's got a man who wouldn't blink at throttling his own brother, if it'd do him any good. Tarboe is iron and steel; he's the kind that succeeds. He likes to rule, and he's going to get what he wants mostly."

"Is that why you're going away?" asked Fabian. "Don't you think it'll be just as well not to go, if Tarboe is going to get all he wants."

"Does Tarboe come here?"

"He's been here twice."

"Visiting?"

"No. He came on urgent business. There was trouble between our two river-driving camps. He wanted my help to straighten things out, and he got it. He's pretty quick on the move."

"He wanted you to let him settle it?"

"He settled it, and I agreed. He knows how to handle men; I'll say that for him. He can run reckless on the logs like a river-driver; he can break a jam like an expert. He's not afraid of man, or log, or devil. That's his training. He got

that training from John Grier's firm under another name. I used to know him by reputation long before he took my place in the business—my place and yours. You got loose from the business only to get tied up in knots of your own tying," he added. "What it is I don't know, but you say you're in trouble and I believe you." Suddenly a sharp look came to his face. "Is it a woman?"

"It's not a man."

"Well, you ought to know how to handle a woman. You're popular with women. My wife'll never hear a word against you. I don't know how you do it. We're so little alike, it makes me feel sometimes we're not brothers. I don't know where you get your temperament from."

"It doesn't matter where I got it, it's mine. I want to earn my own living, and I'm doing it."

Admiration came into Fabian's face. "Yes," he said, "and you don't borrow——"

"And don't beg or steal. Mother has given me money, and I'm spending my own little legacy, all but five thousand dollars of it."

Fabian came up to his brother slowly. "If you know what's good for you, you'll stay where you are. You're not the only man that ought to be married. Tarboe's a strong man, and he'll be father's partner. He's handsome in his rough way too, is Tarboe. He knows what he wants, and means to have it, and this is a free country. Our girls, they have their own way. Why don't

you settle it now? Why don't you marry Junia, and take her away with you—if she'll have you?"

"I can't—even if she'll have me."

"Why can't you?"

"I'm afraid of the law."

An uneasy smile hung at Carnac's lips. He suddenly caught Fabian's shoulder in a strong grip. "We've never been close friends, Fabian. We've always been at sixes and sevens, and yet I feel you'd rather do me a good turn than a bad one. Let me ask you this—that you'll not believe anything bad of me till you've heard what I've got to say. Will you do that?"

Fabian nodded. "Of course. But if I were you, I wouldn't bet on myself, Carnac. Junia's worth running risks for. She's got more brains than my wife and me together, and she bosses us; but with you, it's different. I think you'd boss her. You're unexpected; you're daring; and you're reckless."

"Yes, I certainly am reckless."

"Then why aren't you reckless now? You're going away. Why, you haven't even told her you love her. The other man is here, and—I've seen him look at her! I know by the way she speaks of him how she feels. Besides, he's a great masterful creature. Don't be a fool! Have a try . . . Junia—Junia," he called.

The figure in the garden with the flowers turned. There was a flicker of understanding in the rare

eyes. The girl held up a bunch of flowers high like a torch.

"I'm coming, my children," she called, and, with a laugh, she ran forward through the doorway.

"What is it you want, Fabian?" she asked, conscious that in Carnac's face was consternation. "What can I do for you?" she added, with a slight flush.

"Nothing for me, but for Carnac—" Fabian stretched out a hand.

She laughed brusquely. "Oh, Carnac! Carnac! Well, I've been making him this bouquet." She held it out towards him. "It's a farewell bouquet for his little journey in the world. Take it, Carnac, with everybody's love—with Fabian's love, with Sibyl's love, with my love. Take it, and good-bye."

With a laugh she caught up her hat from the table, and a moment later she was in the street making for the mountain-side up which the children had gone.

Carnac placed the bouquet upon the table. Then he turned to his brother.

"What a damn mess you make of things, Fabian!"

Book II

Chapter XIII — *Carnac's Return*

"WELL, what's happened since I've been gone, mother?" asked Carnac. Is nobody we're interested in married, or going to be married?"

It was spring-time eight months after Carnac had vanished from Montreal, and the sun of late April was melting the snow upon the hills, bringing out the smell of the sprouting verdure and the exultant song of the birds.

His mother replied sorrowfully: "Junia's been away since last fall. Her aunt in the West was taken ill, and she's been with her ever since. Tell me, dearest, is everything all right now? Are you free to do what you want?"

He shook his head morosely. "No, everything's all wrong. I blundered, and I'm paying the price."

"You didn't find Luzanne Larue?"

"Yes, I found her, but it was no good. I said there was divorce, and she replied I'd done it with my eyes open, and had signed our names in the book of the hotel as Mr. and Mrs. Carnac Grier and divorce would not be possible. Also, I'd let

things go for a year, and what jury would give me relief! I consulted a lawyer. He said she had the game in her hands, and that a case could be put up that would discredit me with jury or judge, so there it is. . . . Well, bad as she is, she's fond of me in her way. I don't think she's ever gone loose with any man ; this is only a craze, I'm sure. She wanted me, and she meant to have me."

His mother protested, "No pure, straight, honest girl would——"

Carnac laughed bitterly, and interrupted. "Don't talk that way, mother. The girl was brought up among exiles and political criminals in the purlieu of Montmartre. What's possible in one place is impossible in another. Devil as she is, I want to do her justice."

"Did she wear a wedding-ring?"

"No, but she used my name as her own : I saw it on the paper door-plate. She said she would wait awhile longer, but if at the end of six months I didn't do my duty, she'd see the thing through here among my own people."

"Six months—it's overdue now!" She said in agitation.

He nodded helplessly. "I'm in hell as things are. There's only this to be said : she's done naught yet, and she mayn't do aught!"

They were roused by the click of the gate. "That's your father—that's John Grier," she said.

They heard the front door open and shut, a

footstep in the hall, then the door opened and John Grier came into the room.

Preoccupation, abstraction, filled his face, as he came forward. It was as though he was looking at something distant that both troubled and pleased him. When he saw Carnac he stopped, his face flushed. For an instant he stood unmoving, and then he held out his hand.

"So you've come back, Carnac. When did you get here?"

As Carnac released his hand from John Grier's cold clasp, he said: "A couple of hours ago."

The old man scrutinized him sharply, carefully. "Getting on—making money?" he asked. "Got your hand in the pocket of the world?"

Carnac shook his head. "I don't care much about the pocket of the world, but they like my work in London and New York. I don't get Royal Academy prices, but I do pretty well."

"Got some pride, eh?"

"I'm always proud when anybody outside Montreal mentions your name! It makes me feel I have a place in the world."

"Guess you've made your own place," said the other, pleasure coming to his cheek. "You've got your own shovel and pick to make wealth."

"I care little about wealth. All I want is enough to clothe and feed me, and give me a little home."

"A little home! Yes, it's time," remarked the

other, as he seated himself in his big chair by the table. "Why don't you marry?"

The old man's eyes narrowed until there could only be seen a slit of fire between the lids, and a bitter smile came to his lips. He had told his wife a year ago that he had cut Carnac out of all business consideration. So now, he added:

"Tarboe's taken your place in the business, Carnac. Look out he doesn't take your little home too."

"He's had near a year, and he hasn't done it yet."

"Is that through any virtue of yours?"

"Probably not," answered Carnac ironically. "But I've been away; he's been here. He's had everything with him. Why hasn't he pulled it off then?"

"He pulls off everything he plans. He's never fallen over his own feet since he's been with me, and, if I can help it, he won't have a fall when I'm gone."

Suddenly he got to his feet; a fit of passion seized him. "What's Junia to me—nothing! I've every reason to dislike her, but she comes and goes as if the place belonged to her. She comes to my office; she comes to this house; she visits Fabian; she tries to boss everybody. Why don't you regularize it? Why don't you marry her, and then we'll know where we are? She's got more brains than anybody else in our circle. She's got

tact and humour. Her sister's a fool; she's done harm. Junia's got sense. What are you waiting for? I wouldn't leave her for Tarboe! Look here, Carnac, I wanted you to do what Tarboe's doing, and you wouldn't. You cheeked me—so I took him in. He's made good every foot of the way. He's a wonder. I'm a millionaire. I'm two times a millionaire, and I got the money honestly. I gave one-third of it to Fabian, and he left us. I paid him in cash, and now he's fighting me."

Carnac bristled up: "What else could he do? He might have lived on the interest of the money, and done nothing. You trained him for business, and he's gone on with the business you trained him for. There are other lumber firms. Why don't you quarrel with them? Why do you drop on Fabian as if he was dirt?"

"Belloc's a rogue and a liar."

"What difference does that make? Isn't it a fair fight? Don't you want anybody to sit down or stand up till you tell them to? Is it your view you shall tyrannize, browbeat, batter, and then that everybody you love, or pretend to love, shall bow down before you as though you were eternal law. I'm glad I didn't. I'm making my own life. You gave me a chance in your business, and I tried it, and declined it. You gave it to some one else, and I approved of it. What more do you want?"

Suddenly a new spirit of defiance awoke in him. "What I owe you I don't know, but if you'll make out what you think is due, for what you've done for me in the way of food and clothes and education, I'll see you get it all. Meanwhile, I want to be free to move and do as I will."

John Grier sat down in his chair again, cold, merciless, with a scornful smile.

"Yes, yes," he said slowly, "you'd have made a great business man if you'd come with me. You refused. I don't understand you—I never did. There's only one thing that's alike in us, and that's a devilish self-respect, self-assertion, self-dependence. There's nothing more to be said between us—nothing that counts. Don't get into a passion, Carnac. It don't become you. Good-night—good-night."

Suddenly his mother's face produced a great change in Carnac. Horror, sorrow, remorse, were all there. He looked at John Grier; then at his mother. The spirit of the bigger thing crept into his heart. He put his arm around his mother and kissed her.

"Good-night, mother," he said. Then he went to his father and held out a hand. "You don't mind my speaking what I think?" he continued, with a smile. "I've had a lot to try me. Shake hands with me, father. We haven't found the way to walk together yet. Perhaps it will come; I hope so."

Again a flash of passion seized John Grier. He got to his feet. "I'll not shake hands with you, not to-night. You can't put the knife in and turn it round, and then draw it out and put salve on the wound and say everything's all right. Everything's all wrong. My family's been my curse. First one, then another, and then all against me,—my whole family against me!"

He dropped back in his chair sunk in gloomy reflection.

"Well, good-night," said Carnac. "It will all come right some day."

A moment afterwards he was gone. His mother sat down in her seat by the window; his father sat brooding by the table.

Carnac stole down the hillside, his heart burning in him. It had not been a successful day.

Chapter XIV *The House of the Three Trees*

DURING Carnac's absence, Denzil had lain like an animal, watching, as it were, the doorway out of which Tarboe came and went. His gloom at last became fanaticism. During all the eight months of Carnac's absence he prowled in the precincts of memory.

While Junia was at home he had been watchfully determined to save her from Tarboe, if possible. He had an obsession of wrong-mindedness which is always attached to crime. Though Luke Tarboe had done him no wrong, and was entitled, if he could, to win Junia for himself, to the mind of Denzil the stain of his brother's past was on Tarboe's life. He saw Tarboe and Junia meet ; he knew Tarboe put himself in her way, and he was right in thinking that the girl, with a mind for comedy and coquetry, was drawn instinctively to danger.

Undoubtedly the massive presence of Tarboe, his animal-like, bull-headed persistency, the fun at his big mouth and the light in his bold eye had a kind of charm for her. It was as though she placed herself within the danger zone to try her strength, her

will; and she had done it without real loss. More than once, as she waited in the office for old John Grier to come, she had a strange, intuitive feeling that Tarboe might suddenly grip her in his arms.

She flushed at the thought of it; it seemed so monstrous and absurd. Yet that very thought had passed through the mind of the man. He was by nature a hunter; he was bold, self-willed and reckless. No woman had ever moved him in his life until this girl crossed his path, and he reached out towards her with the same will to control that he had used in the business of life. Yet, while this brute force suggested physical control of the girl, it had its immediate reaction. She was so fine, so delicate, and yet so full of summer and the free unfettered life of the New World, so unimpassioned physically, yet so passionate in mind and temperament, that he felt he must atone for the wild moment's passion—the passion of possession, which had made him long to crush her to his breast. There was nothing physically repulsive in it; it was the wild, strong life of conquering man, of which he had due share. For, as he looked at her sitting in his office, her perfect health, her slim boyishness, her exquisite lines and graceful turn of hand, arm and body, or the flower-like twist of the neck, were the very harmony and poetry of life. But she was terribly provoking too; and he realized that she was an unconscious coquette, that her spirit loved mastery as his did.

Denzil could not know this, however. It was impossible for him to analyse the natures of these two people. He had instinct, but not enough to judge the whole situation, and so for two months after Carnac disappeared he had lived a life of torture. Again and again he had determined to tell Junia the story of Tarboe's brother, but instinctive delicacy stopped him. He could not tell her the terrible story which had robbed him of all he loved and had made him the avenger of the dead. A half-dozen times after she came back from John Grier's office, with slightly heightening colour, and the bright interest in her eyes, and had gone about the garden fondling the flowers, he had started towards her; but had stopped short before her natural modesty. Besides, why should he tell her? She had her own life to make, her own row to hoe. Yet, as the weeks passed, it seemed he must break upon this dangerous romance; and then suddenly she went to visit her sick aunt in the Far West. Denzil did not know, however, that, in John Grier's office as she had gone over figures of a society in which she was interested, the big hand of Tarboe had suddenly closed upon her fingers, and that his head bent down beside hers for one swift instant, as though he would whisper to her. Then she quickly detached herself, yet smiled at him, as she said reprovingly:

"You oughtn't to do that. You'll spoil our friendship."

She did not wait longer. As he stretched out his hands to her, his face had gone pale: she vanished through the doorway, and in forty-eight hours was gone to her sick aunt. The autumn had come and the winter and the spring, and the spring was almost gone when she returned; and, with her return, Catastrophe lifted its head in the person of Denzil.

Perhaps it was imperative instinct that brought Junia back in an hour coincident with Carnac's return—perhaps. In any case, there it was. They had both returned, as it were, in the self-same hour, each having been through a phase of emotion not easy to put on paper.

Denzil told her of Carnac's return, and she went to the house where Carnac's mother lived, and was depressed at what she saw and felt. Mrs. Grier's face was not that of one who had good news. The long arms almost hurt her when they caught her to her breast. Yet Carnac was a subject of talk between them—open, clear-eyed talk. The woman did not know what to say, except to praise her boy, and the girl asked questions cheerfully, unimportantly as to sound, but with every nerve in her body tingling. There was, however, so much of the *commédienne* in her, so much coquetry, that only one who knew her well could have seen the things that troubled her behind all. As though to punish herself, she began to speak of Tarboe, and Mrs. Grier's face clouded; she spoke

more of Tarboe, and the gloom deepened. Then, with the mask of coquetry still upon her she left Carnac's mother abashed, sorrowful and alone.

Tarboe had called in her absence. Entering the garden, he saw Denzil at work. At the click of the gate Denzil turned, and came forward.

"She ain't home," he said bluntly. "She's out. She ain't here. She's up at Mr. Grier's house, *bien sûr.*"

To Tarboe Denzil's words were offensive. It was none of Denzil's business whether he came or went in this house, or what his relations with Junia were. Democrat as he was, he did not let it invade his personal associations. He knew that the Frenchman was less likely to say and do the crude thing than the Britisher.

Tarboe was aware of the position held by Denzil in the Shale household; and that long years of service had given him authority. All this, however, could not account for the insolence of Denzil's words, but he had controlled men too long to act rashly.

"When will Mademoiselle be back?" he asked, putting a hand on himself.

"To-night," answered Denzil, with an antipathetic eye.

"Don't be a damn fool. Tell me the hour when you think she will be at home. Before dinner—within the next sixty minutes?'

"Ma'm'selle is under no orders. She didn't say when she would be back—but no!"

"Do you think she'll be back for dinner?" asked Tarboe, smothering his anger, but set to get his own way.

"I think she'll be back for dinner—*bien sûr*!" and he drove the spade into the ground.

"Then I think I'll sit down and wait." Tarboe made for the verandah.

Denzil let him go on, and then presently trotted after and called to him. "I'd like a word with you."

Tarboe turned round. "Well, what have you got to say?"

"It had better be said in my house, not here," replied Denzil. His face was pale, but there was a fiery look in his eyes.

There was no danger of violence, and, if there were, Tarboe could deal with it. Why should there be violence? Why should that semi-insanity in Denzil's eyes disturb him? The one thing to do was to forge ahead. He nodded.

"Where are you taking me?" he asked presently, as they passed through the gate.

"To my little house by the Three Trees. I've got things I'd like to show you, and there's some things I'd like to say. You are a big hulk of a man, and I'm nobody, but yet I've been close to you and yours in my time—that's so, for sure."

"You've been close to me and mine in your time, eh? I didn't know that."

"No, you didn't know it. Nobody knew it—I've kept it to myself. Your family wasn't all first-class—but no."

They soon reached the little plain board-house, with the well-laid foundation of stone, by the big Three Trees.

Inside the little spare, undecorated house, Tarboe looked round. It was all quiet and still enough. It was like a lodge in the wilderness. Somehow, the atmosphere of it made him feel apart and lonely. Perhaps that was a little due to the timbered ceiling, to the walls with cedar scantlings showing, to the crude look of everything—the head of a moose, the skins hanging down the sides of the walls, the smell of the cedar, and the swift movement of a tame red squirrel, which ran up the walls and over the floor and along the chimney-piece, for Denzil avoided the iron stove so common in these new cold lands, and remained faithful to a huge old-fashioned mantel.

Presently Denzil faced him, having closed the door.

"I said I'd been near to your family and you didn't believe me. Sit down, please, and I'll tell you my story."

Seating himself with a little curt laugh, Tarboe waved a hand as though to say, "Go ahead. I'm ready."

It seemed too difficult for Denzil to begin. He walked up and down the room, muttering and shaking his head. Presently, however, he made the Sign of the Cross upon himself, and, leaning against the wall, and opposite to Tarboe, he began the story he had told Carnac.

His description of his dead fiancée had flashes of poetry and excruciating touches of life:

"She had no mother, and there was lots of things she didn't know because of that—ah, plenty! She had to learn, and she brought on her own tragedy by not knowing that men, when even good to look at, can't be trusted; that every place, even in the woods and the fields where every one seems safe to us outdoor people, ain't safe—but no. So she trusted, and then one day——"

For the next five minutes the words poured from him in moroseness. He drew a picture of the lonely wood, of the believing credulous girl and the masterful, intellectual, skilful man. In the midst of it Tarboe started. The description of the place and of the man was familiar. He had a vision of a fair young girl encompassed by danger; he saw her in the man's arms; the man's lips to hers, and—

"Good God—good God!" he said twice, for a glimmer of the truth struck him. He knew what his brother had done. He could conceive the revenge to his brother's amorous hand. He listened till the whole tale was told; till the death

of the girl in the pond at home—back in her own little home. Then the rest of the story shook him.

"The verdict of the coroner's court was that he was shot by his own hand—by accident," said Denzil. "That was the coroner's verdict, but yes! Well, he was shot by his own gun, but not by his own hand. There was some one who loved the girl, took toll. The world did not know, and does not know, but you know—you—you, the brother of him that spoiled a woman's life! Do you think such a man should live? She was the sweetest girl that ever lived, and she loved me! She told me the truth—and he died by his own gun—in the woods; but it wasn't accident—it wasn't accident—but no! The girl had gone, but behind her was some one that loved her, and he settled it once for all."

As he had told the story, Denzil's body seemed to contract; his face took on an insane expression. It was ghastly pale, but his eyes were aflame. His arms stretched out with grim realism as he told of the death of Almeric Tarboe.

"You've got the whole truth, m'sieu'. I've told it you at last. I've never been sorry for killing him—never—never—never. Now, what are you going to do about it—you—his brother—you that come here making love too?"

As the truth had dawned upon Tarboe, his great figure stretched itself. A black spirit took possession of him.

When Denzil had finished, Tarboe stood up. There was dementia, cruelty, black purpose in his eyes, in every movement.

"What am I going to do? You killed my brother! Well, I'm going to kill you. God blast your soul—I'm going to kill you!"

He suddenly swooped like an animal upon Denzil, his fingers clenched about the thick throat, insane rage was on him.

At that moment there was a knock at the door, it opened, and Carnac stepped inside. He realized the situation and rushed forward. There was no time to struggle.

"Let him go," he cried. "You devil—let him go." Then with all his might, he struck Tarboe in the face.

The blow brought understanding back to Tarboe. His fingers loosed from the Frenchman's throat, and Carnac caught Denzil as he fell backwards.

"Good God!" said Carnac. "Good God, Tarboe! Wasn't it enough for your brother to have taken this man's love without your trying to take his life?"

The blow Carnac struck brought conviction to Tarboe, whose terrible rage passed away. He wiped the blood from his face.

"Is the little devil all right?" he whispered.

It was Denzil who spoke: "Yes. This is the second time M'sieu' Carnac has saved my life."

Carnac intervened. "Tell me, Tarboe, what do you mean to do, now you know the truth?"

At last Tarboe thrust out a hand. "I don't know the truth," he said.

By this Carnac knew that Denzil was safe from the law.

TARBOE did not see Junia that evening nor for many evenings, but Carnac and Junia met the next day in her own house. He came on her as she was arranging the table for midday dinner. She had taken up again the threads of housekeeping, cheering her father, helping the old French-woman cook—a huge creature who moved like a small mountain, and was a tyrant in her way to the old cheerful *avocat*, whose life had been a struggle for existence, yet whose one daughter had married a rich lumberman, and whose other daughter could marry wealth, handsomeness and youth, if she chose.

When Carnac saw Junia she was entering the dining-room with flowers and fruit, and he recalled the last time he had seen her, when she had thrust the farewell bouquet of flowers into his hand. That was in the early autumn, and this was in late spring, and the light in her face was as glowing as then. A remembrance of the scene came to the minds of both, and the girl gave a little laugh.

"Well, well, Carnac," she said gaily, her cheek

flushing, her eyes warm with colour: "well, I sent you away with flowers. Did they bring you luck?" She looked him steadily in the eyes.

"Yes, they brought me a perfect remembrance —of one who has always been to me like the balm of Gilead."

"Soothing and stimulating, eh?" she asked, as she put the flowers on the table and gave him her hand—no, she suddenly gave him both hands with a rush of old-time friendship, which robbed it of all personal emotion.

