

FICTION

Joseph Crosby Lincoln

Fair Harbor

A PUBLIC DOMAIN BOOK

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FAIR HARBOR

By JOSEPH C. LINCOLN

FAIR HARBOR
GALUSHA THE MAGNIFICENT
THE PORTYGEE
"SHAVINGS"
MARY-'GUSTA
CAP'N DAN'S DAUGHTER
THE RISE OF ROSCOE PAINE
THE POSTMASTER
THE WOMAN HATERS
KEZIAH COFFIN
CY WHITTAKER'S PLACE
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CAP'N WARREN'S WARDS
THE DEPOT MASTER
OUR VILLAGE
PARTNERS OF THE TIDE
THE OLD HOME HOUSE
CAPE COD BALLADS

FAIR HARBOR

A NOVEL

BY

JOSEPH C. LINCOLN

AUTHOR OF "GALUSHA THE MAGNIFICENT,"
"SHAVINGS," "MARY 'GUSTA," "MR. PRATT,"
"CAP'N ERI," ETC.



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FAIR HARBOR

CHAPTER I

"Hi hum," observed Mr. Joel Macomber, putting down his knife and fork with obvious reluctance and tilting back his chair. "Hi hum-a-day! Man, born of woman, is of few days and full of--of somethin', I forget what--George, what is it a man born of woman is full of?"

George Kent, putting down his knife and fork, smiled and replied that he didn't know. Mr. Macomber seemed shocked.

"*Don't know?*" he repeated. "Tut, tut! Dear me, dear me! A young feller that goes to prayer meetin' every Friday night--or at least waits outside the meetin'-house door every Friday night--and yet he don't remember his Scriptur' well enough to know what man born of woman is full of? My soul and body! What's the world comin' to?"

Nobody answered. The six Macomber children, Lemuel, Edgar, Sarah-Mary, Bemis, Aldora and Joey, ages ranging from fourteen to two and a half, kept on eating in silence--or, if not quite in silence, at least without speaking. They had been taught not to talk at table; their mother had taught them, their father playing the part of horrible example. Mrs. Macomber, too, was silent. She was busy stacking plates and cups and saucers preparatory to clearing away. When the clearing away was finished she would be busy washing dishes and after that at some other household duty. She was always busy and always behind with her work.

Her husband turned to the only other person at the crowded table.

"Cap'n Sears," he demanded, "you know 'most everything. What is it man born of woman is full of besides a few days?"

Sears Kendrick thoughtfully folded his napkin. There was a hole in the napkin--holes were characteristic of the Macomber linen--but the napkin was clean; this was characteristic, too.

"Meanin' yourself, Joel?" he asked, bringing the napkin edges into line.

"Not necessarily. Meanin' any man born of woman, I presume likely."

"Humph! Know many that wasn't born that way?"

Mr. Macomber's not too intellectual face creased into many wrinkles and the low ceiling echoed with his laugh. "Not many, I don't callate," he said, "that's a fact. But you ain't answered my question, Cap'n. What is man born of woman full of?"

Captain Kendrick placed the folded napkin carefully beside his plate.

"Breakfast, just now, I presume likely," he said. "At least, I know two or three that ought to be, judgin' by the amount of cargo I've seen 'em stow aboard in the last half hour." Then, turning to Mrs. Macomber, he added, "I'm goin' to help you with the dishes this momin', Sarah."

The lady of the house had her own ideas on that subject.

"Indeed you won't do anything of the sort," she declared. "The idea! And you just out of a crippled bed, as you might say."

This remark seemed to amuse her husband hugely. "Ho, ho!" he shouted. "That's a good one! I didn't know the bed was crippled, Sarah. What's the matter with it; got a pain in the slats?"

Sarah Macomber seldom indulged in retort. Usually she was too busy to waste the time. But she allowed herself the luxury of a half minute on this occasion.

"No," she snapped, "but it's had one leg propped up on half a brick for over a year. And at least once a week in all that time you've been promisin' to bring home a new caster and fix it. If that bed ain't a cripple I don't know what is."

Joel looked a trifle taken aback. His laugh this time was not quite as uproarious.

"Guess you spoke the truth that time, Sarah, without knowin' it. Who is it they say always speaks the truth? Children and fools, ain't it? Well, you ain't a child scarcely, Sarah. Hope you ain't the other thing. Eh? Ho, ho!"

Mrs. Macomber was halfway to the kitchen door, a pile of plates upon her arm. She did not stop nor turn, but she did speak.

"Well," she observed, "I don't know. I was one once in my life, there's precious little doubt about that."

