

little joke wi' you,—now come back an' be paid!"

Then, at last, Anthea's stony calm was broken, her bosom heaved with tempestuous sobs, and, next moment, she had thrown herself upon her knees, and had clasped her arms about Small Porges and Aunt Priscilla, mingling kisses with her tears. As for Bellew, he turned away, and, treading a familiar path, found himself beneath the shadow of "King Arthur." Therefore, he sat down, and lighting his pipe, stared up at the glory of the full-orbed moon.

"Happiness," said he, speaking his thought aloud, "'Happiness shall come riding astride the full moon!' Now — I wonder!"

CHAPTER XXVII

In which is verified the adage of the cup and the lip.

Now as he sat thus, plunged in thought, he heard the voice of one who approached intoning a familiar chant, or refrain, — the voice was harsh, albeit not unmusical, and the words of the chant were these:

"When I am dead, diddle diddle, as well may hap,
[Bury me deep, diddle diddle, under the tap,
Under the tap, diddle diddle, I'll tell you —"

"Lord!" exclaimed the singer, breaking off suddenly, "be that you, Mr. Belloo, sir?"

"Yea, in good sooth, Adam, the very same, — but you sing, Adam?"

"Ah! — I sing, Mr. Belloo, sir, an' if you ax me why, then I tell you because I be 'appy-earted an' full o' j-o-y, j'y, sir. The mortgage be paid off at last, Mr. Belloo, sir, — Miss Anthea be out o' debt, — free, sir, — an' all along o' Master Georgy, God bless him!"

“ Oh! ” said Bellew, “ — er — that’s good! ”

“ Good! ” exclaimed Adam, “ Ah, Mr. Belloo sir! it be more than good, — it’s saved Miss Anthea’s home for her, and — betwixt you an’ me, sir, — I think it’s saved her too. An’ it be all along o’ that Master Georgy! Lord sir! many’s the time as I’ve watched that theer blessed b’y a-seekin’, an’ a-searchin’, a pokin’ an’ a pryin’ round the place a-lookin’ for ’is fortun’, — but, Lord bless my eyes an’ limbs, sir! — I never thought as he’d find nothin’.”

“ Why, of course not, Adam.”

“ Ah! — but that’s jest where I were mistook, Mr. Belloo, sir, — because ’e did.”

“ Did what, Adam? ”

“ Found the fortun’ as he were always a-lookin’ for, — a sack o’ golden soverings, sir, an’ bank-notes, Mr. Belloo, sir, — bushels on ’em; enough — ah! more ’n enough to pay off that mortgage, and to send that theer old Grimes about his business, — an’ away from Dapplemere for good an’ all, sir.”

“ So Grimes is really paid off, then, is he, Adam? ”

“ I done it myself, sir, — wi’ these here two ’ands, — Three thousand pound I counted

over to him, an’ five hundred more — in bank-notes, sir, while Miss Anthea sat by like one in a dream. Altogether there were five thousand pound as that blessed b’y dug up out o’ the orchard — done up all in a pertater sack, under this very i-dentical tree as you’m a settin’ under Mr. Belloo sir. E’cod, I be half minded to take a shovel and have a try at fortun’-huntin’ myself, — only there ain’t much chance o’ findin’ another, hereabouts; besides — that b’y prayed for that fortun’, ah! long, an’ hard he prayed, Mr. Belloo sir, an’ — ’twixt you an’ me, sir, I ain’t been much of a pray-er myself since my old mother died. Anyhow, the mortgage be paid off, sir, Miss Anthea’s free, an’ ’tis jy’ful, an’ ’appy-’earted I be this night. Prudence an’ me’ll be gettin’ married soon now, — an’ when I think of her cookin’ — Lord, Mr. Belloo sir! — All as I say is God bless Master Georgy! Good-night, sir! an’ may your dreams be as ’appy as mine, — always supposin’ I do dream, — which is seldom. Good-night, sir! ”

Long after Adam’s cheery whistle had died away, Bellew sat, pipe in mouth, staring up at the moon. At length, however, he rose, and turned his steps towards the house.

“ Mr. Bellew! ”

He started, and turning, saw Anthea standing amid her roses. For a moment they looked upon each other in silence, as though each dreaded to speak, then suddenly, she turned, and broke a great rose from its stem, and stood twisting it between her fingers.

“Why did you — do it?” she asked.

“Do it?” he repeated.

“I mean the — fortune. Georgy told me — how you — helped him to find it, and I — *know* how it came there, of course. Why did you — do it?”

“You didn’t tell him — how it came there?” asked Bellew anxiously.

“No,” she answered, “I think it would break his heart — if he knew.”