For a moment he held her hands. He felt them tremble in his warm clasp, the delicate, shivering pulsation of youth, the womanly feeling. It was for an instant only, because she withdrew her fingers. Then she caught up an apple from the dish she had brought in, and tossed it to him.

"For a good boy," she said. "You *have* been a good boy, haven't you?"

"Yes, I think so, chiefly by remembering a good girl."

"That's a pretty compliment—meant for me?"

"Yes, meant for you. I think you understand me better than anyone else."

He noticed her forehead wrinkle slightly, and a faint, incredulous smile come to her lips.

"I shouldn't have thought I understood you, Carnac," she said, over her shoulder, as she arranged dishes on the sideboard. "I shouldn't

have thought I knew you well. There's no Book of Revelations of your life except in your face."

She suddenly turned full on him, and held his eyes. "Carnac, I think your face looks honest. I've always thought so, and yet I think you're something of a scamp, a rogue and a thief."

There was determination at her lips, through which, though only slightly apart, her beautiful teeth, so straight, so regular, showed. "You don't play fair. What's the good of having a friend if you don't tell your friend your troubles? And you've been in trouble, Carnac, and you're fighting it through alone. Is that wise? You ought to tell some bad man, or some good woman—if they're both clever—what's vexing you. You see the bad clever man would probably think out something that would have the same effect as the good clever woman. They never would think out the same thing, but each'd think out what would help you just the same."

"But you've just said I'm a bad clever man. Why shouldn't I work out my own trouble?"

"Oh, you're bad enough," she answered, "but you're not clever enough."

He smiled grimly. "I'm not sure though about the woman. Perhaps I'll tell the good clever woman some day and let her help me, if she can. But I'd warn her it won't be easy."

"Then there's another woman in it!"

He did not answer. He could not let her know

the truth, yet she was sure she would come to know it one way or another.

At that moment she leaned over the table and stretched a hand to arrange something. The perfection of her poise, the beauty of her lines, the charm of her face seized Carnac, and, with an impulse, he ran his arm around her waist.

"Junia—Junia!" he said in a voice of rash feeling.

She was like a wild bird caught in its flight. A sudden stillness held her, and then she turned her head towards him, subdued inquiry in her eyes. For a moment only she looked—and then she said:

"Take your arm away."

The conviction that he ought not to make any sign of love to her broke his sudden passion. He drew back ashamed, yet defiant, rebuked, yet rebellious. It was like a challenge to her. A sarcastic smile crossed her lips.

"What a creature of impulses you are, Carnac! When we were children the day you saved Denzil years ago you flung your arms around me and kissed me. I didn't understand anything then, and what's more I don't think you did. You were a wilful, hazardous boy, and went your way taking the flowers in the garden that didn't belong to you. Yet after all these years, with an impulse behind which there is nothing—nothing at all, you repeat that incident."

Suddenly passion seemed to possess her. "How dare you trifle with things that mean so much! Have you learned nothing since I saw you last? Can nothing teach you, Carnac? Can you not learn how to play the big part? If you weren't grown up, do you know what I should do? I should slap the face of an insolent, thoughtless, hopeless boy." Then her temper seemed to pass. She caught up an apple again and thrust it into his hand. "Go and eat that, Adam. Perhaps it'll make you wise like the old Adam. He put his faults upon a woman."

"So do I," said Carnac. "So do I."

"That's what you would do, but you mustn't play that sort of game with a good woman." She burst out laughing. "For a man you're a precious fool! I don't think I want to see you again. You don't improve. You're full of horrid impulses." Her passion came back. "How dare you put your arm around me!"

"It was the impulse of my heart. I can say no more; if I could I would. There's something I should like to tell you, but I mustn't." He put the apple down.

"About the other woman, I suppose," she said coldly, the hot indignation gone from her lips.

He looked her steadfastly in the eyes. "If you won't trust me—if you won't trust me——"

"I've always trusted you," she replied, "but I don't trust you now. Don't you understand

that a good girl hates conduct like yours?"

Suddenly with anger he turned upon her. "Yes, I understand everything, but you don't understand. Why won't you believe that the reason I won't tell you my trouble is that it's best you shouldn't know? You're a young girl; you don't know life; you haven't seen it as I've seen it—in the stew-pan, in the ditch, on the road, on the mountain and in the bog. I want you to keep faith with your old friend who doesn't care what the rest of the world thinks, but who wants your confidence. Trust me—don't abjure me. Believe me, I haven't been wanton. Won't you trust me?"

The spirit of egotism was alive in her. She knew how much she had denied herself in the past months. She did not know whether she loved him, but injured pride tortured her. Except in a dance and in sports at a picnic or recreation-ground no man had ever put his arms around her. No man except Carnac, and that he had done it was like a lash upon the raw skinless flesh. If she had been asked by the Almighty whether she loved Carnac, she would have said she did not know. This was not a matter of love; but of womanhood, of self-respect of the pride of one who cannot ask for herself what she wants in the field of love, who must wait to be wooed and won.

"You don't think I'm straight," he said in

protest. "You think I'm no good, that I'm a rotter. You're wrong. Believe me, that is the truth." He came closer up to her. "Junia, if you'll stand by me, I'm sure I'll come out right. I've been caught in a mesh I can't untangle yet, but it can be untangled, and when it is, you shall know everything, because then you'll understand. I can free myself from the tangle, but it could never be explained—not so the world would believe. I haven't trifled with you. I would believe in you even if I saw, or thought I saw, the signs of wrong in you. I would know that at heart you were good. I put my faith in you long ago—last year I staked all on your friendship, and I haven't been deceived."

He smiled at her, his soul in his eyes. There was truth in his smile, and she realized it.

After a moment, she put out a hand and pushed him gently from her. "Go away, Carnac, please —now," she said softly.

A moment afterwards he was gone.

Chapter XVI — *John Grier makes a Journey*

JOHN GRIER'S business had beaten all past records. Tarboe was everywhere: on the river, in the saw-mills, in the lumber-yards, in the office. Health and strength and goodwill were with him, and he had the confidence of all men in the lumber-world. It was rumoured that he was a partner of John Grier, and it was a good thing for him as well as for the business. He was no partner, however; he was on a salary with a bonus percentage of the profits; but that increased his vigour.

There were times when he longed for the back-woods' life; when the smell of the pines and the firs and the juniper got into his nostrils; when he heard, in imagination, the shouts of the river-men as they chopped down the trees, sawed the boles into standard lengths, and plunged the big timbers into the stream, or round the fire at night made call upon the spirit of recreation. In imagination, he felt the timbers creaking and straining under his feet; he smelt the rich soup from the cook's caboose; he drank basins of tea from well-polished metal; he saw the ugly rows

in the taverns, where men let loose from river duty tried to regain civilian life by means of liquor and cards; he heard the stern thud of a hard fist against a piece of wood; he saw twenty men spring upon another twenty with rage in their faces; he saw hundreds of men arrived in civilization once again striking for their homes and loved ones, storming with life. He saw the door flung open, and the knee-booted, corduroyed river-man, with red sash around his waist and gold rings in his ears, seize the woman he called wife and swing her to him with a hungry joy; he saw the children pushed gently here, or roughly, but playfully, tossed in the air and caught again; but he also saw the rough spirits of the river march into their homes like tyrants returned, as it were, cursing and banging their way back to their rightful nests.

Occasionally he would wish to be in it all again, out in the wild woods and on the river and in the shanty, free and strong and friendly and a bit ferocious. All he had known of the backwood's life filled his veins, tortured him at times.

From the day that both wills were made and signed, no word had been spoken concerning them between him and John Grier. He respected and admired certain characteristics of John Grier; some secret charities, some impulsive generosity, some signs of public spirit. The old man was fond of animals, and had given water-troughs to

the town; and his own horses and the horses he used in the woods were always well fed. Also, in all his arrangements for the woods, he was generous. He believed in feeding his men well. It was rough food—beans, potatoes, peas, lentils, pork in barrels—salted pork; but there was bread of the best, rich soup, pork well boiled and fried, with good tea, freshly made. This was the regular fare, and men throve on it.

One day, however, shortly after Carnac's return home, there came a change in the scene. Things had been going badly for a couple of days and the old man had been seriously overworked. He had not listened to the warnings of Tarboe, or to the hints thrown out by his own punished physique. He was not a man to take hints. Everything that vexed his life roused opposition. This Tarboe knew, but he also knew that the business must suffer, if the old man suffered.

When John Grier left the office it was with head bowed and mind depressed. Nothing had happened to cause him grave anxiety, yet he had been below par for several hours. Why was he working so hard? Why was life to him such a concentration? Why did he seek for more money and to get more power? To whom could it go? Not to Fabian; not to his wife. To Tarboe—well, there was not enough in that! This man had only lately come into his life, and was only near to him in a business sense. Carnac

was near in every sense that really mattered, and Carnac was out of it all.

He was not loved, and in his heart of hearts he knew it, but he had had his own way, and he loved himself. No one seemed to care for him, not even his wife. How many years was it since they had roomed together? Yet as he went towards his own home now, he recalled the day they were married, and for the first time had drawn as near to each other as life could draw. He had thought her wonderful then, refined, and oh! so rich in life's gifts. His love had almost throttled her. She was warm and bountiful and full of temperament. So it went for three years, and then slowly he drew away from her until at last, returning from the backwoods, he had gone to another room, and there had stayed. Very occasionally he had smothered her with affection, but that had passed, until now, middle-aged, she seemed to be not a room away from him, but a thousand rooms away. He saw it with no reproach to himself. He forgot it was he who had left her room, and had set up his own tabernacle, because his hours differed from hers, and because she tossed in her bed at nights, and that made him restless too.

Yet, if his love had been the real thing, he would have stayed, because their lives were so similar, and the rules of domestic life in French Canada were so fixed. He had spoiled his own household,

destroyed his own peace, forsaken his own nest, outlived his hope and the possibility of further hope, except more business success, more to leave behind him.

That was the stern truth. Had he been a different man the devotion his wife had shown would have drawn him back to her; had she been a different woman, unvexed by a horrible remembrance, she would have made his soul her own and her soul his own once again. She had not dared to tell him the truth; afraid more for her boy's sake than for her own. She had been glad that Tarboe had helped to replace the broken link with Fabian, that he had taken the place which Carnac, had he been John Grier's son, ought to have taken. She could not blame Carnac, and she could not blame her husband, but the thing ate into her heart.

John Grier found her sitting by her table in the great living-room, patient and grave, and yet she smiled at him, and rose as he came into the room. His troubled face brought her forward quickly to him. She stretched out a hand appealingly to him.

"What's the matter, John? Has anything upset you?"

"I'm not upset."

"Yes you are," she urged, "but, yes, you are! Something has gone wrong."

"Nothing's gone wrong that hasn't been wrong for many a year," he rasped out.

"What's been wrong for many a year?"

"The boys you brought into this world—your sons!" he burst out. "Why isn't Carnac working with me? There must have been something damned bad in the bringing up of those boys. I've not got the love of any of you, and I know it. What's been the cause of it? Why should I be thrown over by every one?"

"Every one hasn't thrown you over. Mr. Tarboe hasn't thrown you over. You've been in great spirits about him. What's the matter?"

He waved a hand savagely at her, and with an almost insane look in his eyes.

"What's he to me! He's a man of business. In a business way I like him, but I want my own flesh and blood by me in my business. I wanted Carnac, and he wouldn't come—a few weeks only he came. I had Fabian, and he wouldn't stay. If I'd had a real chance——"

He broke off, with an outward savage protest of his hands, his voice falling.

"If you'd had your chance, you'd have made your own home happy," she said sadly. "That was your first duty, not your business—your home—your home! You didn't care about it. There were times when for months you forgot me; and then—then——"

Suddenly a dreadful suspicion seized his brain.

His head bent forward, his shoulders thrust out, he stumbled towards her.

"Then—well, what then!" he gasped. "Then —you—forgot——"

She realized she had gone too far, saw the storm in his mind.

"No—no—no, I didn't forget you, John. Never —but——"

She got no farther. Suddenly his hands stretched out as if to seize her shoulders, his face became tortured—he swayed. She caught him. She lowered him to the floor, and put a hassock under his head. Then she rang the bell —rang it—and rang again.

When help came, all was too late. John Grier had gone for ever.

Chapter XVII — *The Reading of the Will*

AS Tarboe stood in the church alone at the funeral, in a pew behind John Grier's family, sadness held him. He had known, as no one else knew, that the business would pass into his own hands. He suddenly felt his task too big for him, and he looked at Carnac now with sympathy. Carnac had brains, capacity, could almost take his father's place ; he was tactful, intuitive, alert. Yet Carnac, at present, was out of the question. He knew the stress of spirit which had turned Carnac from the opportunity lying at his feet.

In spite of himself there ran through his mind another thought. Near by, at the left, dressed in mourning also, was Junia. He had made up his mind that Junia should be his, and suddenly the usefulness of the business about to fall into his hands became a weapon in the field of Love. He was physically a finer man than Carnac ; he had capacity ; he had personality ; and he would have money and position—for a time at least. In that time, why should he not win this girl with the wonderful eyes and hair, with the frank-

ness and candour of unspoiled girlhood in her face? Presently he would be in the blare of sensation, in the height of as dramatic an episode as comes to the lives of men; and in the episode he saw advantages which should weigh with any girl.

Then had come the reading of the will after the funeral rites were over, and he, with the family, were gathered in the dining-room of the House on the Hill. He was scarcely ready, however, for the prodigious silence following the announcement read by the lawyer. He felt as though life was suspended for many minutes, when it was proclaimed that he, Luke Tarboe, would inherit the property. Although he knew of the contents of the will his heart was thumping like a sledge-hammer.

He looked round the room slowly. The only embarrassment to be seen was on the face of Fabian and his wife. Mrs. Grier and Carnac showed nothing. Carnac did not even move; by neither gesture nor motion of body did he show what he felt. At the close of it all, he came to Tarboe and held out a hand.

"Good luck to you, Tarboe!" he said. "You'll make a success, and that's what *he* wanted more than anything else. Good luck to you!" he said again and turned away. . . .

When John Grier's will was published in the

Press consternation filled the minds of all. Tarboe had been in the business for under two years, yet here he was left all the property with uncontracted power. Mrs. John Grier was to be paid during her life a yearly stipend of twenty thousand dollars from the business; she also received a grant of seventy thousand dollars. Beyond that, there were a few gifts to hospitals and for the protection of horses, while to the clergyman of the parish went one thousand dollars. It certainly could not be called a popular will, and, complimentary as the newspapers were to the energy and success of John Grier, few of them called him public-spirited, or a generous-hearted citizen. In his death he paid the price of his egotism.

The most surprised person, however, was Junia Shale. To her it was shameful that Carnac should be eliminated from all share in the abundant fortune John Grier had built up. It seemed fantastic that the fortune and the business—and the business was the fortune—should be left to Tarboe. Had she known the contents of the will before John Grier was buried, she would not have gone to the funeral. Egotistic she had known Grier to be, and she imagined the will to have been a sudden outcome of anger. He was dead and buried. The places that knew him knew him no more. All in an hour, as it were, the man Tarboe—that dominant, resourceful figure—had come into wealth and power.

After Junia read the substance of the will, she went springing up the mountain-side, as it were to work off her excitement by fatigue. At the mountain-top she gazed over the River St. Lawrence with an eye blind to all except this terrible distortion of life. Yet through her obfuscation, there ran admiration for Tarboe. What a man he was! He had captured John Grier as quickly and as securely as a night fisherman spears a sturgeon in the flare at the bow of the boat. Tarboe's ability was as marked as John Grier's mad policy. It was extraordinary that Tarboe should have bewildered and bamboozled—if that word could be used—the old millowner. It was as strange and thrilling as John Grier's fanaticism.

Already the pinch of corruption had nipped his flesh ; he was useless, motionelss in his narrow house, and yet, unseen but powerful, his influence went on. It shamed a wife and son ; it blackened the doors of a home ; it penalized a family.

Indeed he had been a bad man, and yet she could not reconcile it all with a wonderful something in him, a boldness, a sense of humour, an everlasting energy, an electric power. She had never seen anyone vitalize everything round him as John Grier had done. He threw things from him like an exasperated giant ; he drew things to him like an Angel of the Covenant. To him life was less a problem than an experiment, and

this last act, this nameless repudiation of the laws of family life, was like the sign of a chemist's activity. As she stood on the mountain-top her breath suddenly came fast, and with hands that had a hungry grip she caught her bosom in anger.

"Carnac—poor Carnac!" she exclaimed.

What would the world say? There were those, perhaps, who thought Carnac almost a ne'er-do-well, but they were of the commerical world where John Grier had been supreme.

At the same moment, Carnac in the garden of his old home surveyed the river too and the great expanse of country, saw the grey light of evening on the distant hills, and listened to Fabian who condoled with him. When Fabian had gone, Carnac sat down on a bench and thought over the whole thing. Carnac had no quarrel with his fate. When in the old home on the hill he had heard the will, it had surprised him, but it had not shocked him. He had looked to be the discarded heir, and he knew it now without rebellion. He had never tried to smooth the path to that financial security which his father could give. Yet now that disaster had come, there was a glimmer of remorse, of revolt, because there was some one besides himself who might think he had thrown away his chances. He did not know that over on the mountain-side, vituperating the memory of the dead man, Junia was angry only for Carnac's sake.

With the black storm of sudden death roaring in his ears, he had a sense of freedom, almost of licence. Nothing that had been his father's was now his own, or his mother's, except the land and house on which they were. All the great business John Grier had built up was gone into the hands of the usurper, a young, bold, pestilent, powerful, vigorous man. It seemed suddenly horrible that the timber-yards and the woods and the offices, and the buildings of John Grier's commercial business were not under his own direction, or that of his mother, or brother. They had ceased to be factors in the equation; they were *non est* in the post-mortem history of John Grier. How immense a nerve the old man had to make such a will, which outraged every convention of social and family life; which was, in effect, a proclamation that his son Carnac had no place in John Grier's scheme of things, while John Grier's wife was rewarded like some faithful old servant. Yet some newspapers had said he was a man of goodwill, and had appreciation of talent, adding, however, the doubtful suggestion that the appreciation stopped short of the prowess of his son Carnac in the field of Art. It was evident John Grier's act was regarded by the conventionalist as a wicked blunder.

As Carnac saw the world where there was not a single material thing that belonged to him, he had a sudden conviction that his life would run

in other lines than those within which it had been drawn to the present time. Looking over this wonderful prospect of the St. Lawrence, he had an insistent feeling that he ought to remain in the land where he was born, and give of whatever he was capable to its life. It was all a strenuous problem. For Carnac there was, duly or unduly, fairly or unfairly, a fate better than that of John Grier. If he died suddenly, as his father had died, a handful of people would sorrow with excess of feeling, and the growing world of his patrons would lament his loss. No one really grieved for John Grier's departure, except—strange to say—Tarboe.

Book III

MONTHS went by. In them Destiny made new drawings. With his mother, Carnac went to paint at a place called Charlemont. Tarboe pursued his work at the mills successfully; Junia saw nothing of Carnac, but she had a letter from him, and it might have been written by a man to his friend, yet with an undercurrent of sadness that troubled her.

She might, perhaps, have yielded to the attentions of Tarboe, had not an appealing message come from her aunt, and at an hour's notice went West again on her mission of sick-service.

Politically the Province of Quebec was in turmoil. The time was drawing near when the Dominion Government must go to the polls, and in the most secluded cottage on the St. Lawrence, the virtues and defects of the administration were vital questions. Voters knew as much of technical law-making as the average voter everywhere, but no more, and sometimes less. Yet there was in the mind of the French-Canadian an intuition, which was as valuable as the deeper knowledge of a trained politician. The two

great parties in the Province were led by Frenchmen. The English people, however, were chiefly identified with the party opposed to Barode Barouche, the Secretary of State.

As the agitation began in the late spring, Carnac became suddenly interested in everything political. He realized what John Grier had said concerning politics—that, given other characteristics, the making of laws meant success or failure for every profession or trade, for every interest in the country. He had known a few politicians; though he had never yet met the most dominant figure in the Province—Barode Barouche, who had a singular fascination for him. He seemed a man dominant and plausible, with a right-minded impulsiveness. Things John Grier had said about Barouche rang in his ears.

As the autumn drew near excitement increased. Political meetings were being held everywhere. There was one feature more common in Canada than in any other country; opposing candidates met on the same platform and fought their fight out in the hearing of those whom they were wooing. One day Carnac read in a newspaper that Barode Barouche was to speak at St. Annabel. As that was not far from Charlemont he determined to hear Barouche for the first time. He had for him a sympathy which, to himself, seemed a condition of temperament.

"Mother," he said, "wouldn't you like to go

and hear Barode Barouche at St. Annabel? You know him—I mean personally?"

"Yes, I knew him long ago," was the scarcely vocal reply.

"He's a great, fine man, isn't he? Wrong-headed, wrong-purposed, but a big fine fellow."

"If a man is wrong-headed and wrong-purposed, it isn't easy for him to be fine, is it?"

"That depends. A man might want to save his country by making some good law, and be mistaken both as to the result of that law and the right methods in making it. I'd like you to be with me when I hear him for the first time. I've got a feeling he's one of the biggest men of our day. Of course he isn't perfect. A man might want to save another's life, but he might choose the wrong way to do it, and that's wrong-headed; and perhaps he oughtn't to save the man's life, and that's wrong-purposed. There's no crime in either. Let's go and hear Monsieur Barouche."

He did not see the flush which suddenly filled her face; and, if he had seen, he would not have understood. For her a long twenty-seven years rolled back to the day when she was a young neglected wife, full of life's vitalities, out on a junction of the river and the wild woods, with Barode Barouche's fishing-camp near by. She shivered now as she thought of it. It was all so strange, and heart-breaking. For long years she

had paid the price of her mistake. She knew how eloquent Barode Barouche could be; she knew how his voice had all the ravishment of silver bells to the unsuspecting. How well she knew him; how deeply she realized the darkness of his nature! Once she had said to him:

"Sometimes I think that for duty's sake you would cling like a leech."

It was true. For thirty long years he had been in one sense homeless, his wife having lost her reason three years after they were married. In that time he had faithfully visited the place of her confinement every month of his life, sobered, chastened, at first hopeful, defiant. At the bottom of his heart Barode Barouche did not want marital freedom. He had loved the mad woman. He remembered her in the glory of her youth, in the splendour of her beauty. The insane asylum did not destroy his memory.