She left the room. Young Kent and Captain Kendrick exchanged glances. Mr. Macomber swallowed, opened his mouth, closed it and swallowed again. Lemuel and Sarah-Mary, the two older children, giggled. The clock on the mantel struck seven times. The sound came, to the adults, as a timely relief from embarrassment.

Captain Kendrick looked at his watch.

"What's that?" he exclaimed. "Six bells already? So 'tis. I declare I didn't think 'twas so late."

Joel rose to his feet, moving--for him--with marked rapidity.

"Seven o'clock!" he cried. "My, my! We've got to get under way, George, if we want to make port at the store afore 'Liphalet does. Come on, George, hurry up."

Kent lingered for a moment to speak to Sears Kendrick. Then he emerged from the house and he and Joel walked rapidly off together. They were employed, one as clerk and bookkeeper and the other as driver of the delivery wagon, at Eliphalet Bassett's Grocery, Dry Goods, Boots and Shoes and Notion Store at the corner of the main road and the depot road. Joel's position there was fixed for eternity, at least he considered it so, having driven that same delivery wagon at the same wage for twenty-two years. "Me and that grocery cart," Mr. Macomber was wont to observe, "have been doin' 'Liphalet's errands so long we've come to be permanent fixtures. Yes, sir, permanent fixtures." When this was repeated to Mr. Bassett the latter affirmed that it was true. "Every time the dum fool goes out takin' orders," said Eliphalet, "he stays so long that I begin to think he's turned *into* a permanent fixture. Takes an order for a quarter pound of tea and a spool of cotton and then hangs 'round and talks steady for half an hour. Permanent fixture! Permanent gas fixture, that's what *he* is."

George Kent did not consider himself a permanent fixture at Bassett's. He had been employed there for three years, or ever since the death of his father, Captain Sylvester Kent, who had died at sea aboard his ship, the *Ocean Ranger*, on the voyage home from Java to Philadelphia. George remained in Bayport to study law with Judge Knowles, who was interested in the young man and, being a lawyer of prominence on the Cape, was an influential friend worth having. The law occupied young Kent's attention in the evenings; he kept Mr. Bassett's books and sold Mr. Bassett's brown sugar, calico and notions during the days, not because he loved the work, the place, or its proprietor, but because the twelve dollars paid him each Saturday enabled him to live. And, in order to live so cheaply that he might save a bit toward the purchase of clothes, law books and sundries, he boarded at Joel Macomber's. Sarah Macomber took him to board, not because she needed company--six children and a husband supplied a sufficiency of that--but because three dollars more a week was three dollars more.

Joel and George having tramped off to business and the very last crumb of the Macomber breakfast having vanished, the Macomber children proceeded to go through their usual morning routine. Lemuel, who did chores for grumpy old Captain Elijah Samuels at the latter's big place on the depot road, departed to rake hay and be sworn at. Sarah-Mary went upstairs to make beds; when the bed-making was over she and Edgar and Bemis would go to school. Aldora and Joey, the two youngest, went outdoors to play. And Captain Sears Kendrick, late master of the ship *Hawkeye*, and before that of the *Fair Wind* and the *Far Seas* and goodness knows how many others, who ran away to ship as cabin boy when he was thirteen, who fought the Malay pirates when he was eighteen, and outwitted Semmes by outmaneuvering the *Alabama* when he was twenty-eight, a man once so strong and bronzed and confident, but now so weak and shaken--Captain Sears Kendrick rose painfully and with effort from his chair, took his cane from the corner and hobbled to the kitchen.

"Sarah," he said, "I'm goin' to help you with those dishes this mornin'!"

"Sears," said Mrs. Macomber, taking the kettle of boiling dish-water from the top of the stove, "you'll do nothin' of the kind. You'll go outdoors and get a little sunshine this lovely day. It's the first real good day you've had since you got up from bed, and outdoors 'll help you more than anything else. Now you go!"

"But look here, Sarah, for Heaven's sake----"

"Be still, Sears, and don't be foolish. There ain't dishes enough to worry about. I'll have 'em done in half a shake. Go outdoors, I tell you. But don't you walk on those legs of yours. You hear me."

Her brother--Sarah Macomber was a Kendrick before she married Joel--smiled slightly. "How do you want me to walk, Sarah, on my hands?" he inquired. "Never mind my legs. They're better this mornin' than they have been since that fat woman and a train of cars fell on 'em... Ah hum!" with a change of tone, "it's a pity they didn't fall on my neck and make a clean job of it, isn't it?"

"Sears!" reproachfully. "How can you talk so? And especially now, when the doctor says if you take care of yourself, you'll 'most likely be as well as ever in--in a little while."