“And I think it would have broken his heart if he had never found it,” said Bellew, “and I couldn’t let that happen, could I?” Anthea did not answer, and he saw that her eyes were very bright in the shadow of her lashes though she kept them lowered to the rose in her fingers.

“Anthea!” said he, suddenly, and reached out his hand to her. But she started and drew from his touch.

“Don’t!” she said, speaking almost in a whisper, “don’t touch me. Oh! I know you

have paid off the mortgage — you have bought back my home for me as you bought back my furniture! Why? — why? I was nothing to you, or you to me, — why have you laid me under this obligation, — you know I can never hope to return your money — oh! why, — why did you do it?”

“Because I — love you, Anthea, have loved you from the first. Because everything I possess in this world is yours — even as I am.”

“You forget!” she broke in proudly, “you forget — ”

“Everything but my love for you, Anthea, — everything but that I want you for my wife. I’m not much of a fellow, I know, but — could you learn to — love me enough to — marry me — some day, Anthea?”

“Would you have — dared to say this to me — before to-night? — before your money had bought back the roof over my head? Oh! haven’t I been humiliated enough? You — you have taken from me the only thing I had left — my independence, — stolen it from me! Oh! hadn’t I been shamed enough?”

Now, as she spoke, she saw that his eyes were grown suddenly big and fierce, and, in that moment, her hands were caught in his powerful clasp.

"Let me go!" she cried.

"No," said he, shaking his head, "not until you tell me if you — love me. Speak, Anthea."

"Loose my hands!" She threw up her head proudly, and her eyes gleamed, and her cheeks flamed with sudden anger. "Loose me!" she repeated. But Bellew only shook his head, and his chin seemed rather more prominent than usual, as he answered:

"Tell me that you love me, or that you hate me — whichever it is, but, until you do —"

"You — hurt me!" said she, and then, as his fingers relaxed, — with a sudden passionate cry, she had broken free; but, even so, he had caught and swept her up in his arms, and held her close against his breast. And now, feeling the hopelessness of further struggle, she lay passive, while her eyes flamed up into his, and his eyes looked down into her's. Her long, thick hair had come loose, and now with a sudden, quick gesture, she drew it across her face, veiling it from him; wherefore, he stooped his head above those lustrous tresses.

"Anthea!" he murmured, and the masterful voice was strangely hesitating, and the masterful arms about her were wonderfully gentle, "Anthea — do you — love me?" Lower he bent, and lower, until his lips touched her hair,

until beneath that fragrant veil, his mouth sought, and found, her's; and, in that breathless moment, he felt them quiver responsive to his caress. And then, he had set her down, she was free, and he was looking at her with a new-found radiance in his eyes.

"Anthea!" he said, wonderingly, "why then — you do — ?" But, as he spoke, she hid her face in her hands.

"Anthea!" he repeated.

"Oh!" she whispered, "I — hate you! — despise you! Oh! you shall be paid back, — every penny, — every farthing, and — very soon! Next week — I marry Mr. Cassilis!"

And so, she turned, and fled away, and left him standing there amid the roses.

CHAPTER XXVIII

Which tells how Bellew left Dapplemere in the dawn

FAR in the East a grey streak marked the advent of another day, and upon all things was a solemn hush, a great, and awful stillness that was like the stillness of Death. The Earth was a place of gloom, and mist, where spectral shadows writhed, and twisted, and flitted under a frowning heaven, and out of the gloom there came a breath, sharp, and damp, and exceeding chill.

Therefore, as Bellew gazed down from the frowning Heaven to the gloom of Earth, below, with its ever-moving, misty shapes, he shivered involuntarily.

In another hour it would be day, and with the day, the gates of Arcadia would open for his departure, and he must go forth to become once more a wanderer, going up and down, and to and fro in the world until his course was run.

And yet it was worth having lived for, this one golden month, and in all his wanderings needs must he carry with him the memory of

Her who had taught him how deep and high, how wide and infinitely far-reaching that thing called "Love" may really be.

And — Porges! — dear, quaint, Small Porges! where under heaven could he ever find again such utter faith, such pure unaffected loyalty and devotion as throbbed within that small, warm heart? How could he ever bid "Good-bye" to loving, eager, little Small Porges?

And then there was Miss Priscilla, and the strong, gentle Sergeant, and Peterday, and sturdy Adam, and Prudence, and the rosy-cheeked maids. How well they all suited this wonderful Arcadia! Yes, indeed he, and he only, had been out of place, and so — he must go — back to the every-day, matter-of-fact world, but how could he ever say "Good-bye" to faithful, loving Small Porges?

Far in the East the grey streak had brightened, and broadened, and was already tinged with a faint pink that deepened, and deepened, as he watched. Bellew had seen the glory of many a sun-rise in divers wild places of the Earth, and, hitherto, had always felt deep within him, the responsive thrill, the exhilaration of hope new born, and joyful expectation of the great, unknown Future. But now, he

watched the varying hues of pink, and scarlet, and saffron, and gold, with gloomy brow, and sombre eyes.