Mrs. Grier remembered too, but in a different way. Her relations with him had been one swift, absorbing fever—a mad dream, a moment of rash impulse, a yielding to the natural feeling which her own husband had aroused, the husband who now neglected her while Barode Barouche treated her so well, until a day when under his beguilement a stormy impulse gave—Carnac. Then the end came, instant and final; she bolted, barred and locked the door against Barode and

he had made little effort to open it. So they had parted, and had never clasped hands or kissed again. To him she was a sin of which he never repented. He had watched the growth and development of Carnac with a sharp sympathy. He was not a good man ; but in him were seeds of goodness. To her he was the lash searing her flesh, day in day out, year in year out, which kept her sacred to her home. For her children's sake she did not tell her husband, and she had emptied out her heart over Carnac with overwhelming fondness.

"Yes, I'll go, Carnac," she said at last, for it seemed the easier way. "I haven't been to a political meeting for many years."

"That's right. I like your being with me."

The meeting was held in what had been a skating-rink and drill-hall. On the platform in the centre was the chairman, with Barode Barouche on his right. There was some preliminary speech-making from the chairman. A resolution was moved supporting Barouche, his party and policy, and there were little explosions of merriment at strokes of unconscious humour made by the speakers ; and especially by one old farmer who made his jokes on the spot, and who now tried to embalm Barouche with praise. He drew attention to Barouche's leonine head and beard, to his alert eyes and quizzical face, and

said he was as strong in the field of legislation as he was in body and mind. Carnac noticed that Barouche listened good-naturedly, and now and then cocked his head and looked up at the ceiling as though to find something there.

There was a curious familiarity in the action of the head which struck Carnac. He and his mother were seated about five rows back from the front row on the edge of the aisle. As the meeting progressed, Barouche's eyes wandered slowly over the faces of his audience. Presently he saw Carnac and his mother. Mrs. Grier was conscious of a shock upon the mind of Barouche. She saw his eyes go misty with feeling. For him the world was suddenly shut out, and he only saw the woods of a late summer's afternoon, a lonely tent—and a woman. A flush crept up his face. Then he made a quick spasmodic gesture of the hand, outward, which again Carnac recognized as familiar. It was the kind of thing he did himself.

So absorbed was Barode Barouche that he only mechanically heard the chairman announce himself, but when he got to his feet his full senses came back. The sight of the woman to whom he had been so much, and who had been so much to him for one short month, magnetized him; the face of the boy, so like his own as he remembered it thirty years ago, stirred his veins. There before him was his own one unacknowledged

child—the only child ever born to him. His heart throbbed.

Then he began to speak. Never in all his life had he spoken as he did this day. It was only a rural audience; there was not much intelligence in it; but it had a character all its own. It was alive to its own interests, chiefly of agriculture and the river. It was composed of both parties, and he could stimulate his own side, and, perhaps, win the other.

Thus it was that, with the blood pounding through his veins, the inspired sensualist began his speech. It was his duty to map out a policy for the future; to give the people an idea of what his party meant to do; to guide, to inspire, to inflame.

As Carnac listened he kept framing the words not yet issued, but which did issue from Barouche's mouth; his quick intelligence correctly imagined the line Barouche would take; again and again Barouche made a gesture, or tossed his head, or swung upon his feet to right and left in harmony with Carnac's own mind. Carnac would say to himself, "Why, that's what I'd have done—that's what I'd have said, if I had his policy." More than once, in some inspired moment of the speech, he caught his mother's hand, and he did not notice that her hand trembled.

But as for one of Barouche's chapter of policy Carnac almost sprang to his feet in protest when

Barouche declared it. To Carnac it seemed fatal to French Canada, though it was expounded with a taking air; yet as he himself had said it was "wrong-headed and wrong-purposed."

When the speech had finished to great cheering, Carnac suddenly turned to his mother.

He's on the wrong track. I know the policy to down his. He's got no opponent. I'm going to stand against him at the polls."

She clutched his arm. "Carnac—Carnac! You don't know what you're doing."

"Well, I will pretty quick," he replied stoutly. "I'm out after him, if they'll have me."

Chapter XIX — *Carnac becomes a Candidate*

THAT night Carnac mapped out his course, carefully framed the policy to offset that of Barode Barouche, and wrote a letter to the Chairman of the Opposition at Montreal offering to stand, and putting forward an ingenious policy. He asked also for an interview; and the interview was granted by telegram—almost to his surprise. He was aware, however, of the discontent among the English members of the Opposition, and of the wish of the French members to find a good compromise.

He had a hope that his singular position—the notoriety which his father's death and his own financial disfranchisement had caused—would be a fine card in his favour. He was not mistaken. His letter arrived at Headquarters when there were difficulties concerning three candidates who were pressing their claims. Carnac Grier, the disinherited son of the great lumber-king, who had fame as an artist, spoke French as though it were his native tongue, was an element of sensation which, if adroitly used, could be of great service. It might even defeat Barode

Barouche. In the first place, Carnac was young, good-looking, personable, and taking in his manner. Barouche was old, experienced, with hosts of enemies and many friends, but with injurious egotism. An interview was, therefore, arranged at Headquarters.

On the morning of the day it took place, Carnac's anguished mother went with him to the little railway station of Charlemont. She had slept little the night before; her mind was in an eddy of emotions. It seemed dreadful that Carnac should fight his own father, repeating what Fabian had done in another way. Yet at the bottom of her heart there was a secret joy. Some native revolt in her had joy in the thought that the son might extort a price for her long sorrow and his unknown disgrace.

As she had listened to Barouche at the meeting, she realized how sincere yet insincere he was; how gifted and yet how ungracious was his mind. Her youth was over; long pain and regret had chastened her. She was as lonely a creature as ever the world knew; violence was no part of her equipment; and yet terrible memories made her assent to this new phase of Carnac's life. She wondered what Barouche would think. There was some ancient touch of war in her which made her rejoice that after long years the hammer should strike.

Somehow the thing's tremendous possibilities

thrilled her. Carnac had always been a politician —always. She remembered how, when he was a boy, he had argued with John Grier on national matters, laid down the law with the assurance of an undergraduate, and invented theories impossible of public acceptance. Yet in every stand he had taken, there had been thought, logic and reasoning, wrongly premised, but always based on principles. On paper he was generally right; in practice, generally wrong. His buoyant devotion to an idea was an inspiration and a tonic. The curious thing was that, while still this political matter was hanging fire, he painted with elation. That was the curious part of it all.

His mother knew he did not see the thousand little things which made public life so wearying; that he only realized the big elements of national policy. She understood how those big things would inspire the artist in him. For, after all, there was the spirit of Art in framing a great policy which would benefit millions in the present and countless millions in the future. So, at the railway station, as they waited for the train, with an agitation outwardly controlled, she said:

"The men who have fought before, will want to stand, so don't be surprised if——"

"If they reject me, mother?" interrupted Carnac. "No, I shan't be surprised, but I feel in my bones that I'm going to fight Barode Barouche into the last corner of the corral."

"Don't be too sure of that, my son. Won't the thing that prevents your marrying Junia be a danger in this, if you go on?"

Sullen tragedy came into his face, his lips set. The sudden paleness of his cheek, however, was lost in a smile.

"Yes, I've thought of that; but if it has to come, better it should come now than later. If the truth must be told, I'll tell it—yes, I'll tell it!"

"Be bold, but not reckless, Carnac," his mother urged.

Just then the whistling train approached. She longed to put a hand out and hold him back, and yet she ached to let him go. Yet as Carnac mounted the steps of the car, a cry went out from her heart: "My son, stay with me here—don't go!" That was only in her heart, however; with her lips she said: "Good luck! God bless you, Carnac!" and then the train rolled away, leaving her alone in the bright, bountiful morning.

Before the day was done, Headquarters had accepted Carnac, in part, as the solution of their own difficult problem. The three applicants for the post each hated the other; but all, before the day was over, agreed to Carnac as an effective opponent of Barouche.

One thing seemed clear—Carnac's policy had elements of seduction appealing to the selfishness of all sections, and he had an eloquence which

would make Barouche uneasy. That eloquence was shown in a speech Carnac made in the late evening to the assembled executive. He only spoke for a quarter of an hour, but it was long enough to leave upon all who heard him an impression of power, pertinacity, picturesqueness and appeal. He might make mistakes, but he had qualities which would ride over errors with success.

"I'm not French," he said at last in his speech, "but I used to think and write in French as though I'd been born in Normandy. I'm English by birth and breeding, but I've always gone to French schools and to a French University, and I know what New France means. I stand to my English origin, but I want to see the French develop here as they've developed in France, alive to all new ideas, dreaming good dreams. I believe that Frenchmen in Canada can, and should, be an inspiration to the whole population. Their great qualities should be the fibre in the body of public opinion. I will not pander to the French ; I will not be the slave of the English ; I will be free, and I hope I shall be successful at the polls."

This was a small part of the speech which caused much enthusiasm, and was the beginning of a movement, powerful, and as time went on, impetuous.

He went to bed with the blood of battle throb-

bing in his veins. In the morning he had a reasonable joy in seeing the headlines of his candidature in the papers. At first he was almost appalled, for never since life began had his personality been so displayed. It seemed absurd that before he had struck a blow he should be advertised like a general in the field. Yet common sense told him that in standing against Barouche, he became important in the eyes of those affected by Barouche's policy. He had had luck, and it was for him to justify that luck. Could he do it? His first thought, however, as his eyes fell on the headlines—he flushed with elation so that he scarcely saw—was for the thing itself. Before him there flashed a face, however, which at once sobered his exaltation. It was the face of Junia.

"I wonder what she will think," he said to himself, with a little perplexity.

He knew in his heart of hearts she would not think it incongruous that he, an artist, should become a politician. Good laws served to make life beautiful, good pictures ministered to beauty; good laws helped to tell the story of human development; good sculpture strengthened the soul, good laws made life's conveniences greater, enlarged activity, lessened the friction of things not yet adjusted; good laws taught their makers how to balance things, how to make new principles apply without disturbing old rights; good

pictures increased the well-balanced harmony of the mind of the people. Junia would understand these things. As he sat at his breakfast, with the newspaper spread against the teapot and the milk-pitcher, he felt satisfied he had done the bold and right, if incomprehensible, thing.

But in another hotel, at another breakfast, another man read of Carnac's candidature with sickening surprise. It was Barode Barouche.

So, after twenty-seven long years, this was to be the issue! His own son, whom he had never known, was to fight him at the polls! Somehow, the day when he had seen Carnac and his mother at the political meeting had given him new emotions. His wife, to whom he had been so faithful in one sense since she had passed into the asylum, had died, and with her going, a new field of life seemed to open up to him. She had died almost on the same day as John Grier. She had been buried secludedly, piteously, and he had gone back to his office with the thought that life had become a preposterous freedom.

So it was that, on the day when he spoke at the political meeting, his life's tragedy became a hammer beating every nerve into emotion. He was like one shipwrecked who strikes out with a swimmer's will to reach his goal. All at once, on the platform, as he spoke, when his eyes saw the faces of Carnac and his mother the catastrophe stunned him like a huge engine of war. There

had come to him at last a sense of duty where Alma Grier was concerned. She was nearly fifty years of age, and he was fifty-nine; she was a widow with this world's goods; she had been to him how near and dear! for a brief hour, and then—no more. He knew the boy was his son, because he saw his own face, as it had been in his youth, though his mother's look was also there —transforming, illuminating.

He had a pang as he saw the two at the close of his meeting filtering out into the great retort of the world. Then it was that he had the impulse to go to the woman's home, express his sorrow, and in some small sense wipe out his wrong by offering her marriage. He had not gone.

He knew of Carnac's success in the world of Art; and how he had alienated his reputed father by an independence revolting to a slave of convention. He had even bought, not from Carnac, but from a dealer, two of Carnac's pictures and a statue of a riverman. Somehow the years had had their way with him. He had at long last realized that material things were not the great things of life, and that imagination, however productive, should be guided by uprightness of soul.

One thing was sure, the boy had never been told who his father was. That Barouche knew. He had the useful gift of reading the minds of

people in their faces. From Carnac's face, from Carnac's mother's face, had come to him the real story. He knew that Alma Grier had only sinned once and with him. In the first days after that ill-starred month, he had gone to her, only to be repelled as a woman can repel whose soul has been shocked, whose self-respect has been abused.

It had been as though she thrust out arms of infinite length to push him away, such had been the storm of her remorse, such the revulsion against herself and him. So they had fallen apart, and he had seen his boy grow up independent, original, wilful, capable—a genius. He read the newspaper reports of what had happened the day before with senses greatly alive.

After all, politics was unlike everything else. It was a profession recruited from all others. The making of laws was done by all kinds of men. One of the wisest advisers in river-law he had ever known was a priest; one of the best friends of the legislation of the medical profession was a woman; one of the bravest Ministers who had ever quarrelled with and conquered his colleagues had been an insurance agent; one of the sanest authorities on maritime law had been a man with a greater pride in his verses than in his practical capacity; and here was Carnac, who had painted pictures and made statues, plunging into politics with a policy as ingenious as his own, and as

capable of logical presentation. This boy, who was bone of his bone and flesh of his flesh, meant to fight him. He threw back his head and laughed. His boy, his son, meant to fight him, did he? Well, so be it! He got to his feet, and walked up and down the room.

"God, what an issue this!" he said. "It would be terrific, if he won! To wipe me out of the life where I have flourished—what a triumph for him! And he would not know how great the triumph would be. She has not told him. Yet she will urge him on. Suppose it was she put the idea into his head!"

Then he threw back his head, shaking the long brown hair, browner than Carnac's, from his forehead. "Suppose she did this thing—she who was all mine for one brief moment! Suppose she——"

Every nerve tingled; every drop of blood beat hard against his walls of flesh; every vicious element in him sprang into life.

"But no—but no, she would not do it. She would not teach her son to destroy his own father. But something must have told him to come and listen to me, to challenge me in his own mind, and then—then this thing!"

He stared at the paper, leaning over the table, as though it were a document of terror.

"I must go on: I must uphold the policy for which I've got the assent of the Government."

Suddenly his hands clenched. "I will beat him. He shall not bring me to the dust. I gave him life, and he shall not take my life from me. He's at the beginning; I'm going towards the end. I wronged his mother—yes, I wronged him too! I wronged them both, but he does not know he's wronged. He'll live his own life; he has lived it——"

There came a tap at the door. Presently it opened and a servant came in. He had in his hand a half-dozen telegrams.

"All about the man that's going to fight you, I expect, m'sieu'," said the servant as he handed the telegrams.

Barode Barouche did not reply, but nodded a little scornfully.

"A woman has called," continued the servant. "She wants to see you, m'sieu'. It's very important, she says."

Barouche shook his head in negation. "No, Gaspard."

"It ain't one of the usual kind, I think, m'sieu'," protested Gaspard. "It's about the election. It's got something to do with that——" he pointed to the newspaper propped against the teapot.

"It's about that, is it? Well, what about that?"

He eyed the servant as though to see whether the woman had given any information.

"I don't know. She didn't tell me. She's got a mind of her own. She's even handsome, and she's well-dressed. All she said was: 'Tell m'sieu' I want to see him. It's about the election —about Mr. Grier.'"

Barode Barouche's heart stopped. Something about Carnac Grier—something about the election—and a woman! He kept a hand on himself. It must not be seen that he was in any way moved.

"Is she English?"

The man shook his head. "She's French, m'sieu'."

"You think I ought to see her, Gaspard?" said Barouche.

"Sure," was the confident reply. "I guess she's out against whoever's against you."

"You never saw her before."

"Not to my sense."

"But I haven't finished my breakfast."

"Well, if it's anything important that'll help you, m'sieu'. It's like whittling. If you can do things with your hands while you're talking and thinking, it's a great help. You go on eating. I'll show her up."

Barouche smiled maliciously. "Well, show her up, Gaspard."

The servant laughed. "Perhaps she'll show herself up after I show her in," he said, and he went out hastily.

Presently the door opened again, and Gaspard stepped inside.

"A lady to see you, m'sieu'," he said.

Barouche rose from the table, but he did not hold out his hand. The woman was young, good looking, she seemed intelligent. There was also a latent cruelty in her face which only a student of human nature could have seen quickly. She was a woman with a grievance —that was sure. He knew the passionate excitement, fairly well controlled; he saw her bitterness at a glance. He motioned her to a chair.

"It's an early call," he said with a smile. Smiling was one of his serviceable assets; it was said no man could so palaver the public with his cheerful good-nature.

"Yes, it's an early call," she replied, "but I wish not to wait till you go to your office. I wanted you to know something. It has to do with Mr. Carnac Grier."

"Oh, that—eh!"

"It's something you've got to know. If I give you the sure means to win your election, it would be worth while—eh?"

The beating of Barouche's heart was hard, but nothing showed in his face. There he had control.

"I like people who know their own minds," he said, "but I don't believe anything till I

study what I hear. Is it something to injure Mr. Grier ? "

" If a married man went about as a single man and stood up for Parliament against you, don't you think you could spoil him ? "

For a moment Barouche was silent. Here was an impeachment of his own son, but this son was out to bring his own father to the ground. There were two ways to look at it. There was the son's point of view, and there was his own. If he loved his son he ought to know the thing that threatened him ; if he hated his son he ought to know So, after a moment's study of the face with the fiery eyes and a complexion like roses touched with frost, he said slowly :

" Well, have I the honour of addressing Carnac Grier's wife ? "

Barouche had had many rewards in his life, but the sweetest reward of all was now his own. As events proved, he had taken a course which, if he cared for his son, was for that son's well-being, and if he cared for himself most, was essential to his own well-being.

Relief crossed the woman's face. " I'll tell you everything," she said.

Then Luzanne told her story, avoiding the fact that Carnac had been tricked into the marriage. At last she said : " Now I've come here to make him acknowledge me. He's ruined my life, broken my hopes, and——"

"Broken your hopes!" interrupted Barode Barouche. "How is that?"

"I might have married some one else. I could have married some one else."

"Well, why don't you? There's the Divorce Court. What's to prevent it?"

"You ask me that—you a Frenchman and a Roman Catholic! I'm French. I was born in Paris."

"When will you let me see your papers?"

"When do you want to see them?"

"To-day—if possible to-day," he answered. Then he held her eyes. "To whom else here have you told this story?"

"No one—no one. I only came last night, and when I took up the paper this morning, I saw. Then I found out where you lived, and here I am, *bien sûr*. I'm here under my maiden name, Ma'm'selle Luzanne Larue."

"That's right. That's right. Now, until we meet again, don't speak of this to anyone. Will you give me your word?"

"Absolutely," she said, and there was revenge and passion in her eyes. Suddenly a strange expression crept over her face. She was puzzled.

"There's something of him about you," she said, and her forehead gathered. "There's some *look*! Well, there it is, but it's something—I don't know what."

A moment later she was gone. As the door closed, he stretched his hands above his head.

"*Nom de Dieu!* what a situation!" he remarked.

Chapter XX — *Junia and Tarboe hear the News*

TO most people Carnac's candidature was a surprise; to some it was a bewilderment, and to one or two it was a shock. To the second class belonged Fabian Grier and his wife; to the third class belonged Luke Tarboe. Only one person seemed to understand it—by intuition: Junia.

Somehow, nothing Carnac did changed Junia's views of him, or surprised her, though he made her indignant often enough. To her mind, however, in the big things, his actions always had reasonableness. She had never felt his artist-life was to be the only note of his career.

When, therefore, in the West she read a telegram in a newspaper announcing his candidature, she guessed the suddenness of his decision. When she read it, she spread the paper on the table, smoothed it as though it were a beautiful piece of linen, then she stretched out her hands in happy benediction. Like most of her sex, she loved the thrill of warfare. There flashed the feeling, however, that it would be finer sport if Carnac and Tarboe were to be at war, instead of

Carnac and Barouche. It was curious she never thought of Carnac but the other man came throbbing into sight—the millionaire, for he was that now.

In one way, this last move of Carnac's had the elements of a master-stroke. She knew how strange it would seem to the rest of the world, yet it did not seem strange to her. No man she had ever seen had been so at home in the world of men, and also at home in the secluded field of the chisel and the brush as Carnac.

She took the newspaper over to her aunt, holding it up. The big headlines showed like semaphores on the page. As the graceful figure of Junia drew to her aunt—her slim feet, in the brown, well-polished boots, the long, full neck, and then the chin, Grecian, shapely and firm, the straight, sensitive nose, the wonderful eyes under the well-cut, broad forehead, with the brown hair, covering it like a canopy—the old lady reached out and wound her arms round the lissome figure. Situated so, she read the telegram, and then the old arms gripped her tighter.

Presently, the whistle of a train sounded. The aunt stretched out an approving finger to the sound. She realized that the figure round which her arms hung trembled, for it was the " through " daily train for Montreal.

" I'm going back at once, aunty," Junia said.

"Well, I'm jiggered!"

These were Tarboe's words when Carnac's candidature came first to him in the press.

"He's 'broke' out in a new place," he added.

Tarboe loved the spectacular, and this was indeed spectacular. Yet he had not the mental vision of Junia who saw how close, in one intimate sense, was the relation between the artist life and the political life. To him it was a gigantic break from a green pasture into a red field of war. To her, it was a resolution which, in any-one else's life, would have seemed abnormal; in Carnac's life it had naturalness.

Tarboe had been for a few months only the reputed owner of the great business, and he had paid a big price for his headship in the weighty responsibility, the strain of control; but it had got into his blood, and he felt life would not be easy without it now.

Besides, there was Junia. To him she was the one being in the world worth struggling for; the bird to be caught on the wing, or coaxed into the nest, or snared into the net; and two of the three things he had tried without avail. The third—the snaring? He would not stop at that, if it would bring him what he wanted. How to snare her! He surveyed himself in the mirror.

"A great hulking figure like that!" he said in disapproval. "All bone and muscle and flesh and physical bombast! It wouldn't weigh with

her. She's too fine. It isn't the animal in a man she likes. It's what he can do, and what he is, and where he's going."

Then he thought of Carnac's new outburst, and his veins ran cold. "She'll like that—but yes, she'll like that: and if he succeeds she'll think he's great. Well, she'd be right. He'll beat Barouche. He's young and brave, careless and daring. Now where am I in this fight? I belong to Barouche's party and my vote ought to go for him."

For some minutes he sat in profound thought. What part should he play? He liked Carnac, he owed him a debt which he could never repay. Carnac had saved him from killing Denzil. If that had happened, he himself might have gone to the gallows.