"A little while! In a year or two was what he said. In ten years was probably what he meant, and you'll notice he put in

the 'most likely' even at that. If you were to lash him in the fore-riggin' and keep him there till he told the truth, he'd probably end by sayin' that I would always be a good for nothin' hulk same as I am now."

"Sears, don't--please don't. I hate to hear you speak so bitter. It doesn't sound like you."

"It's the way I feel, Sarah. Haven't I had enough to make me bitter?"

His sister shook her head. "Yes, Sears," she admitted, "I guess likely you have, but I don't know as that is a very good excuse. Some of the rest of us," with a sigh, "haven't found it real smooth sailin' either; but----"

She did not finish the sentence, and there was no need. He understood and turned quickly.

"I'm sorry, Sarah," he said. "I ought to be hove overboard and towed astern. The Almighty knows you've had more to put up with than ever I had and you don't spend your time growlin' about it, either. I declare I'm ashamed of myself, but--but--well, you know how it is with me. I've never been used to bein' a loafer, spongin' on my relations."

"Don't, Sears. You know you ain't spongin', as you call it. You've paid your board ever since you've been here."

"Yes, I have. But how much? Next to half of nothin' a week and you wouldn't have let me pay that if I hadn't put my foot down. Or said I was goin' to try to put it down," he added with a grim smile. "You're a good woman, Sarah, a good woman, with more trials than your share. And what makes me feel worst of all, I do believe, is that I should be pitched in on you--to be the biggest trial of all. Well, that part's about over, anyhow. No matter whether I can walk or not I shan't stay and sponge on you. If I can't do anything else I'll hire a fish shanty and open clams for a livin'!"

He smiled again and she smiled in sympathy, but there were tears in her eyes. She was seven years older than her brother, and he had always been her pride. When she was a young woman, helping with the housework in the old home there in Bayport, before her father's death and the sale of that home, she had watched with immense gratification his success in school. When he ran away to sea she had defended him when others condemned. Later, when tales of his "smartness," as sailor or mate, or by and by, a full rated captain, began to drift back, she had gloried in them. He came to see her semi-occasionally when his ship was in port, and his yarns of foreign lands and strange people were, to her, far more wonderful than anything she had ever found in the few books which had come in her way. Each present he brought her she had kept and cherished. And there was never a trace of jealousy in her certain knowledge that he had gone on growing while she had stopped, that he was a strong, capable man of the world--the big world--whereas she was, and would always be, the wife and household drudge of Joel Macomber.

Now, as she looked at him, pale, haggard and leaning on his cane, stooping a little when he had been so erect and sturdy, the pity which she had felt for him ever since they brought him into her sitting-room on the day of the railway accident became keener than ever and with it came an additional flash of insight. She realized more clearly than she had before that it was not his bodily injuries which hurt most and were the hardest to bear; it was his self-respect and the pride which were wounded sorest. That he--*he*--Sears Kendrick, the independent autocrat of the quarter deck, should be reduced to this! That it was wringing his soul she knew. He had never complained except to her, and even to her very, very seldom, but she knew. And she ventured to ask the question she had wanted to ask ever since he had sufficiently recovered to listen to conversation.

"Sears," she said "I haven't said a word before, and you needn't tell me now if you don't want to--it isn't any of my business--but is it true that you've lost a whole lot of money? It isn't true, is it?"

He had been standing by the open door, looking out into the yard. Now he turned to look at her.

"What isn't true, Sarah?" he asked.

"That you've lost a lot of money in--in that--that business you went into. It isn't true, is it, Sears? Oh, I hope it isn't! They say--why, some of 'em say you've lost all the money you had put by. An awful sight of money, they say. Sears, tell me it isn't true--please."

He regarded her in silence for a moment. Then he shook his head.

"Part of it isn't true, Sarah," he answered, with a slight smile. "I haven't lost a big lot of money."

"Oh, I'm *so* glad. Now I can tell 'em a few things, I guess."

"I wouldn't tell 'em too much, because the other part *is* true. I have lost about all I had put by."

"Oh, Sears!"

"Um--hm. And served me right, of course. You can't make a silk ear out of a sow's purse, as old Cap'n Sam Doane used to love to say. You can't, no matter how good a purse--or--ear--it is. I was a pretty good sea cap'n if I do say it, but that wasn't any reason why I should have figured I was a good enough business man to back as slippery an eel as Jim Carpenter in the ship chandlery game ashore."

"But--you----" Mrs. Macomber hesitated to utter the disgraceful word, "you didn't fail up, did you, Sears?" she faltered.

"You know that's what they say you did."

"Well, they say wrong. Carpenter failed, I didn't. I paid dollar for dollar. That's why I've got next to no dollars now."