Now presently, the Black-bird who lived in the apple-tree beneath his window, (the tree of the inquisitive turn of mind), this Black-bird fellow, opening a drowsy eye, must needs give vent to a croak, very hoarse and feeble; then, (apparently having yawned prodigiously and stretched himself, wing, and leg), he tried a couple of notes, — in a hesitating, tentative sort of fashion, shook himself, — repeated the two notes, — tried three, found them mellower, and more what the waiting world very justly expected of him; grew more confident; tried four; tried five, — grew perfectly assured, and so burst forth into the full, golden melody of his morning song.

Then Bellew, leaning out from his casement, as the first bright beams of the rising sun gilded the top-most leaves of the tree, thus apostrophised the unseen singer:

“I suppose you will be piping away down in your tree there, old fellow, long after Arcadia has faded out of my life. Well, it will be only natural, and perfectly right, of course, — She will be here, and may, perhaps, stop to listen to you. Now if, somehow, you

could manage to compose for me a Song of Memory, some evening when I'm gone, — some evening when She happens to be sitting idle, and watching the moon rise over the upland yonder; if, at such a time, you could just manage to remind her of — me, why — I'd thank you. And so, — Good-bye, old fellow!”

Saying which, Bellew turned from the window, and took up a certain bulging, be-strapped portmanteau, while the Black-bird, (having, evidently, hearkened to his request with much grave attention), fell a singing more gloriously than ever.

Meanwhile, Bellew descended the great, wide stair, soft of foot, and cautious of step, yet pausing once to look towards a certain closed door, and so, presently let himself quietly out into the dawn. The dew sparkled in the grass, it hung in glittering jewels from every leaf, and twig, while, now and then, a shining drop would fall upon him as he passed, like a great tear.

Now, as he reached the orchard, up rose the sun in all his majesty filling the world with the splendour of his coming, — before whose kindly beams the skulking mists and shadows shrank affrighted, and fled utterly away.

This morning, “King Arthur” wore his

grandest robes of state, for his mantle of green was thick sewn with a myriad flaming gems; very different he looked from that dark, shrouded giant who had so lately been Conspirator No. Two. Yet, perhaps for this very reason, Bellew paused to lay a hand upon his mighty, rugged bole, and, doing so, turned and looked back at the House of Dapplemere.

And truly never had the old house seemed so beautiful, so quaint, and peaceful as now. It's every stone and beam had become familiar and, as he looked, seemed to find an individuality of its own, the very lattices seemed to look back at him, like so many wistful eyes.

Therefore George Bellew, American Citizen, millionaire, traveller, explorer, and — LOVER, sighed as he turned away, — sighed as he strode on through the green and golden morning, and resolutely — looked back no more.

CHAPTER XXIX

Of the moon's message to Small Porges, and how he told it to Bellew — in a whisper

BELLEW walked on at a good pace with his back turned resolutely towards the House of Dapplemere, and thus, as he swung into that narrow, grassy lane that wound away between trees, he was much surprised to hear a distant hail. Facing sharp about he espied a diminutive figure whose small legs trotted very fast, and whose small fist waved a weather-beaten cap.

Bellew's first impulse was to turn, and run. But Bellew rarely acted on impulse; therefore, he set down the bulging portmanteau, seated himself upon it, and taking out pipe and tobacco, waited for his pursuer to come up.

"Oh Uncle Porges!" panted a voice, "you did walk so awful fast, an' I called, an' called, but you never heard. An' now, please, — where are you going?"

"Going," said Bellew, searching through his pockets for a match, "going, my Porges, why

— er — for a stroll, to be sure, — just a walk before breakfast, you know.”

“ But then — why have you brought your bag? ”

“ Bag! ” repeated Bellew, stooping down to look at it, “ why — so — I have! ”

“ Please — why? ” persisted Small Porges, suddenly anxious. “ Why did you — bring it? ”

“ Well, I expect it was to — er — to bear me company. But how is it you are out so very early, my Porges? ”

“ Why, I couldn't sleep, last night, you know, 'cause I kept on thinking, and thinking 'bout the fortune. So I got up — in the middle of the night, an' dressed myself, an' sat in the big chair by the window, an' looked at the Money Moon. An' I stared at it, an' stared at it till a wonderful thing happened, — an' what do you s'pose? ”

“ I don't know. ”

“ Well, — all at once, while I stared up at it, the moon changed itself into a great, big face; but I didn't mind a bit, 'cause it was a very nice sort of face, — rather like a gnome's face, only without the beard, you know. An' while I looked at it, it talked to me, an' it told me a lot of things, — an' that's how I know

that you are — going away, 'cause you are, you know, — aren't you? ”