He decided. Sitting down, he wrote Carnac the following letter:—

DEAR CARNAC GRIER,—

I see you're beginning a new work. You now belong to a party that I am opposed to, but that doesn't prevent me offering you support. It's not your general policy I support, but it is you, the son of your father, that I mean to work for. If you want financial help for your campaign—or after it is over—come and get it here—ten thousand or more if you wish. Your father if he knew—and perhaps he does know—would

be pleased that you, who could not be a man of business in his world, are become a man of business in the bigger world of law-making. You may be right or wrong in that policy, but that don't weigh with me. You've taken on as big a job as ever your father did. What's the use of working if you don't try to do the big thing that means a lot to people outside yourself! If you make new good laws, if you do something for the world that's wonderful, it's as much as your father did, or, if he was alive, could do now. Whatever there is here is yours to use. When you come back here to play your part, you'll make it a success—the whole blessed thing. I don't wish you were here now, except that it's yours—all of it—but I wish you to beat Barode Barouche.

"Yours to the knife,

"LUKE TARBOE."

He read the letter through, and coming to the words, "When you come back here to play your part, you'll make it a success—the whole blessed thing," he paused, reflecting . . . He wondered what Carnac would think the words meant, and he felt it was bold, and, maybe, dangerous play; but it was not more dangerous than facts he had dealt with often in the last two years. He would let it stand, that phrase of the hidden meaning. He did not post the letter yet.

Four days later he put on his wide-brimmed panama hat and went out into the street leading to the centre of the city. There was trouble in the river reaches between his men and those of Belloc-Grier, and he was keeping an appointment with Belloc at Fabian Grier's office, where several such meetings had taken place.

He had not gone far, however, when he saw a sprightly figure in light-brown linen cutting into his street from a cross-road. He had not seen that figure for months—scarcely since John Grier's death, and his heart thumped in his breast. It was Junia. How would she greet him?

A moment later he met her. Raising his hat, he said: "Back to the firing-line, Miss Shale! It'll make a big difference to every one concerned."

"Are you then concerned?" she asked, with a faint smile.

"One of the most concerned," he answered with a smile not so composed as her own. "It's the honour of the name that's at stake."

"You want to ruin Mr. Grier's chances in the fight?"

"I didn't say that. I said, 'the honour of the name,' and the name of my firm is 'Grier's Company of Lumbermen.' So I'm in it with all my might, and here's a letter—I haven't posted it yet—saying to Carnac Grier where I stand. Will you read it? There's no reason why you

shouldn't." He tore open the envelope and took the letter out.

Junia took it, after hesitation, and read it till she came to the sentence about Carnac returning to the business. She looked up, startled.

"What does that mean?" she asked, pointing to the elusive sentence.

"He might want to come into the business some day, and I'll give him his chance. Nothing more than that."

"Nothing more than that!" she said cynically. "It's bravely said, but how can he be a partner if he can't *buy* the shares?"

"That's a matter to be thought out," he answered with a queer twist to his mouth.

"I see you've offered to help him with cash for the election," she said, handing back the letter.

"I felt it had to be done. Politics are expensive—they sap the purse. That's why."

"You never thought of giving him an income which would compensate a little for what his father failed to do for him?"

There was asperity in her tone.

"He wouldn't take from me what his father didn't give him." Suddenly an idea seized him. "Look here," he said, "you're a friend of the Griers, why don't you help keep things straight between the two concerns? You could do it.

You have the art of getting your own way. I've noticed that."

"So you'd like me to persuade Fabian Grier to influence Belloc, because I'd make things easy for you!" she said briskly. "Do you forget I've known Fabian since I was a baby, that my sister is his wife, and that his interests are near to me?"

He did not knuckle down. "I think it would be helping Fabian's interests. Belloc and Fabian Grier are generally in the wrong, and to keep them right would be good business-policy. When I've trouble with Belloc's firm it's because they act like dogs in the manger. They seem to hate me to live."

She laughed—a buoyant, scornful laugh. "So all the fault is in Belloc and Fabian, is it?" She was impressed enormously by his *sangfroid* and will to rule the roost. "I think you're clever, and that you've got plenty of horse-sense, as they say in the West, but you'll be beaten in the end. How does it feel"—she asked it with provoking candour—"to be the boss of big things?"

"I know I'm always settling troubles my business foes make for me. I have to settle one of them now, and I'm glad I've met you, for you can help me. I want some new river-rules made. If Belloc and Grier'll agree to them, we'll do away with this constant trouble between our gangs."

"And you'd like me to help you?"

He smiled a big riverman's smile down at her, full of good-humour and audacity.

"If you could make it clear to Fabian that all I'm after is peace on the river, it'd do a lot of good."

"Well, do you know," she said demurely, "I don't think I'll take a hand in this game, chiefly because——" she paused.

"Yes: chiefly because——"

"Because you'll get your own way without help. You get everything you want," she added with a little savage comment.

A flood of feeling came into his eyes, his head jerked like that of a bull-moose. "No, I don't get everything I want. The thing I want most in the world doesn't come to me." His voice grew emotional. She knew what he was trying to say, and as the idea was not new she kept composure. "I'm not as lucky as you think me," he added.

"You're pretty lucky. You've done it all as easy as clasping your fingers. If I had your luck——!" she paused.

"I don't know about that, but if I could reach out and touch you at any time, as it were, I think it'd bring me permanent good luck. You'll find out one day that my luck is only a bubble the prick of a pin'll destroy. I don't misunderstand it. I've been left John Grier's business by Grier himself, and he's got a son that ought to

have it, and maybe will have it, when the time is ripe."

Suddenly an angry hand flashed out towards him. "When the time is ripe! Does that mean, when you've made all you want, you'll give up to Carnac what isn't yours but his? Why don't you do it now?"

"Well, because, in the first place, I like my job and he doesn't want it; in the second place, I promised his father I'd run the business as he wished it run; and in the third place, Carnac wouldn't know how to use the income the business brings."

She laughed in a mocking, challenging way. "Was there ever a man didn't know how to use an income no matter how big it was! You're talking enigmas, and I think we'd better say good-bye. Your way to the Belloc offices is down that street." She pointed.

"And you won't help me? You won't say a word to Fabian?"

She shrugged a shoulder. "If I were a man like you, who's so big, so lucky, and so dominant, I wouldn't ask a woman to help me. I'd do the job myself. I'd keep faith with my reputation. But there's one nice thing about you: you're going to help Carnac to beat Barode Barouche. You've made a gallant offer. If you'd gone against him, if you'd played Barouche's game, I——"

The indignation which came to her face sud-

denly fled, and she said: "Honestly, I'd never speak to you again, and I always keep my word. Carnac'll see it through. He's a man of mark, Mr. Tarboe, and he'll be Prime Minister of the whole country one day. I don't think you'll like it."

"You hit hard, but if I hadn't taken the business, Carnac Grier wouldn't have got it. If it hadn't been me, it would have been some one else."

"Well, why don't you live like a rich man and not like a foreman?"

"I've been too busy to change my mode of living. I only want enough to eat and drink and wear, and that's not costly." Suddenly an idea came to him. "Now, if that business had been left to you, you'd be building a stone house somewhere; and you'd have horses and carriages, and lots of servants, and you'd swing along like a pretty coloured bird in the spring-time, wouldn't you?"

"If I had wealth, I'd make it my servant. I'd give it its chance; but as I haven't got it, I live as I do—poor and unknown."

"Not unknown. See, you could control what belonged to John Grier, if you would. I need some one to show me how to spend the money coming from the business. What is wealth unless you buy things that give pleasure to life? Do you know——"

He got no further. "I don't know anything you're trying to tell me, and anyhow this is not the place——"

With that she hastened from him up the street.

Tarboe had a pang, and yet her very last words gave him hope. "I may be a bit sharp in business," he said to himself, "but I certainly am a fool in matters of the heart. Yet what she said at last had something in it for me. Every woman has an idea where a man ought to make love to her, and this open road certainly ain't the place. If Carnac wins this game with Barouche I don't know where I'll be with her—maybe I'm a fool to help him." He turned the letter over and over in his hand. "No, I'm not. I ought to do it, and I will."

Then he fell to brooding. He remembered about the second hidden will. There came upon him a wild wish to destroy it. He loved controlling John Grier's business. Never had anything absorbed him so. Life seemed a new thing. The idea of disappearing from the place where, with a stroke of his fingers, he moved five thousand men, or swept a forest into the great river, or touched a bell which set going a saw-mill with its many cross-cut saws, or filled a ship to take the pine, cedar, maple, ash or elm boards to Europe, or to the United States, was terrible to him. He loved the smell of the fresh-cut wood. The odour of the sawdust as he passed through

a mill was sweeter than a million bunches of violets. Many a time he had caught up a handful of the damp dust and smelt it, as an expert gardener would crumble the fallen flowers of a fruit-tree and sniff the sweet perfume. To be master of one of the greatest enterprises of the New World for three years, and then to disappear ! He felt he could not do it.

His feelings shook his big frame. The love of a woman troubled his spirit. Suppose the will were declared and the girl was still free, what would she do ?

As he set foot in the office of the firm of Belloc, however, he steeled himself to composure.

His task well accomplished, he went back to his own office, and spent the day like a racehorse under the lash, restive, defiant, and reckless. When night and the shadows came, he sat alone in his office with drawn blinds, brooding, wondering.

Chapter XXI — *The Secret Meeting*

AS election affairs progressed, Mrs. Grier kept withdrawn from public ways. She did not seek supporters for her son. As the weeks went on, the strain became intense. Her eyes were aflame with excitement, but she grew thinner, until at last she was like a ghost haunting familiar scenes. Once, and once only, did she have touch with Barode Barouche since the agitation began. This was how it happened:

Carnac was at Ottawa, and she was alone, in the late evening. As she sat sewing, she heard a knock at the front door. Her heart stood still. It was a knock she had not heard for over a quarter of a century, but it had an unforgettable touch. She waited a moment, her face pale, her eyes shining with tortured memory. She waited for the servant to answer the knock, but presently she realized that the servant probably had not heard. Laying down her work, she passed into the front hall. There for an instant she paused, then opened the door.

It was Barode Barouche. Then the memory of a summer like a terrible dream shook her. She

trembled. Some old quiver of the dead days swept through her. How distant and how bad it all was! For one instant the old thrill repeated itself and then was gone—for ever.

"What is it you wish here?" she asked.

"Will you not shut the door?" he responded, for her fingers were on the handle. "I cannot speak with the night looking in. Won't you ask me to your sitting-room? I'm not a robber or a rogue."

Slowly she closed the door. Then she turned, and, in the dim light, she said:

"But you are both a robber and a rogue."

He did not answer until they had entered the sitting-room.

"I gave you that which is out against me now. Is he not brilliant, capable and courageous?"

There was in her face a stern duty.

"It was Fate, monsieur. When he and I went to your political meeting at Charlemont it had no purpose. No blush came to his cheek, because he did not know who his father is. No one in the world knows—no one except myself, that must suffer to the end. Your speech roused in him the native public sense, the ancient fire of the people from whom he did not know he came. His origin has been his bane from the start. He did not know why the man he thought his father seemed almost a stranger to him. He did not understand, and so they fell apart. Yet John

Grier would have given more than he had to win the boy to himself. Do you ever think what the boy must have suffered? He does not know. Only you and I know!" She paused.

He thrust out a hand as though to stay her speech, but she went on again:

"Go away from me. You have spoiled my life; you have spoiled my boy's life, and now he fights you. I give him no help save in one direction. I give to him something his reputed father withheld from him. Don't you think it a strange thing"—her voice was thick with feeling—"that he never could bear to take money from John Grier, and that, even as a child, gifts seemed to trouble him. I think he wanted to give back again all that John Grier had ever paid out to him or for him; and now, at last, he fights the man who gave him birth! I wanted to tell John Grier all, but I did not because I knew it would spoil his life and my boy's life. It was nothing to me whether I lived or died. But I could not bear Carnac should know. He was too noble to have his life spoiled."

Barode Barouche drew himself together. Here was a deep, significant problem, a situation that needed more expert handling than he had ever shown. As he stood by the table, the dim light throwing haggard reflections on her face, he had a feeling that she was more than normal. He saw her greater than he had ever imagined her. Something in him revolted at a war between his own son

and himself. Also, he wanted to tell her of the danger in which Carnac was—how Luzanne had come, and was hidden away in the outskirts of the city, waiting for the moment when the man who rejected her should be sacrificed.

Now that Barouche was face to face with Alma Grier, however, he felt the prodigious nature of his task. In all the years he had taken no chance to pay tribute to the woman who, in a real sense, had been his mistress of body and mind for one short term of life, and who once, and once only, had yielded to him. They were both advanced in years, and Life and Time had taken toll. She was haggard, yet beautiful in a wan way. He did not believe the vanished years had placed between them an impassable barrier.

He put his chances to the test at last.

"Yes, I know—I understand. You remained silent because your nature was too generous to injure anyone. Down at the bottom of his heart, cantankerous, tyrannical as he was, John Grier loved you, and I loved you also."

She made a protest of her hand. "Oh, no! You never knew what love was—never! You had passion, you had hunger of the body, but of love you did not know. I know you, Barode Barouche. You have no heart, you have only sentiment and imagination. No—no, you could not be true. You could never know how."

Suddenly a tempest of fire seemed to burn in

his eyes, in his whole being. His face flushed: his eyes gleamed; his hands were thrust out with passion.

"Will you not understand that were I as foul as hell, a woman like you would make me clean again? The wild sin of our youth has eaten into the soul of my life. You think I have been indifferent to you and to our boy. No, never—never! That I left you both to yourselves was the best proof I was not neglectful. I was sorry, with all my soul, that you should have suffered through me. In the first reaction, I felt that nothing could put me right with you or with eternal justice. So I shrank away from you. You thought it was lust satisfied. I tell you it was honour shamed. Good God! You thought me just the brazen roué, who seized what came his way, who ate the fruit within his grasp, who lived to deceive for his own selfish joy. Did you think that? Then, if you did, I do not wonder you should be glad to see my son fighting me. It would seem the horrible revenge Destiny should take." He took a step nearer to her. His face flamed, his arms stretched out. "I have held you in these arms. I come with repentance in my heart, with——"

Her face now was flushed. She interrupted him.

"I don't believe in you, Barode Barouche. At least my husband did not go from his hearthstone looking for what belonged to others. No—no—no; however much I suffered, I understood

that what he did not feel for me at least he felt for no one else. To him, life was his business, and to the long end business mastered his emotions. I have no faith in you! In the depth of my soul something cries out: 'He is not true. His life is false.' To leave me that was right, but, monsieur, not as you left me. You pick the fruit and eat it and spit upon the ground the fibre and the skin. I am no longer the slave of your false eloquence. It has nothing in it for me now, nothing at all—nothing."

"Yet your son—has he naught of me? If your son has genius, I have the right to say a part of it came from me. Why should you say that all that's good in the boy is yours—that the boy, in all he does and says, is yours! No—no. Your long years of suffering have hardened into injustice and wrong."

Suddenly he touched her arm. "There are women as young as you were when I wronged you, who would be my wife now—young, beautiful, buoyant; but I come to you because I feel we might still have some years of happiness. Together, where our boy's fate mattered, we two could help him on his way. That is what I feel, my dear."

When he touched her arm she did not move, yet there was in his fingers something which stirred ulcers long since healed and scarred. She stepped back from him.

"Do not touch me. The past is buried for ever. There can be no resurrection. I know what I should do, and I will do it. For the rest of my life, I shall live for my son. I hope he will defeat you. I don't lift a hand to help him except to give him money, not John Grier's money but my own, always that. You are fighting what is stronger than yourself. One thing is sure, he is nearer to the spirit of your race than you. He will win—but yes, he will win!"

Her face suffused with warmth, became alive with a wonderful fire, her whole being had a simple tragedy.

Once again, and perhaps for the last time, she had renewed the splendour of her young womanhood. The vital warmth of a great idea had given an expression to her face which had long been absent from it.

He fell back from her. Then suddenly passion seized him. The gaunt beauty of her roused a spirit of contest in him. The evil thing in him, which her love for her son had almost conquered, came back upon him. He remembered Luzanne, and now with a spirit alive with anger he said to her:

"No—no—no, he cannot win." He stretched out a hand. "I have that which will keep for me the place in Parliament that has been mine; which will send him back to the isolation whence he came. Do you think I don't know how to

win an election? Why from east to west, from north to south in this Province of Quebec my name, my fame, have been all-conquering. Suppose he did defeat me, do you think that would end my political life? It would end nothing. I should still go on."

A scornful smile came to her lips. "So you think your party would find a seat for you who had been defeated by a young man who never knew what political life meant till he came to this campaign? You think they would find you a seat? I know you are coming to the end of your game, and when he defeats you, it will finish everything for you. You will disappear from public life, and your day will be done. Men will point at you as you pass along the street, and say: 'There goes Barode Barouche. He was a great man in his day. He was defeated by a boy with a painter's brush in his hand.' He will take from you your livelihood. You will go, and he will stay; he will conquer and grow strong. Go from me, Barode Barouche," she cried, thrusting out her hands against him, "go from me. I love my son with all my soul. His father has no place in my heart."

There had been upon him the wild passion of revenge. It had mastered him before she spoke, and while she spoke, but, as she finished, the understanding spirit of him conquered. Instead of telling her of Luzanne Larue, and of what he

would do if he found things going against him, instead of that he resolved to say naught. He saw he could not conquer her. For a minute after she had ceased speaking, he watched her in silence, and in his eyes was a remorse which would never leave them. She was master.

Slowly, and with a sense of defeat, he said to her: "Well, we shall never meet again like this. The fight goes on. I will defeat Carnac. No, do not shake your head. He shall not put me from my place. For you and me there is no future—none; yet I want to say to you before we part for ever now, that you have been deeper in my life than any other woman since I was born."

He said no more. Catching up his hat from the chair, and taking his stick, he left the room. He opened the front door, stepped out, shut it behind him, and, in a moment, was lost in the night.

WHILE these things were happening, Carnac was spending all his time in the constituency. Every day was busy to the last minute, every hole in the belt of his equipment was buckled tight. In spite of his enthusiasm he was, however, troubled by the fact that Luzanne might appear. Yet as time went on he gained confidence. There were days, however, when he appeared, mentally, to be watching the street corners.

One day at a public meeting he thought the sensation had come. He had just finished his speech in reply to Barode Barouche—eloquent, eager, masterful. Youth's aspirations, with a curious sympathy with the French-Canadian people, had idealized his utterances. When he finished there had been cheering, but in the quiet instant that followed the cheering, a habitant got up—a weird, wilful fellow who had a reputation for brag, yet who would not have hurt an enemy save in wild passion.

" M'sieu' Carnac Grier," he said, " I'd like to put a question to you. You've been asking for our votes. We're a family people, we Canucs

and we like to know where we're going. Tell me, m'sieu', where's your woman?"

Having asked the question, he remained standing.

"Where's your woman?" the habitant had asked. Carnac's breath came quick and sharp. There were many hundreds present, and a good number of them were foes. Barode Barouche was on the same platform. Not only Carnac was stirred by the question, for Barouche, who had listened to his foe's speech with admiring anxiety, was startled.

"Where's your woman?" was not a phrase to be asked anyhow, or anywhere. Barouche was glad of the incident. Ready as he was to meet challenge, he presently realized that his son had a readiness equally potent. He was even pleased to see the glint of a smile at the lips of the slim young politician, in whom there was more than his own commingling of temperament, of wisdom and wantonness and raillery.

After a moment, Carnac said: "Isn't that a leading question to an unmarried man?"

Barouche laughed inwardly. Surely it was the reply he himself would have made. Carnac had showed himself a born politician. The audience cheered, but the questioner remained standing. He meant to ask another question.

"Sit down—sit down, jackass!" shouted some of the more raucous of the crowd, but the man

was stubborn. He stretched out an arm towards Carnac.

"*Bien*, look here, my son, you take my advice. Pursue the primrose path into the meadows of matrimony."

Again Carnac shrank, but his mind rallied courageously, and he said: "There are other people who want to ask questions, perhaps." He turned to Barode Barouche. "I don't suggest my opponent has planned this heckling, but he can see it does no good. I'm not to be floored by catch-penny tricks. I'm going to win. I run straight. I haven't been long enough in politics to learn how to deceive. Let the accomplished professionals do that. They know how."

He waved a hand disdainfully at Barouche. "Let them put forth all that's in them, I will remain; let them exert the last ounce of energy, I will prevail; let them use the thousand devices of elections, I will use no device, but rely upon my policy. I want nothing except my chance in Parliament. My highest ambition is to make good laws. I am for the man who was the first settler on the St. Lawrence and this section of the continent—his history, his tradition, his honour and fame are in the history books of the world. If I should live a hundred years, I should wish nothing better than the honour of having served the men whose forefathers served Frontenac, Cartier, La Salle and Maisonneuve, and all the

splendid heroes of that ancient age. What they have done is for all men to do. They have kept the faith. I am for the habitant, for the land of his faith and love, first and last and all the time."

He sat down in a tumult of cheering. Many present remarked that no two men they had ever heard spoke so much alike, and kept their attacks so free from personal things.

There had been at this public meeting two intense supporters of Carnac, who waited for him at the exit from the main doorway. They were Fabian's wife and Junia.

Barode Barouche came out of the hall before Carnac. His quick eye saw the two ladies, and he raised his broad-brimmed hat like a Stuart cavalier, and smiled.

"Waiting for your champion, eh?" he asked with cynical friendliness. "Well, work hard, because that will soften his fall." He leaned over, as it were confidentially, to them, while his friends craned their necks to hear what he said: "If I were you I'd prepare him. He's beaten as sure as the sun shines."

Junia was tempted to say what was in her mind, but her sister Sibyl, who resented Barouche's patronage, said:

"There's an old adage about the slip 'twixt the cup and the lip, Monsieur Barouche. He's young, and he's got a better policy than yours."

"And he's unmarried, eh!" Barouche remarked. "He's unmarried, and I suppose that matters!"

There was an undercurrent of meaning in his voice which did not escape Junia.

"And Monsieur Barouche is also unmarried," she remarked. "So you're even there."

"Not quite even. I'm a widower. The women don't work for me as they work for him."

"I don't understand," remarked Junia. "The women can't all marry him."

"There are a lot of things that can't be understood by just blinking the eyes, but there's romance in the fight of an unmarried man, and women like romance even if it's some one else's. There's sensation in it."

Barouche looked to where Carnac was slowly coming down the centre of the hall. Women were waving handkerchiefs and throwing kisses towards him. One little girl was pushed in front of him, and she reached out a hand in which was a wild rose.

"That's for luck, m'sieu'," she said.