"But you--you've got *some*, Sears. You must have," hopefully, "because you've been paying me board. So you must have *some* left."

The triumph in her face was pathetic. He hated to disturb her faith.

"Yes," he said dryly, "I have some left. Maybe seven hundred dollars or some such matter. If I had my legs left it would be enough, or more than enough. I wouldn't ask odds of anybody if I was the way I was before that train went off the track. I'd lost every shot I had in the locker, but I'm not very old yet--some years to leeward of forty--there was more money to be had where that came from and I meant to have it. And then--well, then this happened to me."

"I know. And to think that you was comin' down here on purpose to see me when it did happen. Seems almost as if I was to blame, somehow."

"Nonsense! Nobody was to blame but the engineer that wrecked the train and the three hundred pound woman that fell on my legs. And the engineer was killed, poor fellow, and the woman was--well, she carried her own punishment with her, I guess likely. Anyhow, I should call it a punishment if I had to carry it. There, there, Sarah! Let's talk about somethin' else. You do your dishes and, long as you won't let me help you, I'll hop-and-go-fetch-it out to that settee in the front yard and look at the scenery. Just think! I've been in Bayport almost four months and haven't been as far as that gate yet--except when they lugged me in past it, of course. And I don't recall much about that."

"I guess not, you poor boy. And I saw them bringin' you in, all stretched out, with your eyes shut, and as white as--- Oh, my soul and body! I don't want to think about it, let alone talk about it."

"Neither do I, Sarah, so we won't. Do you realize how little I know of what's been goin' on in Bayport since I was here last? And do you realize how long it has been since I *was* here?"

"Why, yes, I do, Sears. It's been almost six years; it will be just six on the tenth of next September."

The speech was illuminating. He looked at her curiously.

"You do keep account of my goin's and comin's, don't you, old girl?" he said. "Better than I do myself."

"Oh, it means more to me than it does to you. You live such a busy life, Sears, all over the world, meetin' everybody in all kinds of places. For me, with nothin' to do but be stuck down here in Bayport--well, it's different with me--I have to remember. Rememberin' and lookin' ahead is about all I have to keep me interested."

He was silent for a moment. Then he said: "It looks as if rememberin' was all I will be likely to have. Think of it, Sarah! Four months in Bayport and I haven't been to the post-office. That'll stand as a town record, I'll bet."

"And--and you'll keep up your courage, Sears? You won't let yourself get blue and discouraged, for my sake if nobody else's?"

He nodded. "I couldn't, Sarah," he said earnestly. "With you around I'd be ashamed to."

She ran to help him down the step, but he waved her away, and, leaning upon the cane and clinging fast to the lattice with the other hand, he managed to make the descent safely. Once on the flat level of the walk he moved more rapidly and, so it seemed to his sister, more easily than he had since his accident. The forty odd feet of walk he navigated in fair time and came to anchor, as he would have expressed it, upon the battered old bench by the Macomber gate. The gate, like the picket fence, of which it was a part, needed paint and the bench needed slats in its back. Almost anything which Joel Macomber owned needed something and his wife and family needed most of all.

An ancient cherry tree, its foliage now thickly spotted with green fruit, for the month was June, cast a shadow upon the occupant of the bench. At his feet grew a bed of daffodils and jonquils which Sarah Macomber had planted when she came, a hopeful bride, to that house. Each year they sprouted and bloomed and now, long after Sarah's hopes had ceased to sprout, they continued to flourish. Beside the cherry tree grew a lilac bush. Beyond the picket fence was the dusty sidewalk and beyond that the dustier, rutted road. And beyond the road and along it upon both sides were the houses and barns and the few shops of Bayport village, Bayport as it was, and as some of us remember it, in the early '70s.

In some respects it was much like the Bayport of to-day. The houses themselves have changed but little. Then, as now, they were trim and white and green-shuttered. Then, as now, the roses climbed upon their lattices and the silver-leaf poplars and elms and mulberry trees waved above them. But the fences which enclosed their trim lawns and yards have disappeared, and the hitching posts and carriage blocks by their front gates have gone also. Gone, too, are the horses and buggies and carryalls which used to stand by these gates or within those barns. They are gone, just as the ruts and dust of the roads have vanished. When Mrs. Captain Hammond, of the lower road, used to call upon Mrs. Ryder at

West Bayport, she was wont to be driven to her destination in the intensely respectable Hammond buggy drawn by the equally respectable Hammond horse and piloted by the even more respectable--not to say venerable--Hammond coachman, who was also gardener and "hired man." And they made the little journey in the very respectable time of thirty-five minutes. Now when Mrs. Captain Hammond's granddaughter, who winters in Boston but summers at the old home, wishes to go to West Bayport she skims over the hard, oiled macadam in her five thousand dollar runabout and she finishes the skimming in eight minutes or less.