“ Why, my Porges, ” said Bellew, fumbling with his pipe, “ why Shipmate, I — since you ask me — I am. ”

“ Yes, I was 'fraid the moon was right, ” said Small Porges, and turned away. But Bellew had seen the stricken look in his eyes, therefore he took Small Porges in the circle of his big arm, and holding him thus, explained to him how that in this great world each of us must walk his appointed way, and that there must, and always will be, partings, but that also there must and always shall be, meetings:

“ And so, my Porges, if we have to say ‘ Good-bye ’ now, — the sooner we shall meet again, — some day — somewhere. ”

But Small Porges only sighed, and shook his head in hopeless dejection.

“ Does — she — know you're going, — I mean my Auntie Anthea? ”

“ Oh yes, she knows, Porges. ”

“ Then I s'pose that's why she was crying so, in the night — ”

“ Crying? ”

“ Yes; — she's cried an awful lot lately, hasn't she? Last night, — when I woke up,

you know, an' couldn't sleep, I went into her room, an' she was crying—with her face hidden in the pillow, an' her hair all about her—”

“Crying!”

“Yes; an' she said she wished she was dead. So then, a course, I tried to comfort her, you know. An' she said ‘I'm a dreadful failure, Georgy dear, with the farm, an' everything else. I've tried to be a father and mother to you, an' I've failed in that too,—so now, I'm going to give you a real father,’—an' she told me she was going to marry—Mr. Cassilis. But I said ‘No’—’cause I'd 'ranged for her to marry you an' live happy ever after. But she got awful angry again an' said she'd never marry you if you were the last man in the world—’cause she 'spised you so—”

“And that would seem to—settle it!” nodded Bellew gloomily, “so it's ‘Good-bye’ my Porges! We may as well shake hands now, and get it over,” and Bellew rose from the portmanteau, and sighing, held out his hand.

“Oh!—but wait a minute!” cried Small Porges eagerly, “I haven't told you what the Moon said to me, last night—”

“Ah!—to be sure, we were forgetting

that!” said Bellew with an absent look, and a trifle wearily.

“Why then—please sit down again, so I can speak into your ear, 'cause what the Moon told me to tell you was a secret, you know.”

So, perforce, Bellew re-seated himself upon his portmanteau, and drawing Small Porges close, bent his head down to the anxious little face; and so, Small Porges told him exactly what the Moon had said. And the Moon's message, (whatever it was), seemed to be very short, and concise, (as all really important messages should be); but these few words had a wondrous, and magical effect upon George Bellew. For a moment he stared wide-eyed at Small Porges like one awaking from a dream, then the gloom vanished from his brow, and he sprang to his feet. And, being upon his feet, he smote his clenched fist down into the palm of his hand with a resounding smack.

“By heaven!” he exclaimed, and took a turn to and fro across the width of the lane, and seeing Small Porges watching him, caught him suddenly up in his arms, and hugged him.

“And the moon will be at the full, tonight!” said he. Thereafter he sat him down upon his portmanteau again, with Small Porges upon his knee, and they talked confidentially

together with their heads very close together and in muffled tones.

When, at last, Bellew rose, his eyes were bright and eager, and his square chin, prominent, and grimly resolute.

"So — you quite understand, my Porges?"

"Yes, yes — Oh I understand!"

"Where the little bridge spans the brook, — the trees are thicker, there."

"Aye aye, Captain!"

"Then — fare thee well, Shipmate! Good-bye, my Porges, — and remember!"

So they clasped hands, very solemnly, Big Porges, and Small Porges, and turned each his appointed way, the one up, the other down, the lane. But lo! as they went Small Porges' tears were banished quite; and Bellew strode upon his way, his head held high, his shoulders squared, like one in whom Hope has been newborn.

CHAPTER XXX

How Anthea gave her promise

"AND so — he — has really gone!" Miss Priscilla sighed as she spoke, and looked up from her needle-work to watch Anthea who sat biting her pen, and frowning down at the blank sheet of paper before her. "And so, he is — really — gone?"

"Who — Mr. Bellew? Oh yes!"

"He went — very early!"

"Yes."

"And — without any breakfast!"

"That was — his own fault!" said Anthea.

"And without even — saying 'Good-bye'!"

"Perhaps he was in a hurry," Anthea suggested.

"Oh dear me, no my dear! I don't believe Mr. Bellew was ever in a hurry in all his life."

"No," said Anthea, giving her pen a vicious bite, "I don't believe he ever was; he is always so — hatefully placid, and deliberate!" and here, she bit her pen again.

"Eh, my dear?" exclaimed Miss Priscilla,