Carnac took the rose, and placed it in his button-hole; then, stooping down, he kissed the child's cheek.

Outside the hall, Barode Barouche winked an eye knowingly. "He's got it all down to a science. Look at him—kissing the young chick. Nevertheless, he's walking into an abyss."

Carnac was near enough now for the confidence

in his face to be seen. Barouche's eyes suddenly grew resentful. Sometimes he had a feeling of deep affection for his young challenger ; sometimes there was a storm of anger in his bosom, a hatred which can be felt only for a member of one's own family. Resentment showed in his face now. This boy was winning friends on every side.

Something in the two men, some vibration of temperament, struck the same cord in Junia's life and being. She had noticed similar gestures, similar intonations of voice, and, above all else, a little toss of the head backwards. She knew they were not related, and so she put the whole thing down to Carnac's impressionable nature which led its owner into singular imitations. It had done so in the field of Art. He was young enough to be the imitator without loss to himself.

" I'm doing my best to defeat you," she said to Barouche, reaching out a hand for good-bye, " and I shall work harder now than ever. You're so sure you're going to win that I'd disappoint you, monsieur—only to do you good."

" Ah, I'm sorry you haven't any real interest in Carnac Grier, if it's only to do me good ! Well, good-bye—good-bye," he added, raising his hat, and presently was gone.

As Carnac drew near, Fabian's wife stepped forward. " Carnac," she said, " I hope you'll come with us on the river in Fabian's steam-

launch. There's work to do there. It's pay-day in the lumber-yards on the Island, so please come. Will you ? "

Carnac laughed. " Yes, there's no engagement to prevent it. He thanked Junia and Sybil for all they had done for him, and added : " I'd like a couple of hours among the rivermen. Where's the boat ? "

Fabian's wife told him, and added : " I've got the roan team here, and you can drive us down, if you will."

A few moments afterwards, with the cheers of the crowd behind them, they were being driven by Carnac to the wharf where lay the " Fleur-de-lis." On board was Fabian.

" Had a good meeting, Carnac ? " Fabian asked.

" I should call it first-class. It was like a storm at sea—wind from one direction, then from another, but I think on the whole *we* had the best of it. Don't you think so ? " he added to Fabian's wife.

" Oh, much the best," she answered. " That's so, Junia, isn't it ? "

" I wouldn't say so positively," answered Junia. " I don't understand Monsieur Barouche. He talked as if he had something up his sleeve." Her face became clouded. " Have you any idea what it is, Carnac ? "

Carnac laughingly shook his head. " That's his way. He's always bluffing. He does it to

make believe the game's his, and to destroy my confidence. He's a man of mark, but he's having the biggest fight he ever had—of that I'm sure. . . . Do you think I'll win? " he asked Junia presently with a laugh, as they made their way down the river. " Have I conquest in my eye? "

How seldom did Junia have Carnac to herself in these days! How kind of Fabian to lend his yacht for the purpose of canvassing! But Sybil had in her mind a deeper thing—she had become a match-maker. She and Fabian, when the boat left the shore, went to one corner of the stern, leaving Carnac and Junia in the bow.

Three miles below the city was the Island on which many voters were working in a saw-mill and lumber-yard. It had supporters of Barouche chiefly in the yards and mills. Carnac had never visited it, and it was Junia's view that he should ingratiate himself with the workers, a rough-and-ready lot. They were ready to " burst a meeting " or bludgeon a candidate on occasion.

When Carnac asked his question Junia smiled up at him. " Yes, I think you'll win, Carnac. You have the tide with you." Presently she added: " I'm not sure that you've got all the cards, though—I don't know why, but I have that fear."

" You think that——"

She nodded. " I think Monsieur Barouche has some cards he hasn't played yet. What they are I don't know, but he's confident. Tell me,

Carnac, is there any card that would defeat you? Have you committed any crime against the law —no, I'm sure you haven't, but I want to hear you say so." She smiled cheerfully at him.

"He has no card of any crime of mine, and he can't hit me in a mortal place."

"You have the right policy for this province. But tell me, is there anyone who could hurt you, who could spring up in the fight—man or woman?"

She looked him straight in the eye, and his own did not waver.

"There's no one has a knock-out blow for me —that's sure. I can weather any storm."

He paused, however, disconcerted, for the memory of Luzanne came to him, and his spirit became clouded. "Except one—except one," he added.

"And you won't tell me who it is?"

"NO, I can't tell you—yet," answered Carnac. "You ought to know; though you can't put things right."

"Don't forget you are a public man, and what might happen if things went wrong. There are those who would gladly roast you on a gridiron for what you are in politics."

"I never forget it. I've no crime to repent of, and I'm afraid of nothing in the last resort. Look, we're nearing the Island."

"It's your worst place in the constituency, and I'm not sure of your reception. Oh, but yes, I am," she added hastily. "You always win good feeling. No one really hates you. You're on the way to big success."

"I've had some unexpected luck. I've got Tarboe on my side. He's a member of Barouche's party, but he's coming with me."

"Did he tell you so?" she asked with apparent interest.

"I've had a letter from him, and in it he says he is with me 'to the knife!' That's good. Tarboe has a big hold on rivermen, and he may

carry with him some of the opposition. It was a good letter—if puzzling."

"How puzzling?"

"He said in one part of it, 'When you come back here to play your part you'll make it a success, the whole blessed thing.' I've no idea what he meant by that. I don't think he wants me as a partner, and I'll give him no chance of it. I don't want now what I could have had when Fabian left. That's all over, Junia."

"He meant something by it; he's a very able man," she replied gravely. "He's a huge success."

"And women love success more than all else," he remarked a little cynically.

"You're unjust, Carnac. Of course, women love success; but they'd not sell their souls for it—not the real women—and you ought to know it."

"I ought to know it, I suppose," he answered, and he held her eyes meaningly. He was about to say something vital, but Fabian and his wife appeared.

Fabian said to him: "Don't be surprised if you get a bad reception here, Carnac. It's the worst place on the river, and I've no influence over the men—I don't believe Tarboe could have. They're a difficult lot. There's Eugene Grandois, he's as bad as they make 'em. He's got a grudge against us because of some act of father, and he

may break out any time. He's a labour leader too, and we must be vigilant."

Carnac nodded. He made no reply in words. They were nearing the little dock, and men were coming to the point where the launch would stop.

"There's Grandois now!" said Fabian with a wry smile, for he had a real fear of results. He had, however, no idea how skilfully Carnac would handle the situation—yet he had heard much of his brother's adaptability. He had no psychological sense, and Carnac had big endowment of it. Yet Carnac was not demonstrative. It was his quiet way that played his game for him. He never spoke, if being could do what he wanted. He had the sense of physical speech without words. He was a bold adventurer, but his methods were those of the subtlest. If a motion of the hand was sufficient, then let it go at that.

"You people after our votes never come any other time," sneeringly said Eugene Grandois, as Carnac and Fabian landed. "It's only when you want to use us."

"Would you rather I didn't come at all?" asked Carnac with a friendly smile. "You can't have it both ways. If I came here any other time you'd want to know why I didn't stay away, and I come now because it's good you should know if I'm fit to represent you in Parliament."

"There's sense, my bonny boy," said an English-Canadian labourer standing near. "What you

got to say to that, little skeezicks?" he added teasingly to Eugene Grandois.

"He ain't got more gifts than his father had, and we all know what he was—that's so, bagosh!" remarked Grandois viciously.

"Well, what sort of a man was he?" asked Carnac coolly, with a warning glance at Fabian, who was resentful. Indeed, Fabian would have struck the man if his brother had not been present, and then been torn to pieces himself.

"What sort—don't you know the kind of things he done? If you don't, I do, and there's lots of others know, and don't you forget it, *mon vieux.*"

"That's no answer, Monsieur Grandois—none at all. It tells nothing," remarked Carnac cheerily.

"You got left out of his will, m'sieu', you talk as if he was all right—that's blither."

"My father had a conscience. He gave me chance to become a partner in the business, and I wouldn't, and he threw me over—what else was there to do? I could have owned the business to-day, if I'd played the game as he thought it ought to be played. I didn't, and he left me out—that's all."

"Makin' your own way, ain't you?" said the English labourer. "That's hit you where you're tender, Grandois. What you got to say to that?"

The intense black eyes of the habitant sparkled

wickedly, his jaws set with passion, and his sturdy frame seemed to fasten to the ground. His gnarled hands now shot out fiercely.

"What I got to say! Only this: John Grier played the devil's part. He turned me and my family out into the streets in winter-time, and the law upheld him, old beast that he was—*sacré diable!*"

"*Beast—devil!* Grandois, those are hard words about a man in his son's presence, and they're not true. You think you can say such things because I'm standing for Parliament. *Beast, devil,* eh? You've got a free tongue, Grandois; you forgot to say that my father paid the doctor's bill for your whole family when they were taken down with smallpox; and he kept them for weeks afterwards. You forgot to recall *that* when he turned you out for being six months behind with your rent and making no effort to pay up! Who was the *devil* and *beast* then, Grandois? Who spat upon his own wife and children then? You haven't a good memory. . . . Come, I think your account with my father is squared; and I want you to vote to put my father's son in Parliament, and to put out Barode Barouche, who's been there too long. Come, come, Grandois, isn't it a bargain? Your tongue's sharp, but your heart's in the right place—is it a bargain?"

He held out his hand with applause from the

crowd, but Grandois was not to be softened. His anger, however, had behind it some sense of caution, and what Carnac said about the small-pox incident struck him hard. It was the first time he had ever been hit between the eyes where John Grier was concerned. His prestige with the men was now under a shadow, yet he dared not deny the truth of the statement. It could be proved. His braggart hatred of John Grier had come home to roost. Carnac saw that, and he was glad he had challenged the man. He believed that in politics, as in all other departments of life, candour and bold play were best in the long run. Yet he would like to see the man in a different humour, and with joy he heard Junia say to Grandois:

"How is the baby boy, and how is madame, Monsieur Grandois?"

It came at the right moment, for only two days before had Madame Grandois given her husband the boy for which he had longed. Junia had come to know of it through a neighbour and had sent jellies to the sick woman. As she came forward now, Grandois, taken aback, said:

"*Alors*, they're all right, ma'm'selle, thank you. It was you sent the jellies, eh?"

She nodded with a smile. "Yes, I sent them, Grandois. May I come and see madame and the boy to-morrow?"

The incident had taken a favourable turn.

"It's about even—things between us, Grandois?" asked Carnac, and held out his hand. "My father hit you, but you hit him harder by forgetting about the smallpox and the rent, and also by drinking up the cash that ought to have paid the rent. It doesn't matter now that the rent was never paid, but it does that you recall the smallpox debt. Can't you say a word for me, Grandois? You're a big man here among all the workers. I'm a better Frenchman than the man I'm trying to turn out. Just a word for a good cause. They're waiting for you, and your hand on it! Here's a place for you on the roost. Come up."

The "roost" was an upturned tub lying face down on the ground, and in the passion of the moment, the little man gripped Carnac's hand and stood on the tub to great cheering; for if there was one thing the French-Canadians love, it is sensation, and they were having it. They were mostly Barouche's men, but they were emotional, and melodrama had stirred their feelings.

Besides, like the Irish, they had a love of feminine nature, and in all the river-coves Junia was known by sight at least, and was admired. She had the freshness of face and mind which is the heart of success with the habitants. With Eugene Grandois on his feet, she heard a speech which had in it the best spirit of Gallic eloquence, though

it was crude. But it was forcible and adroit.

"Friends and comrades," said Eugene Grandois, with his hands playing loosely, "there's been misunderstandings between me and the Grier family, and I was out against it, but I see things different since M'sieu' Carnac has spoke—and I'm changing my mind—certainlee. That throwing out of my house hit me and my woman and little ones hard, and I've been resentin' it all these years till now; but I'm weighin' one thing agin another, and I'm willing to forget my wrongs for this young man's sake. He's for us French. *Alors*, some of you was out to hurt our friend M'sieu' Carnac here, and I didn't say no to it; but you'd better keep your weapons for election day and use them agin Barode Barouche. I got a change of heart. I've laid my plate on the table with a prayer that I get it filled with good political doctrine, and I've promise that the food I'm to get is what's best for all of us. M'sieu' Carnac Grier's got the right stuff in him, and I'm for him both hands up—both hands way up high, *nom de pipe!*"

At that he raised both hands above his head with a loud cheer, and later Carnac Grier was carried to the launch in the arms of Eugene Grandois' friends.

"WHO are you, ma'm'selle?"

It was in the house of Eugene Grandois that this question was asked of Junia. She had followed the experience on the Island by a visit to Grandois' house, carrying delicacies for the sick wife. Denzil had come with her, and was waiting in the street.

She had almost ended her visit when the outer door opened and Luzanne Larue entered carrying a dish she placed on the table, eyeing Junia closely. First they bowed to each other, and Junia gave a pleasant smile, but instantly she felt here was a factor in her own life—how, she could not tell!

To Luzanne, the face of Junia had no familiar feature, and yet she felt here was one whose life's lines crossed her own. So it was she presently said, "Who are you, ma'm'selle?" in a sharp voice. As Junia did not reply at once, she put the question in another form, "What is your name, ma'm'selle?"

"It is Junia Shale," said the other calmly, yet with heart beating hard. Somehow the question

foreshadowed painful things, associated with Carnac. Her first glance at Luzanne showed the girl was well dressed, that she had a face of some beauty, that her eyes were full of glamour—black and bold, and, in a challenging way, beautiful. It was a face and figure full of daring. She was not French-Canadian ; yet she was French ; that was clear from her accent. Yet the voice had an accent of crudity, and the plump whiteness of the skin and waving fulness of the hair gave the girl a look of an adventuress. She was dressed in black with a white collar which, by contrast, seemed to heighten her unusual nature.

At first Junia shuddered, for Luzanne's presence made her uneasy ; yet the girl must have good qualities, for she had brought comforts to the sick woman, and indeed, within, madame had spoken of the " dear beautiful stranger." That could be no other than this girl. She became composed. Yet she had a feeling that between them was a situation needing all her resources. About what ? She would soon know, and she gave her name at last slowly, keeping her eyes on those of Luzanne.

At mention of the name, Luzanne's eyes took on prejudice and moroseness. The pupils enlarged, the lids half closed, the face grew sour.

" Junia Shale—you are Junia Shale ? " The voice was bitter and resentful.

Junia nodded, and in her smile was understand-

ing and conflict, for she felt this girl to be her foe.

" We must have a talk—that's sure," Luzanne said with decision.

" Who are you ? " asked Junia calmly.

" I am Luzanne Larue."

" That makes me no wiser."

" Hasn't Carnac Grier spoken of me ? "

Junia shook her head, and turned her face towards the door of Madame Grandois' room. " Had we not better go somewhere else to talk, after you've seen Madame Grandois and the baby ? " she asked with a smile, yet she felt she was about to face an alarming event. " Madame Grandois has spoken pleasantly of you to me," Junia added, for tact was her prompt faculty. " If you'd come where we could talk undisturbed—do you see ? "

Luzanne made no reply in words, but taking up the dish she went into the sick-room, and Junia heard her in short friendly speech with Madame Grandois. Luzanne appeared again soon and spoke : " Now we can go where I'm boarding. It's only three doors away, and we can be safe there. You'd like to talk with me—ah, yes, surelee ! "

Her eyes were combative and repellent, but Junia was not dismayed, and she said : " What shall we talk about ? "

" There's only one thing and one person to talk about, ma'm'selle."

" I still don't know what you mean."

" Aren't you engaged to Carnac Grier ? Don't you think you're going to marry him ? . . . Don't you like to tell the truth, then ? " she added.

Junia raised her eyebrows. " I'm not engaged to Carnac Grier, and he has never asked me to marry him—but what business is it of yours, ma'm'selle ? "

" Come and I'll tell you." Luzanne moved towards the door. They were speechless till they reached Luzanne's lodgings.

" This is the house of Monsieur Marmette, an agent of Monsieur Barouche," said Junia. " I know it."

" You'll know it better soon. The agent of M'sieu' Barouche is a man of mark about here, and he'll be more marked soon—but yes ! "

" You think Monsieur Barouche will be elected, do you ? " asked Junia, as they closed the door.

" I know he will."

" I've been working for Monsieur Grier, and that isn't my opinion."

" I'm working for Barode Barouche, and I *know* the result."

They were now in Luzanne's small room, and Junia noted that it had all the characteristics of a habitant dwelling—even to the crucifix at the head of the bed, and the picture of the French-Canadian Premier of the Dominion on the wall. She also saw a rosary on a little hook beside the bed.

"How do you know?"

"Because I am the wife of Carnac Grier, and I know what will happen to him. . . . You turn pale, ma'm'selle, but your colour isn't going to alter the truth. I'm Carnac Grier's wife by the laws of New York State."

"Does Monsieur Grier admit he is your husband?"

"It doesn't matter. He must respect the law by which he married me."

"I don't believe he was ever honestly married to you," declared Junia bravely. "Has he ever lived with you—for a single day?"

"What difference would that make? I have the marriage certificate here." She touched her bosom.

"I'd have thought you were Barode Barouche's wife by the way you act. Isn't it a wife's duty to help her husband—— Shouldn't you be fighting against Barode Barouche?"

"I mean to be recognized as Carnac Grier's wife—that's why I'm here."

"Have you seen him since you've been here? Have you told him how you're working against him? Have you got the certificate with you?"

"Of course. I've got my head on like a piece of flesh and blood that belongs to me—*bien sûr*."

She suddenly drew from her breast a folded piece of blue paper. "There it is, signed by Judge Grimshaw that married us, and there's the seal;

and the whole thing can't be set aside. Look at it, if you like, *petite.*"

She held it not far from Junia's face, and Junia could see that it was registration of a marriage of New York State. She could have snatched the paper away, but she meant to conquer Luzanne's savage spirit.

"Well, how do you intend to defeat your husband?"

"I mean to have the people asked from a platform if they've seen the wife of the candidate, and then a copy of the certificate will be read to all. What do you think will happen after that?"

"It will have to be done to-night or to-morrow night," remarked Junia.

"Because the election comes the day after to-morrow, eh?"

"Because of that. And who will read the document?"

"Who but the man he's trying to defeat?—tell me that."

"You mean Barode Barouche?"

"Who else?"

"Has he agreed to do it?"

Luzanne nodded. "On the day Carnac became a candidate."

"And if Carnac Grier denies it?"

"He won't deny it. He never has. He says he was drunk when the thing was done—*mais, oui.*"

"Is that all he says?"

"No. He says he didn't know it was a real marriage, and——" Luzanne then related Carnac's defence, and added: "Do you think anyone would believe him with the facts as they are? Remember I'm French and he's English, and that marriage to a French girl is life and death; and this is a French province!"

"And yet you are a Catholic and French, and were married by a Protestant judge."

"That is my own affair, ma'm'selle."

"It is not the thing to say to French-Canadians here. What do you get out of it all? If he is your husband, wouldn't it be better to have him successful than your defeated victim. What will be yours if you defeat him?"

"Revenge—my rights—the law!" was the sharp rejoinder.

Junia smiled. "What is there in it all for you? If the man I married did not love me, I'd use the law to be free. What's the good of trying to destroy a husband who doesn't love you, who never loved you—never."

"You don't know that," retorted Luzanne sharply.

"Yes, I do. He never loved you. He never lived with you for a single day. That's in the power of a doctor to prove. If you are virtuous, then he has taken nothing; if you have given your all, and not to Carnac Grier, what will his

mind be about you? Is it money? He has no money except what he earns. His father left him nothing—not a dollar. Why do you hate him so? I've known him all my life, and I've never known him hurt man or animal. When did he ever misuse you, or hurt you? Did he ever treat you badly? How did you come to know him? Answer that."

She paused and Luzanne flushed. The first meeting! Why, that was the day Carnac had saved her life, had taken her home safe from danger, and had begun a friendship with behind it only a desire to help her. And how had she repaid the saviour of her life? By tricking him into a marriage, and then by threatening him if he did not take her to his home.

Truth is, down beneath her misconduct was a passion for the man which, not satisfied, became a passion to destroy him and his career. It was a characteristic of her blood and breed. It was a relic of ancient dishonour, inherited and searching; it was atavism and the incorrigible thing. Beneath everything was her desire for the man, and the mood in which she had fought for him was the twist of a tortured spirit. She was not so deliberate as her actions had indicated. She had been under the malicious influence of her father and her father's friend. She was like one possessed of a spirit that would not be deterred from its purpose.

Junia saw the impression she had made, and set it down to her last words.

"Where did you first meet him? What was the way of it?" she added.

Suddenly Junia came forward and put her hands on Luzanne's shoulders. "I think you loved Carnac once, and perhaps you love him now, and are only trying to hurt him out of anger. If you destroy him, you will repent of it—so soon! I don't know what is behind these things you are doing, but you'll be sorry for it when it is too late. Yes, I know you have loved Carnac, for I see all the signs——"

"Do you love him then, ma'm'selle?" asked Luzanne exasperated. "Do you love him?"

"He has never asked me, and I have never told him that; and to speak truth, I don't know, but, if I did, I would move heaven and earth to help him, and if he didn't love me I'd help him just the same. And so, I think, should you. If you ever loved him, then you ought to save him from evil. Tell me, did Carnac ever do you a kind act, one that is worth while in your life?"

For a moment Luzanne stood dismayed, then a new expression drove the dark light from her eyes. It was as though she had found a new sense.

"He saved my life the day we first met," she said at last under Junia's hypnotic influence.

"And now you would strike him when he is trying to do the big thing. You threaten to declare his marriage, in the face of those who can elect him to play a great part for his country."

Junia saw the girl was in emotional turmoil, was obsessed by one idea, and she felt her task had vast difficulty. That Carnac should have married the girl was incredible, that he had played an unworthy part seemed sure; yet it was in keeping with his past temperament. The girl was the extreme contrast of himself, with dark—almost piercing—eyes, and a paleness which was physically constitutional—the joy of the artistic spirit. It was the head of a tragedienne or a martyr, and the lean, rather beautiful body was eloquent of life.

Presently Junia said: "To try to spoil him would be a crime against his country, and I shall tell him you are here."

"He'll do nothing at all." The French girl's words were suddenly biting, malicious and defiant. The moment's softness she had felt was gone, and hardness returned. "If he hasn't moved against me since he married me, he wouldn't dare do so now."

"Why hasn't he moved? Because you're a woman, and also he'd believe you'd repent of your conduct. But I believe he will act sternly against you at once. There is much at stake."