And although the dwellings along the Bayport roads are much as they were that morning when Captain Sears Kendrick sat upon the bench in the Macomber yard and gazed gloomily at the section of road which lay between the Macomber gate and the curve beyond the Orthodox meeting-house--although the houses were much the same in external appearance, those who occupy them at the present day are vastly different from those who owned and lived in them then. Here is the greatest change which time has brought to old Bayport. Now those houses--the majority of them--are open only in summer; then they were open all the year. They who come to them now regard them as playthings, good-time centers for twelve or fourteen weeks. Then they were the homes of men and women who were proud of them, loved them, meant to live in them--while on land--as long as life was theirs; to die in them if fortunate enough to be found by death while ashore; and at last to be buried near them, under the pines of the Bayport cemetery. Now these homes are used by business men or lawyers or doctors, whose real homes are in Boston, New York, Chicago, or other cities. Then practically every house was owned or occupied either by a sea captain, active or retired, or by a captain's widow or near relative.

For example, as Captain Kendrick sat in his brother-in-law's yard on that June morning of that year in the early '70's, within his sight, that is within the half mile from curve to curve of the lower road, were no less than nine houses in which dwelt--or had dwelt--men who gained a living upon a vessel's quarter deck. Directly across the road was the large, cupola-crowned house of Captain Solomon Snow. Captain Sol was at present somewhere between Surinam and New York, bound home. His wife was with him, so was his youngest child. The older children were at home, in the big house; their aunt, Captain Sol's sister, herself a captain's widow, was with them.

Next to Captain Solomon's was the Crowell place. Captain Bethuel Crowell was in Hong Kong, but, so his wife reported at sewing circle, had expected to sail from there "any day about now" bound for Melbourne. Next to Captain Bethuel lived Mrs. Patience Foster, called "Mary Pashy" by the townspeople to distinguish her from another Mary Foster in East Bayport. Her husband had been drowned at sea, or at least so it was supposed. His ship left Philadelphia eight years before and had never been spoken or heard from since that time. Next to Mary-Pashy's was the imposing, if ugly, residence of Captain Elkanah Wingate. Captain Elkanah was retired, wealthy, a member of the school-committee, a selectman, an aristocrat and an autocrat. And beyond Captain Elkanah lived Captain Godfrey Peasley--who was not quite of the aristocracy as he commanded a schooner instead of a square-rigger, and beyond him Mrs. Tabitha Crosby, whose husband had died of yellow fever while aboard his ship in New Orleans; and beyond Mrs. Crosby's was--well, the next building was the Orthodox meeting-house, where the Reverend David Dishup preached. Nowadays people call it the Congregationalist church. On the same side of the road as the Macomber cottage were the homes of Captain Sylvanus Baker and Captain Noah Baker and of Captain Orrin Eldridge.

Bayport, in that day, was not only by the sea, it was of the sea. The sea winds blew over it, the sea air smelled salty in its highways and byways, its male citizens--most of them--walked with a sea roll, and upon the tables and whatnots of their closed and shuttered "front parlors" or in their cupboards or closets were laquered cabinets, and whales' teeth, and alabaster images, and carved chessmen and curious shells and scented fans and heaven knows what, brought from heaven knows where, but all brought in sailing ships over one or more of the seas of the world. The average better class house in Bayport was an odd combination of home and museum, the rear two-thirds the home section and the remaining third, that nearest the road, the museum. Bayport front parlors looked like museums, and generally smelled like them.

To a stranger from, let us say, the middle west, the village then must have seemed a queer little community dozing upon its rolling hills and by its white beaches, a community where the women had, most of them, traveled far and seen many strange things and places, but who seldom talked of them, preferring to chat concerning the minister's wife's new bonnet; and whose men folk, appearing at long intervals from remote parts of the world, spoke of the port side of a cow and compared the three-sided clock tower of the new town hall with the peak of Teneriffe on a foggy morning.

All this, odd as it may have seemed to visitors from inland, were but matters of course to Sears Kendrick. To him there was nothing strange in the deep sea atmosphere of his native town. It had been there ever since he knew it, he fondly imagined--being as poor a prophet as most of us--that it would always be. And, as he sat there in the Macomber yard, his thoughts were busy, not with Bayport's past or future, but with his own, and neither retrospect nor forecast was cheerful. He could see little behind him except the mistakes he had made, and before him--not even the opportunity to make more.