" You want it for your own sake," said Luzanne sharply. " You think he'd marry you if I gave him up."

" Perhaps he'd ask me to marry him, if you weren't in the way, but I'd have my own mind about that, and knowing what you've told me—truth or lie—I'd weigh it all carefully. Besides, he's not the only man. Doesn't that ever strike you? Why try to hold him by a spurious bond when there are other men as good-looking, as clever? Is your world so bare of men—no, I'm sure it isn't," she added, for she saw anger rising in the impulsive girl. " There are many who'd want to marry you, and it's better to marry some one who loves you than to hold to one who doesn't love you at all. Is it hate? He saved your life—and that's how you came to know him first, and now you would destroy him! He's a great man. He would not bend to his father's will, and so he was left without a cent of his father's money. All because he has a conscience, and an independence worthy of the best that ever lived. . . . That's the soul of the man you are trying to hurt. If you had a real soul, there wouldn't be even the thought of this crime. Do you think he wouldn't loathe you, if you do this ghastly thing? Would any real man endure it for an hour? What do you expect to get but ugly revenge on a man who never gave anything except friendship? "

" Friendship—friendship—yes, he gave that, but emotion too."

" You think that real men marry women for whom they only have emotion. You think that he—Carnac Grier—would marry any woman on that basis ? Come, ma'm'selle, the truth ! He didn't know he was being married, and when you told him it was a real marriage he left you at once. You and yours tricked him—the man you'd never have known if he hadn't saved your life. You thought that with your beauty—yes, you are beautiful—you'd conquer him, and that he'd give in, and become a real husband in a real home. Come now, isn't that it ? "

The other did not reply. Her face was alive with memories. The lower things were flying from it, a spirit of womanhood was living in her —feebly, but truly, living. She was conscious of the insanity of her pursuit of Carnac. For a few moments she stood silent, and then she said with agitation :

" If I give this up "—she took from her breast the blue document—" he'd be safe in his election, and he'd marry you : is it not so, ma'm'selle ? "

" He'd be safe for his election, but he has never asked me to marry him, and there are others besides him——" She was thinking of Tarboe. " Tell me," she added suddenly, " to whom have you told this thing in Montreal ? Did you mean to challenge him yourself ? "

" I told it only to M'sieu' Barouche, and he said he would use it at the right moment—and the right moment has come," she added. " He asked me for a copy of it last night, and I said I'd give it to him to-day. It's because of him I've been here quiet all these weeks as Ma'm'selle Larue."

" He is worse than you, mademoiselle, for he has known Carnac's family, and he has no excuse. If a man can't win his fight fairly, he oughtn't to be in public life."

After a few dark moments, with a sudden burst of feeling, Luzanne said: " Well, Carnac won't be out of public life through me ! "

She took the blue certificate from her breast and was about to tear it up, when Junia stopped her.

" Don't do that," Junia said, " don't tear it up yet, give it to me. I'll tear it up at the right moment. Give it to me, my dear."

She held out her hand, and the blue certificate was presently in her fingers. She felt a sudden weakness in her knees, for it seemed she held the career of Carnac Grier, and it moved her as she had never been moved.

With the yielding of the certificate, Luzanne seemed suddenly to lose self-control. She sank on the bed beside the wall with a cry of distress.

"*Mon Dieu—oh, Mon Dieu!*" Then she sprang to her feet. "Give it back, give it back to me," she cried, with frantic pain. "It's all I have of him—it's all I have."

"I won't give it back," declared Junia quietly. "It's a man's career, and you *must* let it go. It's the right thing to do. Let it stand, mademoiselle."

She fully realized the half-insane mind and purpose of the girl, and she wrapped her arms around the stricken figure

"See, my dear," she said, "it's no use. You can't have it back. Your soul is too big for that now. You can be happy in the memory that you gave Carnac back his freedom."

"But the record stands," said the girl helplessly.

"Tell the truth and have it removed. You owe that to the man who saved your life. Have it done at once at Shipton."

"What will you do with the certificate?" She glanced at Junia's bosom where the paper was hidden.

"I will give it to Carnac, and he can do what he likes with it."

By now the tears were streaming down the face of Luzanne Larue, and hard as it was for Junia, she tried to comfort her, for the girl should be got away at once, and only friendliness could

achieve that. She would see Denzil—he was near by, waiting.

There would be a train in two hours for New York and the girl must take it—she must.

Chapter XXV Denzil takes a Hand in the Game

BARODE BAROUCHE was excited. He had sure hope of defeating Carnac with the help of Luzanne Larue. The woman had remained hidden since her coming, and the game was now in his hands. On the night before the poll he could declare the thing, not easy to be forgiven by the French Canadian public, which has a strong sense of domestic duty. Carnac Grier was a Protestant, and that was bad, and if there was added an offence against domestic morality, he would be beaten at the polls as sure as the river ran. He had seen Luzanne several times, and though he did not believe in her, he knew the marriage certificate was real. He had no credence in Carnac's lack of honour, yet it was strange he had not fought his wife, if his case was a good one.

Day by day he had felt Carnac's power growing, and he feared his triumph unless some sensation stopped it. Well, he had at hand the sufficient sensation. He would produce both the certificate of marriage and the French girl who was the legal wife of Carnac Grier. That Luzanne was French

helped greatly, for it would be used by Carnac's foes as an insult to French Canada, and his pulses throbbed as he thought of the possible turmoil in the constituency.

Fortunately the girl was handsome, had ability, and spoke English with a French accent, and she was powerful for his purposes. He was out to prevent his own son from driving himself into private life, and he would lose no trick in the game, if he could help it. Sentimental feeling—yes, he had it, but it did not prevent him from saving his own skin. Carnac had come out against him, and he must hit as hard as he could. It was not as though Carnac had been guilty of a real crime and was within the peril of the law. His offence was a personal one, but it would need impossible defence at the moment of election. In any case, if Carnac was legally married, he should assume the responsibilities of married life; and if he had honest reason for not recognizing the marriage, he should stop the woman from pursuing him. If the case kept Carnac out of public life and himself in, then justice would be done; for it was monstrous that a veteran should be driven into obscurity by a boy. In making his announcement he would be fighting his son as though he was a stranger and not of his own blood and bones. He had no personal connection with Carnac in the people's minds.

On the afternoon of the day that Junia had had

her hour with Luzanne, he started for the house where Luzanne was lodging. He could not travel the streets without being recognized, but it did not matter, for the house where the girl lodged was that of his sub-agent, and he was safe in going to it. He did not know, however, that Denzil had been told by Junia to watch the place and learn what he meant to do.

Denzil had a popular respect of Barode Barouche as a Minister of the Crown; but he had a far greater love of Carnac. He remained vigilant until after Junia and Luzanne had started in a cab for the railway-station. They left near three-quarters of an hour before the train was to start for New York; and for the first quarter of an hour after they left, Denzil was in apprehension.

Then he saw Barouche enter the street and go to the house of his sub-agent. The house stood by itself, with windows open, and Denzil did not scruple to walk near it, and, if possible, listen. Marmette, the sub-agent, would know of the incident between Junia and Luzanne; and he feared Barouche might start for the station, overtake Luzanne and prevent her leaving. He drew close and kept his ears open.

He was fortunate, he heard voices; Marmette was explaining to Barouche that Junia and Luzanne had gone to the station, as " Ma'm'selle "

was bound for New York. Marmette had sent word to M. Barouche by messenger, but the messenger had missed him. Then he heard Barouche in anger say:

"You fool—why did you let her leave! It's my bread and butter—and yours too—that's at stake. I wanted to use her against Grier. She was my final weapon of attack. How long ago did she leave?"

Marmette told him.

Denzil saw Barode Barouche leave the house with grim concern and talking hard to Paul Marmette. He knew the way they would go, so he fell behind a tree, and saw them start for the place where they could order a cab. Then he followed them. Looking at his watch he saw that, if they got a cab, they would get to the station before the train started, and he wondered how he could retard Barouche. A delay of three minutes would be enough, for it was a long way, and the distance could only be covered with good luck in the time. Yet Denzil had hope, for his faith in Junia was great, and he felt sure she would do what she planned. He had to trot along fast, because Barouche and Marmette were going hard, and he could not see his way to be of use yet. He would give his right hand to help Carnac win against the danger Junia had suggested. It could not be aught to Carnac's discredit, or Junia would not have tried to get the danger out of Montreal;

he had seen Luzanne, and she might be deadly, if she had a good weapon!

Presently, he saw Barouche and his agent stop at the door of a livery-stable, and were told that no cabs were available. There were none in the street, and time was pressing. Not far away, however, was a street with a tram-line, and this tram would take Barouche near the station from which Luzanne would start. So Barouche made hard for this street and had reached it when a phaeton came along, and in it was one whom Barouche knew. Barouche spoke to the occupant, and presently both men were admitted to the phaeton just as a tram-car came near.

As the phaeton would make the distance to the station in less time than the car, this seemed the sensible thing to do, and Denzil's spirits fell. There remained enough time for Barouche to reach the station before the New York train started! He got aboard the tram himself, and watched the phaeton moving quickly on ahead. He saw the driver of the phaeton strike his horse with a whip, and the horse, suddenly breaking into a gallop, slipped and fell to the ground on the tram-track. A moment later the tram came to a stop behind the fallen horse, and Denzil saw the disturbed face of Barode Barouche looking for another trap—in any case, it would take three or four minutes to get the horse up and clear the track for the tram. There was no carriage in

sight—only a loaded butcher's cart, a road-cleaner, and a heavily loaded van. These could be of no use to Barouche.

In his corner, Denzil saw the play with anxious eyes. It was presently found that the horse had injured a leg in falling and could not be got to its feet, but had presently to be dragged from the tram-lines. It had all taken near five minutes of the time before the train went, and, with despair, Barouche mounted the steps of the tram. He saw Denzil, and shrewdly suspected he was working in the interests of Carnac. He came forward to Denzil.

"You're a long way from home, little man," he said in a voice with an acid note.

"About the same as you from home, m'sieu'," said Denzil.

"I've got business everywhere in this town," remarked Barouche with sarcasm—"and you haven't, have you? You're travelling privately, eh?"

"I travel as m'sieu' travels, and on the same business," answered Denzil with a challenging smile.

The look Barouche gave him then Denzil never forgot. "I didn't know you were in politics, *mon vieux!* What are you standing for? When are you going to the polls—who are you fighting, eh?"

"I'm fighting you, m'sieu', though I ain't in

politics, and I'm going to the polls now," Denzil answered.

Denzil had gained in confidence as he saw the arrogance of Barode Barouche. He spoke with more vigour than usual, and he felt his gorge rising, for here was a man trying to injure his political foe through a woman; and Denzil resented it. He did not know the secret of Luzanne Larue, but he did realize there was conflict between Junia Shale and Barouche, and between Barouche and Carnac Grier, and that enlisted his co-operation. By nature he was respectful; but the politician now was playing a dirty game, and he himself might fight without gloves, if needed. That was why his eyes showed defiance at Barouche now. He had said the thing which roused sharp anger in Barouche. It told Barouche that Denzil knew where he was going and why. Anger shook him as he saw Denzil take out his watch.

"The poll closes in three minutes, m'sieu'," Denzil added with a dry smile, for it was clear Barouche could not reach the station in time, if the train left promptly. The swiftest horses could not get him there, and these were not the days of motor-cars. Yet it was plain Barouche meant to stick to it, and he promptly said:

"You haven't the right time, beetle. The poll closes only when the train leaves, and your watch doesn't show that, so don't put on airs yet."

"I'll put on airs if I've won, m'sieu'," Denzil answered quietly, for he saw people in the tram were trying to hear.

Barouche had been recognized, and a murmur of cheering began, followed by a hum of disapproval, for Barouche had lost many friends since Carnac had come into the fray. A few folk tried to engage Barouche in talk, but he responded casually; yet he smiled the smile which had done so much for him in public life, and the distance lessened to the station. The tram did not go quite to the station, and as it stopped, the two men hurried to the doors. As they did so, an engine gave a scream, and presently, as they reached the inside of the station, they saw passing out at the far end, the New York train.

"She started five minutes late, but she did start," said Denzil, and there was malice in his smile.

As he looked at his watch, he saw Junia passing out of a door into the street, but Barode Barouche did not see her—his eyes were fixed on the departing train. For a moment Barouche stood indecisive as to whether he should hire a locomotive and send some one after the train, and so get in touch with Luzanne in that way, or send her a telegram to the first station where the train would stop in its schedule; but presently he gave up both ideas. As he turned towards the exit of the station, he saw Denzil, and he came forward.

"I think you've won, *mon petit chien*," he said with vindictiveness, "but *my* poll comes to-morrow night, and I shall win."

"No game is won till it's all played, m'sieu', and this innings is mine!"

"I am fighting a bigger man than you, wasp," snarled Barouche.

"As big as yourself and bigger, m'sieu'," said Denzil with a smile.

There was that in his tone which made Barouche regard him closely. He saw there was no real knowledge of the relationship of Carnac and himself in Denzil's eyes; but he held out his hand with imitation courtesy, as though to say good-bye.

"Give me a love-clasp, spider," he said with a kind of sneer. "I'd like your love as I travel to triumph."

A light of hatred came into Denzil's eyes. "*Beetle—dog—wasp—spider* he had been called by this big man—well, he should see that the wasp could give as good as it got. His big gnarled hand enclosed the hand of Barode Barouche, then he suddenly closed on it tight. He closed on it till he felt it crunching in his own and saw that the face of Barode Barouche was like that of one in a chair of torture. He squeezed, till from Barouche's lips came a gasp of agony, and then he let go.

"You've had my love-clasp, m'sieu'," Denzil

said with meaning, " and when you want it again let me know. It's what M'sieu' Carnac will do with you to-morrow night. Only he'll not let go, as I did, before the blood comes. Don't be hard on those under you, m'sieu'. Remember wasps and spiders can sting in their own way, and that dogs can bite."

" Little black beast," was the short reply, " I'll strip your hide for Hell's gridiron in good time."

" Bien, m'sieu', but you'll be in hell waiting, for I'm going to bury you here where you call better men than yourself dogs and wasps and spiders and beetles. And I'll not strip your ' hide,' either. That's for lower men than me."

A moment later they parted, Denzil to find Junia, and Barouche to prepare his speech for the evening. Barouche pondered. What should he do—should he challenge Carnac with his marriage with Luzanne Larue ? His heart was beating hard.

Chapter XXVI — *The Challenge*

THE day of the election came. Never had feeling run higher, never had racial lines been so cut across. Barode Barouche fought with vigour, but from the going of Luzanne Larue, there passed from him the confidence he had felt since the first day of Carnac's candidature. He had had temptation to announce to those who heard him the night before the poll what Luzanne had told; but better wisdom guided him, to his subsequent content. He had not played a scurvy trick on his son for his own personal advantage. Indeed, when his meetings were all over, he was thankful for the disappearance of Luzanne. At heart he was not all bad. A madness had been on him. He, therefore, slept heavily from midnight till morning on the eve of the election, and began the day with the smile of one who abides the result with courage.

Several times he came upon Carnac in the streets, and they saluted courteously; yet he saw the confidence of Carnac in his bearing. Twice also he came upon Junia and he was startled by the look she gave him. It was part

of his punishment that Junia was the source of his undoing where Luzanne was concerned. Junia knew about Luzanne; but if she condemned him now, what would she think if she knew that Carnac was his own son!

"A devilish clever girl that," he said to himself. "If he wins, it'll be due to her, and if he wins—no, he can't marry her, for he's already married; but he'll owe it all to her. If he wins! . . . No, he shall not win; I've been in the game too long; I've served too many interests; I've played too big a part."

It was then he met his agent, who said: "They're making strong play against us—the strongest since you began politics."

"Strong enough to put us in danger?" inquired Barouche. "You've been at the game here for thirty years, and I'd like to know what you think—quite honestly."

His agent was disturbed. "I think you're in danger; he has all your gifts, and he's as clever as Old Nick besides. He's a man that'll make things hum, if he gets in."

"If he gets in—you think . . .?"

"He has as good a chance as you, m'sieu'. Here's a list of doubtful ones, and you'll see they're of consequence."

"They are indeed," said Barouche, scanning the list. "I'd no idea these would be doubtful."

"Luke Tarboe's working like the devil for

Carnac. People believe in him. Half the men on that list were affected by Tarboe's turning over. Tarboe is a master-man; he has fought like hell."

"Nevertheless, I've been too long at it to miss it now," said the rueful member with a forced smile. "I must win now, or my game is up."

The agent nodded, but there was no certainty in his eye. Feeling ran higher and higher, but there was no indication that Barouche's hopes were sure of fulfilment. His face became paler as the day wore on, and his hands freer with those of his late constituents. Yet he noticed that Carnac was still glib with his tongue and freer with his hands. Carnac seemed everywhere, on every corner, in every street, at every polling booth; he laid his trowel against every brick in the wall.

Carnac was not as confident as he seemed, but he was nearing the end of the trail; and his feet were free and his head clear. One good thing had happened. The girl who could do him great harm was not in evidence, and it was too late to spoil his chances now, even if she came. What gave him greatest hope was the look on Junia's face as he passed her. It was the sign of the conqueror—something he could not understand. It was knowledge and victory.

Also, he had a new feeling towards Tarboe, who had given him such powerful support. There

was, then, in the man the bigger thing, the light of fairness and reason! He had had no talk with Tarboe, and he desired none, but he had seen him at three of his meetings, and he had evidence of arduous effort on his behalf. Tarboe had influenced many people in his favour, men of standing and repute, and the workmen of the Grier firm had come, or were coming, his way. He had always been popular with them, in spite of the strike he had fought, but they voted independently of their employers; and he was glad to know that most of them were with him in the fight.

His triumph over Eugene Grandois at the Island had been a good influence, and he had hopes of capturing the majority of the river people. Yet, strange to say, the Church had somewhat reversed its position, and at the last had swung round to Barouche, quietly, though not from the pulpit, supporting him. The ancient prejudice in favour of a Catholic and a Frenchman was alive again.

Carnac was keyed to anxiety, but outwardly seemed moving with brilliant certainty. He walked on air, and he spoke and acted like one who had the key of the situation in his fingers, and the button of decision at his will. It was folly electioneering on the day of the poll, and yet he saw a few labour leaders and moved them to greater work for him. One of these told him that

at the Grier big-mill was one man working to defeat him by personal attacks. It had something to do with a so-called secret marriage, and it would be good to get hold of the man, Roudin, as soon as possible.

A secret marriage! So the thing had, after all, been bruited and used—what was the source of the information? Who was responsible? He must go to the mill at once, and he started for it. On the way he met Luke Tarboe.

"There's trouble down at the mill," Tarboe said. "A fellow called Roudin has been spreading a story that you're married and repudiate your wife. It'd be good to fight it now before it gets going. There's no truth in it, of course," he added with an opposite look in his eye, for he remembered the letter Carnac received one day in the office and his own conclusion then.

"It's a lie, and I'll go and see Roudin at once. . . . You've been a good friend to me in the fight, Tarboe, and I'd like a talk when it's all over."

"That'll be easy enough, Grier. Don't make any mistake—this is a big thing you're doing; and if a Protestant Britisher can beat a Catholic Frenchman in his own habitant seat, it's the clinching of Confederation. We'll talk it over when you've won."

"You think I'm going to win?" asked Carnac

with thumping heart, for the stark uncertainty seemed to overpower him, though he smiled.

"If the *lie* doesn't get going too hard, I'm sure you'll pull it off. There's my hand on it. I'd go down with you to the mill, but you should go alone. You've got your own medicine to give. Go it alone, Grier. It's best—and good luck to you!"

A few moments later Carnac was in the yard of the mill, and in one corner he saw the man he took to be Roudin talking to a group of workmen. He hurried over, and heard Roudin declaring that he, Carnac, was secretly married to a woman whom he repudiated, and was that the kind of man to have as member of Parliament? Presently Roudin was interrupted by cheers from supporters of Carnac, and he saw it was due to Carnac's arrival. Roudin had courage. He would not say behind a man's back what he would not say to his face.

"I was just telling my friends here, m'sieu', that you was married, and you didn't acknowledge your wife. Is that so?"

Carnac's first impulse was to say *No*, but he gained time by challenging.

"Why do you say such things to injure me? Is that what Monsieur Barouche tells you to say?"

Roudin shook his head protestingly.

"If M. Barouche does that he oughtn't to

hold the seat, he ought to be sent back to his law offices."

"No, I didn't hear it from M'sieu' Barouche. I get it from better hands than his," answered Roudin.

"Better hands than his, eh? From the lady herself, perhaps?"

"Yes, from the lady herself, m'sieu'."

"Then bring the lady here and let us have it out, monsieur. It's a lie. Bring the lady here, if you know her."

Roudin shrugged a shoulder. "I know what I know, and I don't have to do what you say—*bien sûr!*"

"Then you're not honest. You do me harm by a story like that. I challenge you, and you don't respond. You say you know the woman, then produce her—there's no time to be lost. The poll closes in four hours. If you make such statements, prove them. It isn't playing the game—do you think so, messieurs?" he added to the crowd which had grown in numbers.

At that moment a man came running from the entrance towards Carnac. It was Denzil.

"A letter for you, an important letter," he kept crying as he came nearer. He got the letter into Carnac's hands.

"Read it at once, m'sieu'," Denzil said urgently.

Carnac saw the handwriting was Junia's, and

he tore open the letter, which held the blue certificate of the marriage with Luzanne. He conquered the sudden dimness of his eyes, and read the letter. It said :

" DEAR CARNAC,—

" I hear from Mr. Tarboe of the lies being told against you. Here is the proof. She has gone. She told it to Barode Barouche, and he was to have announced it last night, but I saw her first. You can now deny the story. The game is yours. Tell the man Roudin to produce the woman—she is now in New York, if the train was not lost. I will tell you all when you are M.P.

" JUNIA."

With a smile, Carnac placed the certificate in his pocket. How lucky it was he had denied the marriage and demanded that Roudin produce the woman ! He was safe now, safe and free. It was no good any woman declaring she was married to him if she could not produce the proof—and the proof was in his pocket and the woman was in New York.

" Come, Monsieur Roudin, tell us about the woman, and bring her to the polls. There is yet time, if you're telling the truth. Who is she ? Where does she live ? What's her name ? "

" Mrs. Carnac Grier—that's her name," responded Roudin with a snarl, and the crowd

laughed, for Carnac's boldness gave them a sense of security.

"What was her maiden name?"

"Larue," answered the other sharply.

"What was her Christian name, since you know so much, monsieur?"

He had no fear now, and his question was audacity, but he knew the game was with him, and he took the risks. His courage had reward, for Roudin made no reply. Carnac turned to the crowd.

"Here's a man tried to ruin my character by telling a story about a woman whose name he doesn't know. Is that playing the game after the rules—I ask you?"

There were cries from the crowd supporting him, and he grew bolder. "Let the man tell his story and I'll meet it here face to face. I fear nothing. Out with your story, monsieur. Tell us why you haven't brought her into the daylight, why she isn't claiming her husband at the polls. What's the story? Let's have it now."

The truth was, Roudin dared not tell what he knew. It was based wholly on a talk he had partly overheard between Barode Barouche and Luzanne in the house where she stayed and where he, Roudin, lodged. It had not been definite, and he had no proofs. He was a sensationalist, and he had had his hour and could say no more,

because of Barode Barouche. He could not tell the story of his overhearing, for why had not Barouche told the tale? With an oath he turned away and disappeared. As he went he could hear his friends cheering Carnac.

"Carnac Grier lies, but he wins the game," he said.

"GRIER'S in—Carnac's in—Carnac's got the seat!"

This was the cry heard in the streets at ten-thirty at night when Carnac was found elected by a majority of one hundred and ten.

Carnac had not been present at the counting of the votes until the last quarter-hour, and then he was told by his friends of the fluctuations of the counting—how at one time his defeat seemed assured, since Barode Barouche was six hundred ahead, and his own friends had almost given up hope. One of his foes, however, had no assurance of Carnac's defeat. He was too old an agent to believe in returns till all were in, and he knew of the two incidents by which Carnac had got advantage—at the Island over Eugene Grandois, and at the Mill over Roudin the very day of polling; and it was at these points he had hoped to score for Barouche a majority. He watched Barouche, and he deplored the triumph in his eye, for there was no surety of winning; his own was the scientific mind without emotions

or passions. He did not "enthuse," and he did not despair; he kept his head.

Presently there were fluctuations in favour of Carnac, and the six hundred by which Barouche led were steadily swallowed up; he saw that among the places which gave Carnac a majority were the Island and the Mill. He was also nonplussed by Carnac's coolness. For a man with an artist's temperament, he was well-controlled. When he came into the room, he went straight to Barouche and shook hands with him, saying they'd soon offer congratulations to the winner. As the meeting took place the agent did not fail to note how alike in build and manner were the two men, how similar were their gestures.

When at last the Returning Officer announced the result, the agent dared not glance at his defeated chief. Yet he saw him go to Carnac and offer a hand.

"We've had a straight fight, Grier, and I hope you'll have luck in Parliament. This is no place for me. It's your game, and I'll eat my sour bread alone."

He motioned to the window with a balcony, beyond which were the shouting thousands. Then he smiled at Carnac, and in his heart he was glad he had not used the facts about Luzanne before the public. The boy's face was so glowing that his own youth came back, and a better spirit took residence in him. He gave thanks to the Return-

ing Officer, and then, with his agent, left the building by the back door. He did not wait for the announcement of Carnac's triumph, and he knew his work was done for ever in public life.

Soon he had said his say at the club where his supporters, discomfited, awaited him. To demands for a speech, he said he owed to his workers what he could never repay, and that the long years they had kept him in Parliament would be the happiest memory of his life.

"We'll soon have you back," shouted a voice from the crowd.

"It's been a good fight," said Barode Barouche. Somehow the fact he had not beaten his son by the story of his secret marriage was the sole comfort he had. He advised his followers to "play the game" and let the new member have his triumph without belittlement.

"It's the best fight I've had in thirty years," he said at last, "and I've been beaten fairly."

In another hour he was driving into the country on his way to visit an old ex-Cabinet Minister, who had been his friend through all the years of his Parliamentary life. It did not matter that the hour was late. He knew the veteran would be waiting for him, and unprepared for the bad news he brought. The night was spent in pain of mind, and the comfort the ex-Minister gave him, that a seat would be found for him by the Government, gave him no thrill. He knew he

had enemies in the Government, that the Prime Minister was the friend of the successful only, and that there were others, glad of his defeat, who would be looking for his place. Also he was sure he had injured the chances of the Government by the defeat of his policy.

As though Creation was in league against him, a heavy storm broke about two o'clock, and he went to bed cursed by torturing thoughts. "Chickens come home to roost——" Why did that ancient phrase keep ringing in his ears when he tried to sleep? Beaten by his illegitimate son at the polls, the victim of his own wrong-doing—the sacrifice of penalty! He knew that his son, inheriting his own political gifts, had done what could have been done by no one else. All the years passed since Carnac was begotten laid their deathly hands upon him, and he knew he could never recover from this defeat. How much better it would have been if he had been struck twenty-seven years ago!

Youth, ambition and resolve would have saved him from the worst then. Age has its powers, but it has its defects, and he had no hope that his own defects would be wiped out by luck at the polls. Spirit was gone out of him, longing for the future had no place in his mind; in the world of public work he was dead and buried. How little he had got from all his life! How few friends he had, and how few he was entitled to

have! This is one of the punishments that selfishness and wrong-doing brings; it gives no insurance for the hours of defeat and loss. Well, wealth and power, the friends so needed in dark days, had not been made, and Barode Barouche realized he had naught left. He had been too successful from the start; he had had all his own way; and he had taken no pains to make or keep friends. He well knew there was no man in the Cabinet or among his colleagues that would stir to help him—he had stirred to help no man in all the years he had served the public. It was no good only to serve the public, for democracy is a weak stick on which to lean. One must stand by individuals or there is no defence against the malicious foes that follow the path of defeat, that ambush the way. It is the personal friends made in one's own good days that watch the path and clear away the ambushers. It is not big influential friends that are so important—the little unknown man may be as useful as the big boss in the mill of life; and if one stops to measure one's friends by their position, the end is no more sure than if one makes no friends at all.

"There's nothing left for me in life—nothing at all," he said as he tossed in bed while the thunder roared and the storm beat down the shrubs. "How futile life is—'Youth's a dream, middle age a delusion, old age a mistake!'"

he kept repeating to himself in quotation. "What does one get out of it? Nothing—nothing—nothing! It's all a poor show at the best, and yet—is it? Is it all so bad? Is it all so poor and gaunt and hopeless? Isn't there anything in it for the man who gives and does his best?"

Suddenly there came upon him the conviction that life is only futile to the futile, that it is only a failure to those who prove themselves incompetent, selfish and sordid; but to those who live life as it ought to be lived, there is no such thing as failure, or defeat, or penalty, or remorse or punishment. Because the straight man has only good ends to serve, he has no failures; though he may have disappointments, he has no defeats; for the true secret of life is to be content with what is decreed, to earn bread and make store only as conscience directs, and not to set one's heart on material things.

He got out of bed soon after daylight, dressed, and went to the stable and hitched his horse to the buggy. The world was washed clean, that was sure. It was muddy under foot, but it was a country where the roads soon dried, and he would suffer little inconvenience from the storm. He bade his host good-bye and drove away intent to reach the city in time for breakfast. He found the roads heavy, and the injury of the storm was everywhere to be seen. Yet it all did not distract him, for he was thinking hard of the things that

lay ahead of him to do—the heart-breaking things that his defeat meant to him.

At last he approached a bridge across a stream which had been badly swept by the storm. It was one of the covered bridges not uncommon in Canada. It was not long, as the river was narrow, and he did not see that the middle pier of the bridge had been badly injured. Yet as he entered the bridge, his horse still trotting, he was conscious of a hollow, semi-thunderous noise which seemed not to belong to the horse's hoofs and the iron wheels of the carriage. He raised his eyes to see that the other end of the bridge was clear, and at that moment he was conscious of an unsteady motion of the bridge, of a wavering of the roof, and then, before he had time to do aught, he saw the roof and the sides and the floor of the bridge collapse and sink slowly down.

With a cry, he sprang from the carriage to retrace his way ; but he only climbed up a ladder that grew every instant steeper ; and all at once he was plunged downwards after his horse and carriage into the stream. He could swim, and as he swept down this thought came to him—that he might be able to get the shore, as he heard the cries of people on the bank. It was a hope that died at the moment of its birth, however, for he was struck by a falling timber on the head.

When, an hour later, he was found in an eddy of the river by the shore, he was dead, and his

finders could only compose his limbs decently. But in the afternoon, the papers of Montreal had the following head-lines :

DEFEAT AND DEATH OF BARODE BAROUCHE
THE END OF A LONG AND GREAT CAREER

As soon as Carnac Grier heard the news, he sent a note to his mother telling her all he knew. When she read the letter, she sank to the floor, overcome. Her son had triumphed indeed.

Chapter XXVIII — *A Woman writes a Letter*

THE whole country rang with the defeat and death of Barode Barouche, and the triumph of the disinherited son of John Grier. Newspapers drew differing lessons from the event, but all admitted that Carnac, as a great fighter, was entitled to success. The Press were friendly to the memory of Barode Barouche, and some unduly praised his work, and only a few disparaged his career.

When news of the tragedy came to Mrs. Grier, she was reading in the papers of Carnac's victory, and in her mind was an agonizing triumph, pride in a stern blow struck for punishment. The event was like none she could have imagined.

It was at this moment the note came from Carnac telling of Barouche's death, and it dropped from her hand to the floor. The horror of it smote her being, and, like one struck by lightning, she sank to the floor unconscious. The thing had hit her where soul and body were closely knit ; and she had realized for the first time how we all must pay to the last penny for every offence we commit against the laws of life and nature. Barode Barouche had paid and she must pay—

she also who had sinned with him must pay. But had she not paid?

For long she lay unconscious, but at last the servant, unknowing why she was not called to remove the breakfast things, found her huddled on the floor, her face like that of death. The servant felt her heart, saw she was alive, and worked with her till consciousness came back.

"That's right, ma'am, keep up heart. I'll send for M'sieu' Carnac at once, and we'll have you all right pretty quick."

But Mrs. Grier forbade Carnac to be sent for, and presently in her bed, declined to have the doctor brought. "It's no use," she said. "A doctor can do no good. I need rest, that's all."

Then she asked for notepaper and pen and ink, and so she was left alone. She must tell her beloved son why it was there never had been, and never could be, understanding between John Grier and himself. She had arrived at that point where naught was to be gained by further concealment. So through long hours she struggled with her problem, and she was glad Carnac did not come during the vexing day. He had said when he sent her word of his victory, that he feared he would not be able to see her the next day at all, as he had so much to do. She even declined to see Junia when she came, sending word that she was in bed, indisposed.

The letter she wrote ran thus:

"My Beloved Carnac,—

"Your news of the death of Barode Barouche has shocked me. You will understand when I tell you I have lived a life of agony ever since you became a candidate. This is why: *you were fighting the man who gave you to the world.*

"Let me tell you how. I loved John Grier when I married him, and longed to make my life fit in with his. But that could not easily be, for his life was wedded to his business, and he did not believe in women. To him they were incapable of the real business of life, and were only meant to be housekeepers to men who make the world go round. So, unintentionally, he neglected me, and I was young and comely then, so the world said, and I was unwise and thoughtless.

"Else, I should not have listened to Barode Barouche, who, one summer in camp on the St. Lawrence River near our camp, opened up for me new ways of thought, and springs of feeling. He had the gifts that have made you what you are, a figure that all turn twice to see. He had eloquence, he was thoughtful in all the little things which John Grier despised. In the solitude of the camp he wound himself about my life, and roused an emotion for him false to duty. And so one day—one single day, for never but the once was I weak, yet that was enough, God knows. . . . He went away because I would not see him again;

because I would not repeat the offence which gave me years of sorrow and remorse.

"After you became a candidate, he came and offered to marry me, tried to reopen the old emotion; but I would have none of it. He was convinced he would defeat you, and he wanted to avoid fighting you. But when I said, 'Give up the seat to him,' he froze. Of course, his seat belonged to his party and not alone to himself; but that was the test I put him to, and the answer he gave was, 'You want me to destroy my career in politics! That is your proposal, is it?' He was not honest either in life or conduct. I don't think he ever was sorry for me or for you, until perhaps these last few weeks; but I have sorrowed ever since the day you came to me—every day, every hour, every minute; and the more because I could not tell John Grier the truth.

"Perhaps I ought to have told the truth long ago, and faced the consequences. It might seem now that I would have ruined my home life, and yours, and Barode Barouche's, and John Grier's life if I had told the truth; but who knows! There are many outcomes to life's tragedies, and none might have been what I fancied. It is little comfort that Barode Barouche has now given all for payment of his debt. It gives no peace of mind. And it may be you will think I ought not to tell you the truth. I don't *know*, but I feel you will not misunderstand. I tell you my

story, so that you may again consider if it is not better to face the world with the truth about Luzanne. We can live but once, and it is to our good if we refuse the secret way.

"It is right you should know the truth about your birth, but it is not right you should declare it to all the world now. That was my duty long ago, and I did not do it. It is not your duty, and you must not do it. Barode Barouche is gone; John Grier has gone; and it would only hurt Fabian and his wife and you to tell it now. You inherit Barode Barouche's gifts, and you have his seat, you represent his people—and they are your people too. You have French blood in your veins, and you have a chance to carry on with honour what he did with skill. Forgive me, if you can.

"Your loving

"MOTHER.

"P.S. Do nothing till you see me."

RETURNING from Barode Barouche's home to his mother's House on the Hill, Carnac was in a cheerless mood. With Barouche's death to Carnac it was as though he himself had put aside for ever the armour of war, for Barouche was the only man in the world who had ever tempted him to fight, or whom he had fought.

There was one thing he must do: he must go to Junia, tell her he loved her, and ask her to be his wife. She had given him the fatal blue certificate of his marriage and the marriage could now be ended with Luzanne's consent, for she would not fight the divorce he must win soon. He could now tell the truth, if need be, to his constituents, for there would be time enough to recover his position, if it were endangered, before the next election came, and Junia would be by his side to help him! Junia—would she, after all, marry him now? He would soon know. To-night he must spend with his mother, but to-morrow he would see Junia and learn his fate, and know about Luzanne. Luzanne had been in Montreal, had been ready to destroy his chance

at the polls, and Junia had stopped it. How? Well, he should soon know. But now, at first, for his mother.

When he entered the House on the Hill, he had a sudden shiver. Somehow, the room where his mother had sat for so many years, and where he had last seen his father, John Grier, had a coldness of the tomb. There was a letter on the centre table standing against the lamp. He saw it was in his mother's handwriting, and addressed to himself.

He tore it open, and began to read. Presently his cheeks turned pale. More than once he put it down, for it seemed impossible to go on, but with courage he took it up again and read on to the end.

"God—God in Heaven!" he broke out when he had finished it. For a long time he walked the floor, trembling in body and shaking in spirit. "Now I understand everything," he said at last aloud in a husky tone. "Now I see what I could not see—ah yes, I see at last!"

For another time of silence and turmoil he paced the floor, then he stopped short. "I'm glad they both are dead," he said wearily. Thinking of Barode Barouche, he had a great bitterness. "To treat any woman so—how glad I am I fought him! He learned that such vile acts come home at last to the family roof-tree."

Then he thought of John Grier. "I loathed

him and loved him always," he said with terrible remorse in his tone. " He used my mother badly, and yet he was himself; he was the soul that he was born, a genius in his own way, a neglecter of all that makes life beautiful—and yet himself, always himself. He never pottered. He was real—a pirate, a plunderer, but he was real. And he cared for me, and would have had me in the business if he could. Perhaps John Grier knows the truth now! . . . I hope he does. For, if he does, he'll see that I was not to blame for what I did, that it was Fate behind me. He was a big man, and if I'd worked with him, we'd have done big things, bigger than he did, and that was big enough."

" Do nothing till you see me," his mother had written in a postscript to her letter, and, with a moroseness at his heart and scorn of Barouche at his lips, he went slowly up to his mother's room. At her door he paused. But the woman was his mother, and it must be faced. After all, she had kept faith ever since he was born. He believed that. She had been an honest wife ever since that fatal summer twenty-seven years before.

" She has suffered," he said, and knocked at her door.

An instant later he was inside the room. There was only a dim light, but his mother was sitting up in her bed, a gaunt and yet beautiful, sad-eyed figure of a woman. For a moment Carnac paused.

As he stood motionless, the face of the woman became more drawn and haggard, the eyes more deeply mournful. Her lips opened as though she would speak, but no sound came, and Carnac could hardly bear to look at her. Yet he did look, and all at once there rushed into his heart the love he had ever felt for her. After all, he was her son, and she had not wronged him since his birth. And he who had wronged her and himself was dead, his pathway closed for ever to the deeds of life and time. As he looked, his eyes filled with tears and his lips compressed. At last he came to the bed. Her letter was in his hand.

"I have read it, mother."

She made no reply, but his face was good for her eyes to see. It had no hatred or repulsion.

"I know everything now," he added. "I see it all, and I understand all you have suffered these many years."

"Oh, my son, you forgive your mother?" She was trembling with emotion.

He leaned over and caught her wonderful head to his shoulder. "I love you, mother," he said gently. "I need you—need you more than I ever did."

"I have no heart any more, and I fear for you——"

"Why should you fear for me? You wanted

me to beat him, didn't you?" His face grew hard, his lips became scornful. "Wasn't it the only way to make him settle his account?"

"Yes, the only way. It was not that I fear for you in politics. I was sure you would win the election. It was not that, it was the girl."

"*That's* all finished. I am free at last," he said. He held the blue certificate before her eyes.

Her face was deadly pale, her eyes expanded, her breath came sharp and quick. "How was it done—how was it done? Was she here in Montreal?"

"I don't know how it was done, but she was here, and Junia got this from her. I shan't know how till I've seen Junia."

"Junia is the best friend," said the stricken woman gently, "in all the world; she's——"

"She's so good a friend she must be told the truth," he said firmly.

"Oh, not while I live! I could not bear that——"

"How could I ask Junia to marry me and not tell her all the truth—mother, can't you see?"

The woman's face flushed scarlet. "Ah, yes, I see, my boy—I see."

"Haven't we had enough of secrecy—in your letter you lamented it! If it was right for you to be secret all these years, is it not a hundred

times right now for me to tell you the truth. . . . I have no name—no name," he added, tragedy in his tone.

"You have my name. You may say I have no right to it, but it is the only name I can carry; they both are dead, and I must keep it. It wrongs no one living but you, and you have no hatred of me: you think I do not wrong you—isn't that so?"

His cheek was hot with feeling. "Yes, that's true," he said. "You must still keep your married name."

Then a great melancholy took hold of him, and he could hardly hide it from her. She saw how he was moved, and she tried to comfort him.

"You think Junia will resent it all? . . . But that isn't what a girl does when she loves. You have done no wrong; your hands are clean."

"But I must tell her all. Tarboe is richer, he has an honest birth, he is a big man and will be bigger still. She likes him, she——"

"She will go to you without a penny, my son!"

"It will be almost without a penny, if you don't live," he said with a faint smile. "I can't paint—for a time anyhow. I can't earn money for a time. I've only my salary as a Member of Parliament and the little that's left of my legacy;

therefore, I must draw on you. And I don't seem to mind drawing upon you; I never did."

She smiled with an effort. "If I can help you, I shall justify living on."

Chapter XXX — *Tarboe has a Dream*

THE day Carnac was elected it was clear to Tarboe that he must win Junia at once, if he was ever to do so, for Carnac's new honours would play a great part in influencing her. In his mind, it was now or never for himself; he must bring affairs to a crisis.

Junia's father was poor, but the girl had given their home an air of comfort and an art belonging to larger spheres. The walls were covered with brown paper, and on it were a few of her own water-colour drawings, and a few old engravings of merit. Chintz was the cover on windows and easy chairs, and in a corner of the parlour was a chintz-covered lounge where she read of an evening. So it was that, with Carnac elected and Barode Barouche buried, she sat with one of Disraeli's novels in her hand busy with the future. She saw for Carnac a safe career, for his two chief foes were gone—Luzanne Larue and Barode Barouche. Now she understood why Carnac had never asked her to be his wife. She had had no word with Carnac since his election—only a letter to thank her for the marriage certifi-

cate and to say that after M. Barouche was buried he would come to her, if he might. He did say, however, in the letter that he owed her his election.

" You've done a great, big thing for me, dearest friend, and I am your ever grateful Carnac "—that was the way he had put it. Twice she had gone to visit his mother, and had been told that Mrs. Grier was too ill to see her—overstrain, the servant had said. She could not understand being denied admittance ; but it did not matter, for one day Mrs. Grier should know how she—Junia—had saved her son's career.

So she thought, as she gazed before her into space from the chintz-covered lounge on the night of the day Barode Barouche was buried. There was a smell of roses in the room. She had gathered many of them that afternoon. She caught a bud from a bunch on a table, and fastened it in the bosom of her dress. Somehow, as she did it, she had a feeling she would like to clasp a man's head to her breast where the rose was—one of those wild thoughts that come to the sanest woman at times. She was captured by the excitement in which she had moved during the past month —far more now than she had been in all the fight itself.

There came a knock at the outer door, and before that of her own room opened, she recognized the step of the visitor. So it was Tarboe

had come. He remembered that day in the street when he met Junia, and was shown there were times when a woman could not be approached with emotion. He had waited till the day he knew she was alone, for he had made a friend of her servant by judicious gifts of money.

"I hope you're glad to see me," he said with an uncertain smile, as he saw her surprise.

"I hope I am," she replied, and motioned him to a seat. He chose a high-backed chair with a wide seat near the lounge. He made a motion of humorous dissent to her remark, and sat down.

"Well, we pulled it off somehow, didn't we?" she said. "Carnac Grier is M.P."

"And his foe is in his grave," remarked Tarboe dryly.

"Providence pays debts that ought to be paid. This election has settled a lot of things," she returned with a smile.

"I suppose it has, and I've come here to try and find one of the settlements."

"Well, find them," she retorted.

"I said *one* of the settlements only. I have to be accurate in my life."

"I'm glad to hear of it. You helped Mr. Grier win his election. It was splendid of you. Think of it, Mr. Tarboe, Carnac Grier is beginning to get even with his foes."

"I'm not a foe—if that's what you mean. I've proved it."

She smiled provokingly. "You've proved only you're not an absolute devil, that's all. You've not proved yourself a real man—not yet. Do you think it paid your debt to Carnac Grier that you helped get him into Parliament?"

His face became a little heated. "I'll prove to you and to the world that I'm not an absolute devil in the Grier interests. I didn't steal the property. I tried to induce John Grier to leave it to Carnac or his mother, for if he'd left it to Mrs. Grier it would have come to Carnac. He did not do it that way, though. He left it to me. Was I to blame for that?"