Overhead, amid the cherry branches, the bees buzzed and the robins chirped. From the kitchen window came the click

of dishes as Mrs. Macomber washed and wiped them. Around the curve of the road by the meeting-house came Dr. Sheldon's old horse, drawing Dr. Sheldon's antiquated chaise, with the doctor himself leaning back comfortably upon its worn cushions. Captain Kendrick, not being in the mood for a chat just then even with as good a friend as his physician, made no move, and the old chaise and its occupant passed by and disappeared around the next curve. Sarah-Mary and Edgar and Bemis noisily trooped out of the house and started for school. Edgar was enthusiastically carolling a ditty which was then popular among Bayport juvenility. It was reminiscent of a recent presidential campaign.

"Grant and Greely were fightin' for flies,
Grant gave Greely a pair of black eyes--"

The children, like Doctor Sheldon and the chaise, passed out of sight around the bend of the road. Edgar's voice, more or less tunefully, drifted back:

"Grant said, 'Do you want any more?'
Greely said, 'No, for my eyes are too sore.'"

Sears Kendrick crossed his knees and changed position upon the bench. Obviously he could not hope to go to sea again for months at the very earliest. Obviously he could not live during those months at his sister's. She would be only too delighted to have him do so, but on that point his mind was made up. And, quite as obviously, he could not long exist, and pay an adequate price for the privilege of existing, with the small sum which was left after his disastrous voyage upon the sea of business. His immediate problems then were two: First, to find a boarding place which was very, very cheap. Second, if possible, to find a means of earning a little money. The first of these he might, perhaps, solve after a fashion, but the second--and he a cripple! He groaned aloud.

Then he gradually became aware of a new set of sounds, sounds approaching along the road from the direction in which the children and the doctor's equipage had disappeared. The sounds, at first rather confused, gradually separated themselves into two varieties, one the sharp, irregular rattle of a springless cart, the second a hoarse unmusical voice which, like Edgar's, was raised in song. But in this case the rattle of the cart caused the song to be broken unexpectedly into jerky spasms, so to speak. Nevertheless, the singer kept manfully at his task.

"Now the *Dreadnought's* a-bowlin' (*Bump! Rattle*) down the wild Irish sea
Where the pass (*Bump!*) engers are merry with hearts full of glee,
While the sailors like lions (*Gid-dap! What's the matter with ye*) walk the decks to and fro,
She's the Liverpool packet (*Bump! Bang! Crack!*) Good Lord, let her go!"

Sears Kendrick sat upright on the settee. Of course he recognized the song, every man who had ever sailed salt water knew the old *Dreadnought* chantey, but much more than that, he believed he recognized the voice of the singer. Leaning forward, he watched for the latter to appear.

Then, around the clump of lilacs which leaned over Captain Sol Snow's fence at the corner, came an old white horse drawing an old "truck-wagon," the wagon painted, as all Cape Cod truck-wagons then were and are yet, a bright blue; and upon the high seat of the wagon sat a chunky figure, a figure which rocked back and forth and sang:

"Now the *Dreadnought's* a sailin' the (*Bang! Bump!*) Atlantic so wide,
While the (*Thump! Bump!*) dark heavy seas roll along her black side,
With the sails neatly spread (*Crump! Jingle!*) and the red cross to show,
She's the Liverpool packet; Good Lord, let----"

Captain Kendrick interrupted here.

"Ahoy, the *Dreadnought!*" he hailed. "*Dreadnought* ahoy!"

"Good Lord, let 'er go!" roared the man on the seat of the truck-wagon, finishing the stanza of his chantey. Then he added "Whoa!" in a mighty bellow. The white horse stopped in his tracks, as if he had one ear tipped backward awaiting the invitation. His driver leaned down and peered into the shadow of the lilac bush.

"Who--?" he began. "Eh? *What?* Limpin', creepin', crawlin', jumpin' Moses and the prophets! It ain't Cap'n Sears Kendrick, is it? It is, by Henry! Well, well, *well*, WELL, *WELL!*"

Each succeeding "well" was louder and more emphatic than its predecessor. They were uttered as the speaker rolled, rather than climbed, down from the high seat. Alighting upon a pair of enormous feet shod in heavy rubber boots, the tops of which were turned down, he thumped up the little slope from the road to the sidewalk. Then, thrusting over the fence pickets a red and hairy hand, the size of which corresponded to that of the feet, he roared another string of delighted exclamations.

"Cap'n Sears Kendrick, on deck and all taut again! Well, by the jumpin', creepin'! If this ain't--Cap'n Sears, sir, how be you?"

His broad-brimmed, battered straw hat had fallen off in his descent from the wagon seat, uncovering a partially bald head and a round, extremely red face, two-thirds of which was hidden by a tremendously thick and bristly tangle of short gray whiskers. The whiskers were now bisected by a broad grin, a grin so broad and so ecstatic that its wrinkles extended to the bulbous nose and the apple cheeks above.