"Perhaps not, but you could have taken Carnac in, or given up the property to him—the rightful owner. You could have done that. But you were thinking of yourself altogether."

"Not altogether. In the first place, I am bound to keep my word to John Grier. Besides, if Carnac had inherited, the property would have got into difficulties—there were things only John Grier and I understood, and Carnac would have been floored."

"Wouldn't you still have been there?"

"Who knows! Who can tell! Maybe not!"

"Carnac Grier is a very able man."

"But of the ablest. He'll be a success in Parliament. He'll play a big part; he won't puddle about. I meant there was a risk in letting Carnac run the business at the moment, and——"

"And there never was with you!"

"None. My mind had grasped all John Grier intended, and I have the business at my fingers' ends. There was no risk with me. I've proved it. I've added five per cent to the value of the business since John Grier died. I can double the value of it in twenty years—and easy at that."

"If you make up your mind to do it, you will," she said with admiration, for the man was persuasive, and he was playing a game in which he was a master.

Her remarks were alive with banter, for Tarboe's humour was a happiness to her.

"How did I buy your approval?" he questioned alertly.

"By ability to put a bad case in a good light. You had your case, and you have made a real success. If you keep on you may become a Member of Parliament some day!"

He laughed. "Your gifts have their own way of stinging. I don't believe I could be elected to Parliament. I haven't the trick of popularity of that kind."

Many thoughts flashed through Tarboe's mind. If he married her now, and the truth was told about the wills and the law gave Carnac his rights, she might hate him for not having told her when he proposed. So it was that in his desire for her life as his own, he now determined there should be no second will. In any case,

Carnac had enough to live on through his mother. Also, he had capacity to support himself.

There was a touch of ruthlessness in Tarboe. No one would ever guess what the second will contained—no one. The bank would have a letter saying where the will was to be found, but if it was not there!

He would ask Junia to be his wife now, while she was so friendly. Her eyes were shining, her face was alive with feeling, and he was aware that the best chances of his life had come to win her. If she was not now in the hands of Carnac, his chances were good. Yet there was the tale of the secret marriage—the letter he saw Carnac receive in John Grier's office! The words of the ancient Greek came to him as he looked at her: "He who will not strike when the hour comes shall wither like a flower, and his end be that of the chaff of the field."

His face flushed with feeling, his eyes grew bright with longing, his tongue was loosed to the enterprise.

"Do you dream, and remember your dreams?" he asked with a thrill in his voice. "Do you?"

"I don't dream often, but I sometimes remember my dreams."

"I dream much, and one dream I have constantly."

"What is it?" she asked with anticipation.

"It is the capture of a wild bird in a garden

—in a cultivated garden where there are no nests, no coverts for the secret invaders. I dream that I pursue the bird from flower-bed to flower-bed, from bush to bush, along paths and the green-covered walls; and I am not alone in my chase, for there are others pursuing. It is a bitter struggle to win the wild thing. And why? Because there is pursuing one of the pursuers another bird of red plumage. Do you understand?"

He paused, and saw her face was full of colour and her eyes had a glow. Every nerve in her was pulsing hard.

"Tell me," she said presently, "whom do you mean by the bird of red plumage? Is it a mere figure of speech? Or has it a real meaning?"

"It has a real meaning."

He rose to his feet, bent over her and spoke hotly. "Junia, the end of my waiting has come. I want you as I never wanted anything in my life. I must know the truth. I love you, Junia. I have loved you from the first moment I saw you, and nothing is worth while with you not in it. Let us work together. It is a big, big game I'm playing."

"Yes, it's a big game you're playing," she said with emotion. "It is a big, big game, and, all things considered, you should win it, but I doubt you will. I feel there are matters bigger than the game, or than you, or me, or anyone

else. And I do not believe in your bird of red plumage; I don't believe it exists. It may have done so, but it doesn't now."

She also got to her feet, and Tarboe was so near her she could feel his hot breath on her cheek.

"No, it doesn't exist now," she repeated, "and the pursuer is not pursued. You have more imagination than belongs to a mere man of business—you're an inexperienced poet."

He caught her hand and drew it to his breast. "The only poetry I know is the sound of your voice in the wind, the laughter of your lips in the sun, the delight of your body in the heavenly flowers. Yes, I've drunk you in the wild woods; I've trailed you on the river; I've heard you in the grinding storm—always the same, the soul of all beautiful things. Junia, you shall not put me away from you. You shall be mine, and you and I together shall win our way to great ends. We will have opportunity, health, wealth and prosperity. Isn't it worth while?"

"Yes," she answered after a moment, "but it cannot be with you, my friend."

She withdrew her fingers and stepped back; she made a gesture of friendly repulsion. "You have said all that can be said, you have gifts greater than you yourself believe; and I have been tempted; but it is no use, there are deeper things than luxuries and the magazines of merchandise—much deeper. No, no, I cannot marry

you ; if you were as rich as Midas, as powerful as Cæsar, I would not marry you—never, never, never."

" You love another," he said boldly. " You love Carnac Grier."

" I do not love you—isn't that enough ? "

" Almost—almost enough," he said, embarrassed.

ALL Junia had ever felt of the soul of things was upon her as she arranged flowers and listened to the church bells ringing.

"They seem to be always ringing," she said to herself, as she lightly touched the roses. "It must be a Saint's Day—where's Denzil? Ah, there he is in the garden! I'll ask him."

Truth is, she was deceiving herself. She wanted to talk with Denzil about all that had happened of late, and he seemed, somehow, to avoid her. Perhaps he feared she had given her promise to Tarboe who had, as Denzil knew, spent an hour with her the night before. As this came to Denzil's brain, he felt a shiver go through him. Just then he heard Junia's footsteps, and saw her coming towards him.

"Why are the bells ringing so much, Denzil? Is it a Saint's Day?" she asked.

He took off his hat. "Yes, ma'm'selle, it is a Saint's Day," and he named it. "There were lots of neighbours at early Mass, and some have gone to the Church of St. Anne de Beaupré at Beaupré, them that's got sickness."

" Yes, Beaupré is as good as Lourdes, I'm sure. Why didn't you go, Denzil ? "

" Why should I go, ma'm'selle—I ain't sick—ah, bah ! "

" I thought you were. You've been in low spirits ever since our election, Denzil."

" Nothing strange in that, ma'm'selle. I've been thinking of him that's gone."

" You mean Monsieur Barouche, eh ? "

" Not of M'sieu' Barouche, but of the father to the man that beat M'sieu' Barouche."

" Why should you be thinking so much of John Grier these days ? "

" Isn't it the right time ? His son that he threw off without a penny has proved himself as big a man as his father—ah, surelee ! M'sieu' left behind him a will that gave all he had to a stranger. His own son was left without a sou. There he is now," he added, nodding towards the street.

Junia saw Carnac making his way towards her house. " Well, I'll talk with him," she said, and her face flushed. She knew she must give account of her doings with Luzanne Larue.

A few moments later in the house, her hand lay in that of Carnac, and his eyes met hers.

" It's all come our way, Junia," he remarked gaily, though there was sadness in his tone.

" It's as you wanted it. You won."

"Thanks to you, Junia," and he took from his pocket the blue certificate.

"That—oh, that was not easy to get," she said with agitation. "She had a bad purpose, that girl."

"She meant to announce it?"

"Yes, through Barode Barouche. He agreed to that."

Carnac flushed. "He agreed to that—you know it?"

"Yes. The day you were made candidate she arrived here; and the next morning she went to Barode Barouche and told her story. He bade her remain secret till the time was ripe, and he was to be the judge of that. He was waiting for the night before the election. Then he was going to strike you and win!"

"She told you that—Luzanne told you that?"

"And much else. Besides, she told me you had saved her life from the street-cars; that you had played fair at the start."

"First and last I played fair," he said indignantly.

Her eyes were shining. "Not from first to last, Carnac. You ought not to have painted her, or made much of her and then thrown her over. She knew—of course she knew, after a time, that you did not mean to propose to her, and all the evil in her came out. Then she willed to have you in spite of yourself, believing, if you were

married, her affection would win you in the end. There it was—and you were to blame."

"But why should you defend her, Junia?"

Her tongue became bitter now. "Just as you would, if it was some one else and not yourself."

His head was sunk on his breast, his eyes were burning. "It was a horrible thing for Barouche to plan."

"Why so horrible? If you were hiding a marriage for whatever reason, it should be known to all whose votes you wanted."

"Barouche was the last man on earth to challenge me, for he had a most terrible secret."

"What was it?" Her voice had alarm, for she had never seen Carnac so disturbed.

"*He was fighting his own son—and he knew it!*"

The words came in broken accents.

"He was fighting his own son, and he knew it! You mean to say that!" Horror was in her voice.

"I mean that the summer before I was born ——" He told her the story as his mother had told it to him. Then at last he said:

"And now you know Barode Barouche got what he deserved. He ruined my mother's life; he died the easiest death such a man could die. He has also spoiled my life."

"Nothing can spoil your life except yourself,"

she declared firmly, and she laid a hand upon his arm. "Who told you all this—and when?"

"My mother in a letter last night. I had a talk with her afterwards."

"Who else knows?"

"Only you."

"And why did you tell me?"

"Because I want you to know why our ways must for ever lie apart."

"I don't grasp what you mean," she declared in a low voice.

"You don't grasp why, loving you, I didn't ask you to marry me long ago; but you found out for yourself from the one who was responsible, and freed me and saved me; and now you know I am an illegitimate son."

"And you want to cut me out of your life for a bad man's crime, not your own. . . . Listen, Carnac. Last night I told Mr. Tarboe I could not marry him. He is rich, he has control of a great business, he is a man of mark. Why do you suppose I did it, and for over two years have done the same?—for he has wanted me all that time. Does not a girl know when a *real* man wants her? And Luke Tarboe is a real man. He knows what he wants, and he goes for it, and little could stop him as he travels. Why do you suppose I did it?" Her face flushed, anger lit her eyes. "Because there was another man; but I've only just discovered he's a sham, with

no real love for me. It makes me sorry I ever knew him."

"Me—no real love for you! That's not the truth: it's because I have no real name to give you—that's why I've spoken as I have. Never have I cared for anyone except you, Junia, and I could have killed anyone that wronged you——"

"Kill yourself then," she flashed.

"Have I wronged you, Junia?"

"If you kept me waiting and prevented me from marrying a man I could have loved, if I hated you—if you did that, and then at last told me to go my ways, don't you think it wronging me! Don't be a fool, Carnac. You're not the only man on earth a good girl could love. I tell you, again and again I have been moved towards Luke Tarboe, and if he had had understanding of women, I should now be his wife."

"You tell me what I have always known," he interposed. "I knew Tarboe had a hold on your heart. I'm not so vain as to think I've always been the one man for you. I lived long in anxious fear, and——"

"And now you shut the door in my face! Looked at from any standpoint, it's ugly."

"I want you to have your due," he answered with face paler. "You're a great woman—the very greatest, and should have a husband born in honest wedlock."

"I'm the best judge of what I want," she

declared almost sharply, yet there was a smile at her lips. "Why, I suppose if John Grier had left you his fortune, you'd give it up; you'd say: 'I have no right to it,' and would give it to my brother-in-law, Fabian."

"I should."

"Yet Fabian had all he deserved from his father. He has all he should have, and he tried to beat his father in business. Carnac, don't be a bigger fool than there's any need to be. What is better than that John Grier's business should be in Tarboe's hands—or in yours? Remember, John Grier might have left it all to your mother, and, if he had, you'd have taken it, if she had left it to you. You'd have taken it even if you meant to give it away afterwards. There are hospitals to build. There are good and costly things to do for the State."

Suddenly she saw in his eyes a curious soft understanding, and she put her hand on his shoulder. "Carnac," she said gently, "great, great Carnac, won't you love me?"

For an instant he felt he must still put her from him, then he clasped her to his breast.

"But I really had to throw myself into your arms!" she said later.

Chapter XXXII — *"Halves, Pardner, Halves"*

IT was Thanksgiving Day, and all the people of the Province were *en fête*. The day was clear, and the air was thrilling with the spirits of the north country ; the vibrant sting of oxygen, the blessed resilience of the river and the hills.

It was a great day on the St. Lawrence, for men were preparing to go to the backwoods, to the "shanties," and hosts were busy with the crops, storing them ; while all in trade and industry were cheerful. There was a real *benedicite* in the air. In every church, Catholic and Protestant, hands of devoted workers had made beautiful altar and communion table, and lectern and pulpit, and in the Methodist chapel and the Presbyterian kirk, women had made the bare interiors ornate. The bells of all the churches were ringing, French and English ; and each priest, clergyman and minister was moving his people in his own way and by his own ritual to bless God and live.

In the city itself, the Mayor had arranged a festival in the evening, and there were gathered many people to give thanks. But those most con-

spicuous were the poor, unsophisticated habitants, who were on good terms with the refreshment provided. Their enthusiasm was partly due to the presence of Carnac Grier.

In his speech to the great crowd, among other things the Mayor said: "It is our happiness that we have here one whose name is familiar to all in French-Canada—that of the new Member of Parliament, Monsieur Carnac Grier. In Monsieur Grier we have a man who knows his own mind, and it is filled with the interests of the French as well as the English. He is young, he has power, and he will use his youth and power to advance the good of the whole country. May he live long!"

Carnac never spoke better in his life than in his brief reply. When he had finished, some one touched his arm. It was Luke Tarboe.

"A good speech, Grier. Can you give me a few moments?"

"Here?" asked Carnac, smiling.

"Not here, but in the building. There is a room where we can be alone, and I have to tell you something of great importance."

"Of great importance? Well, so have I to tell you, Tarboe."

A few minutes later they were in the Mayor's private parlour, hung with the portraits of past Governors and Mayors, and carrying over the door the coat-of-arms of the Province.

Presently Carnac said: "Let me give you my news first, Tarboe: I am to marry Junia Shale—and soon."

Tarboe nodded. "I expected that. She is worth the best the world can offer." There was a ring of honesty in his tone. "All the more reason why I should tell you what my news is, Carnac. I'm going to tell you what oughtn't yet to be told for another two years, but I feel it due you, for you were badly used, and so I break my word to your father."

Carnac's hand shot out in protest, but Tarboe took no notice. "I mean to tell you now in the hour of your political triumph that——"

"That I can draw on you for ten thousand dollars, perhaps?" shot out Carnac.

"Not for ten thousand, but in two years' time —or to-morrow—for a hundred and fifty times that if you want it."

Carnac shrugged his shoulders. "I don't know what you're driving at, Tarboe. Two years from now—or to-morrow—I can draw on you for a hundred and fifty times ten thousand dollars! What does that mean? Is it you're tired of the fortune left you by the biggest man industrially French-Canada has ever known?"

"I'll tell you the truth—I never had a permanent fortune, and I was never meant to have the permanent fortune, though I inherited by will. That was a matter between John Grier and myself.

There was another will made later, which left the business to some one else."

"I don't see."

"Of course you don't see, and yet you must."

Tarboe then told the story of the making of the two wills, doing justice to John Grier.

"He never did things like anyone else, and he didn't in dying. He loved you, Carnac. In spite of all he said and did he believed in you. He knew you had the real thing in you, if you cared to use it."

"Good God! Good God!" was all Carnac could at first say. "And you agreed to that?"

"What rights had I? None at all. I'll come out of it with over a half-million dollars—isn't that enough for a backwoodsman? I get the profits of the working for three years, and two hundred thousand dollars besides. I ought to be satisfied with that."

"Who knows of the will besides yourself?" asked Carnac sharply.

"No one. There is a letter to the bank simply saying that another will exists and where it is, but that's all."

"And you could have destroyed that will in my favour?"

"That's so." The voice of Tarboe was rough with feeling, his face grew dark. "More than once I willed to destroy it. It seemed at first I could make better use of the property than

you. The temptation was big, but I held my own, and now I've no fear of meeting anyone in Heaven or Hell. I've told you all. . . . Not quite all. There's one thing more. The thought of Junia Shale made me want to burn the second will, and I almost did it; but I'm glad I didn't."

"If you had, and had married her, you wouldn't have been happy. You can't be fooling a wife and be safe."

"I guess I know that—just in time. . . . I have a bad heart, Carnac. Your property came to me against my will through your father, but I wanted the girl you're going to marry, and against my will you won her. I fought for her. I thought there was a chance for me, because of the rumour you were secretly married——"

"I'll tell you about it, Tarboe, now. It was an ugly business." And he told in a dozen sentences the story of Luzanne and the false marriage.

When he had finished, Tarboe held out his hand. "It was a close shave, Carnac."

After a few further remarks, Tarboe said: "I thought there was a chance for me with Junia Shale, but there never was a real one, for she was yours from a child. You won her fairly, Carnac. If you'll come to the office to-morrow morning, I'll show you the will."

"You'll show me the will?" asked Carnac with an edge to his tone.

"What do you mean?" Tarboe did not like the look in the other's eyes.

"I mean, what you have you shall keep, and what John Grier leaves me by that will, I will not keep."

"You will inherit, and you shall keep."

"And turn you out!" remarked Carnac ironically.

"I needn't be turned out. I hoped you'd keep me as manager. Few could do it as well, and, as Member of Parliament, you haven't time yourself. I'll stay as manager at twenty thousand dollars a year, if you like."

Carnac could not tell him the real reason for declining to inherit, but that did not matter. Yet there flashed into his heart a love, which he had never felt so far in his life, for John Grier. The old man had believed he would come out right in the end, and so had left him the fortune in so odd a way. How Carnac longed to tell Tarboe the whole truth about Barode Barouche, and yet dare not! After a short time of hesitation and doubt, Carnac said firmly:

"I'll stand by the will, if you'll be my partner and manager, Tarboe. If you'll take half the business and manage the whole of it, I'll sell the half for a dollar to you, and we can run together to the end."

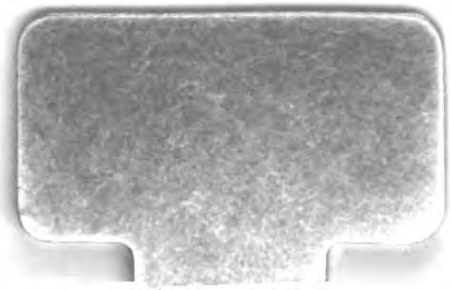
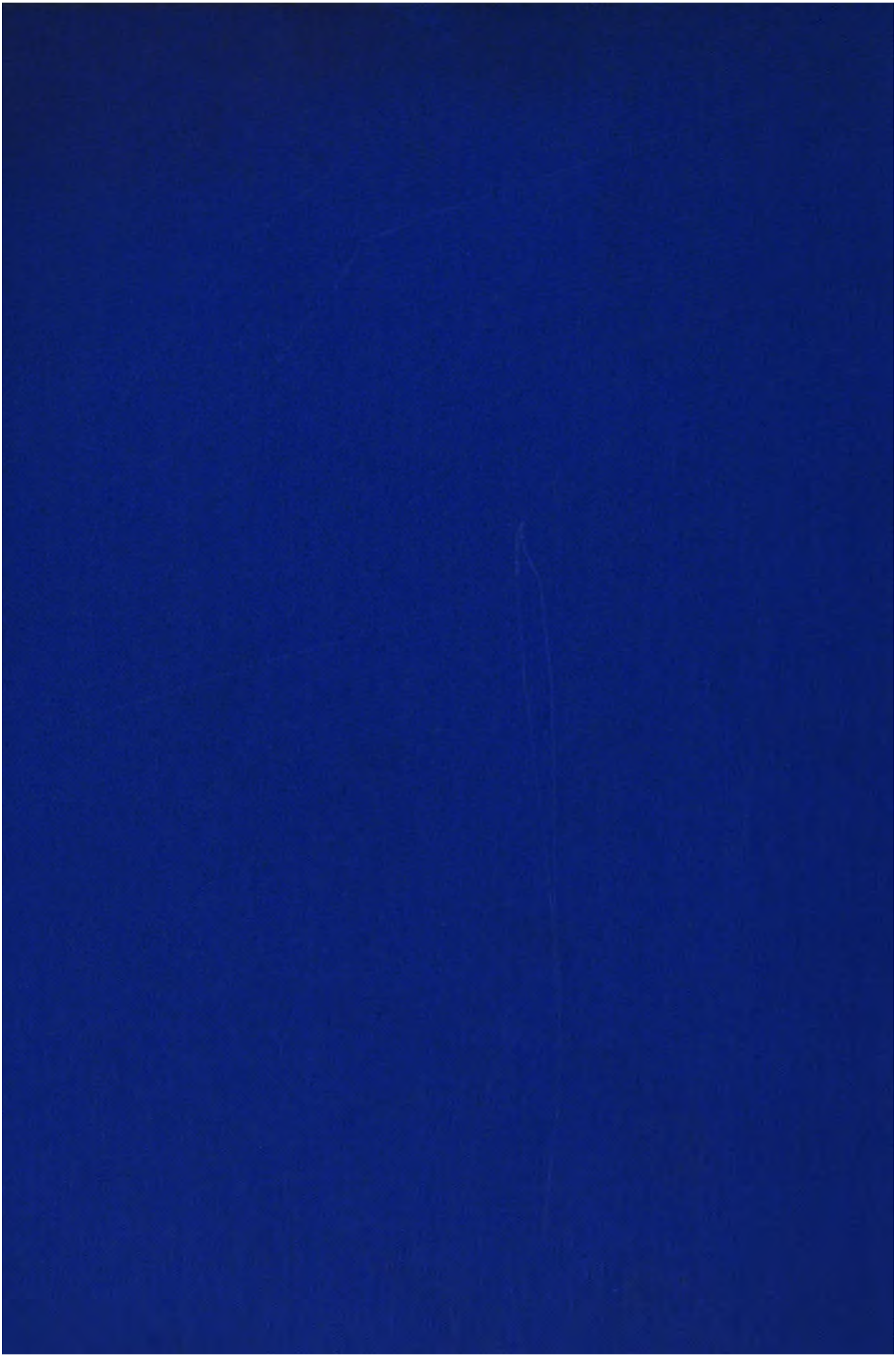
Tarboe's face lighted; there was triumph in his eyes. It was all better than he had dared to

hope, for he liked the business, and he loathed the way the world had looked at John Grier's will.

" Halves, pardner, halves ! " he said, assenting gladly, and held out his hand.

They clasped hands warmly.

The door opened and Junia appeared. She studied their faces anxiously. When she saw the smiling light in them :

" Oh, you two good men ! " she said joyously, and held out a hand to each.

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