"Cap'n Sears, sir," repeated the driver of the truck-wagon, "I'm proud to see you on deck again, sir. Darned if I ain't!"

The captain leaned forward and shook the big red hand extended across the fence pickets.

"Judah Cahoon, you old salt herrin'," he cried heartily, "I'm just as glad to see you! But *what* in the world are you doin' here in Bayport?"

CHAPTER II

Mr. Cahoon's grin vanished and the expression of his face above the whiskers indicated extreme surprise.

"What am I doin' here?" he repeated. "Didn't you know I was here, Cap'n Sears?"

"Of course I didn't. The last I heard of you you had shipped as cook aboard the *Gallant Rover* and was bound for Calcutta, or Singapore or somewhere in those latitudes. And that was only a year ago. What are you doin' on the Cape and pilotin' that kind of a craft?" indicating the truck wagon.

The question was ignored. "Didn't they never tell you I was here?" demanded Judah. "Didn't that Joel Macomber tell you I been hailin' him every time he crossed my bows, askin' about you every day since you run on the rocks? Didn't he tell you that?"

"No."

"Never give you my respects nor--nor kind remembrances, nor nawthin'?"

"Not a word. Never so much as mentioned your name."

"The red-headed shark!"

"There! There! Sshh! Never mind him. Come in here and sit down a minute, can't you? Or are you in a hurry?"

"Eh? No-o, I ain't in no 'special hurry. Just got a deck load of seaweed aboard carting it up home, that's all."

"Home? What home?"

"Why, where I'm livin'. I call it home; anyhow it's all the home I got. Eh? Why, Cap'n Sears, ain't they never told you that I'm livin' at the Minot place?"

"The Minot place! Why--why, man alive, you don't mean the General Minot place, do you?"

"Um-hm. That's what folks down here call it. There ain't no Generals there though."

"And *you* are livin' in the General Minot house? Look here, Judah, are you trying to make a fool of me?"

Mr. Cahoon's countenance--that portion of it above the whisker tidemark, of course--registered horror at the thought. He had been cook and steward aboard Captain Kendrick's ships for many voyages and his feeling for his former skipper was close kin to idolatry.

"Eh?" he gasped. "Me try to make a fool out of *you*, Cap'n Sears? *Me*? No, no, I got *some* sense left, I hope."

Kendrick smiled. "Oh, the thing isn't impossible, Judah," he observed dryly. "It has been done. I have been made a fool of and more than once.... But there, never mind that. I want to know what you are doin' at the General Minot place. Come aboard here and tell me about it. You can leave your horse, can't you? He doesn't look as if he was liable to run away."

"Run away! Him?" Judah snorted disgust. "Limpin' Moses! He won't run away for the same reason old Cap'n Eben Gould didn't say his prayers--he's forgot how. I was out with that horse on the flats last week and the tide pretty nigh caught us. The water in the main channel was so deep that it was clean up to the critter's garboard strake, and still, by the creepin', I couldn't get him out of a walk. I thought there one spell he might *drift* away, but I knew dum well he'd never run.... Whoa! you--you hipponoceros you!" addressing the ancient animal, who was placidly gnawing at the

Macomber hitching post. "'Vast heavin' on that post! *Look* at the blasted idiot!" with huge disgust. "To home, by the creepin', he'll turn up his nose at good hay and then he'll cruise out here and start to swaller a wood fence. Whoa! Back! Back, or I'll--I'll bore a hole in you and scuttle you."

The old horse condescended to back for perhaps two feet, a proceeding which elicited a grunt of grudging approval from Mr. Cahoon. The latter then settled himself with a thump upon the settee beside Captain Kendrick.

"How's the spars splicin'?" he inquired, with a jerk of his thumb toward the captain's legs. "Gettin' so you can navigate with 'em? Stand up under sail, will they?"

"Not for much of a cruise," replied Sears, using the same nautical phraseology. "I shan't be able to run under anything but a jury rig for a good while, I'm afraid. But never mind the spars. I want to know how you happen to be down here in Bayport, and especially what on earth you are doin' at the Minot place? Somebody died and left you a million?"

Mr. Cahoon's whiskers were split again by his wide grin.

"If I was left a million *I'd* die," he observed with emphasis. "No, no, nothin' like that, Cap'n. I'm there along of ... humph! You know young Ogden Minot, don't you?"

"No, I guess I don't. I don't seem to remember him. Ogden Minot, you say?"

"Sartin. Why, you must have run afoul of him, Cap'n Sears. He has a--a sort of home moorin's at a desk in Barstow Brothers' shippin' office up on State Street. Has some kind of berth with the firm, they tell me, partner or somethin'. You must have seen him there."

"Well, if I have I... Hold on a minute! Seems to me I do remember him. Tall fellow, dresses like a tailor's picture; speaks as if--"

"As if the last half of every word was comin' on the next boat. That's him. Light complected, wears his whiskers wing and wing, like a schooner runnin' afore the wind. Same kind of side whiskers old Cap'n Spencer of the *Farewell* used to carry that voyage when I fust run afoul of you. You was second mate and I was cook, remember. You recollect the skipper's side whiskers, Cap'n Sears? Course you do! Stuck out each side of his face pretty nigh big as old-fashioned studdin' sails. Fo'mast hands used to call 'em the old man's 'homeward-bounders.' Ho, ho! Why, I've seen them whiskers blowin'--"

Kendrick interrupted.

"Never mind Cap'n Spencer's whiskers," he said. "Stick to your course, Judah. What about this Ogden Minot?"

"Everythin' bout him. If 'twan't for him I wouldn't be here now. No sir-ee, 'stead of settin' here swappin' yarns with you, Cap'n Sears, I'd be somewheres off Cape Horn, cookin' lobscouse and doughboy over a red-hot galley stove. Yes sir, that's where I'd be. And I'd just as soon be here, and a dum sight juster, as the feller said. Ho, ho! Tut, tut, tut! You can't never tell, can you? How many times I've stood in my galley with a gale of wind blowin', and my feet braced so's I wouldn't pitch into the salt-horse kittle every time she rolled, and thinkin'--"

"There, there, Judah! Bring her up, bring her up. You're three points off again."

"Eh? So I be, so I be. I'll try and hold her nose in the notch from now on. Well, 'twas last October, a year ago, when I'd about made up my mind to go cook in the *Gallant Rover*, same as you said. I hadn't signed articles, you understand, but I was call'latin' to, and I was down on Long Wharf where the *Rover* was takin' cargo, and her skipper, Cap'n Gustavus Philbrick, 'twas--he was a Cape man, one of the Ostable Philbricks--he asked me if I wouldn't cruise up to the Barstow Brothers' office and fetch down some papers that was there for him. So I didn't have nawthin' to do 'special, and 'twas about time for my eleven o'clock--when I'm in Boston I always call'late to hist aboard one eleven o'clock, rum and sweetenen' 'tis generally, at Jerry Crockett's saloon on India Street and.... Aye, aye, sir! All right, all right, Cap'n Sears. I'll keep her in the notch, don't worry. Well--er--er--what was I sayin'? Oh, yes! Well, I had my eleven o'clock and then I cruised up to the Barstow place, and the fust mate there, young Crosby Barstow 'twas, he was talkin' with this Ogden Minot. And when I hove in sight young Barstow, he sings out: 'And here's another Cape Codder, Ogden,' he says. 'You two ought to know each other. Cahoon,' says he, 'this is Mr. Ogden Minot; his folks hailed from Bayport. That's down your way, ain't it?'

"'You bet!' says I. 'My home port's Hamiss, and that's right next door. Minot? Minot?' I says, tryin' to recollect, you understand. 'Seems to me I used to know a Minot down that way. Why, yes, course I did! You any relation to old Ichabod Minot, that skippered the *Gypsy Maid* fishin' to the Banks? Ichabod hailed from--from--Denboro, seems to me 'twas.'

"He said no pretty sharp. Barstow, he laughed like fury and wanted to know if this Ogden Minot looked like Ichabod. 'Is there a family resemblance?' he says. I told him I guessed not. 'Anyhow,' says I, 'I couldn't tell very well. I only seen Ichabod when he was drunk.' That tickled Barstow most to death. 'You never saw him but that once, then?' he wanted

to know. 'Oh, yes,' says I, 'I seen him about every time he was on shore after a fishin' trip.'

"That seemed to make him laugh more'n ever and even young Ogden laughed some. Anyhow, we got to talkin' and I told Barstow how I was callin' to go cook on the *Gallant Rover*. 'And I'm sick of it,' I says. 'I'd like a nice snug berth ashore.' 'You would?' says Barstow. Then he says, 'Humph!' and looks at Minot. And Minot, he says, 'Humph!' and looked at him. And then they both says, 'Humph!' and looked at me. And afore I set sail from that office to carry Cap'n Philbrick's papers back to him I'd agreed not to sign on for that v'yage as cook until I'd cruised down here to Bayport along of young Ogden Minot to see how I'd like to be sort of--of general caretaker and stevedore, as you might call it, at the General Minot place. You see, young Ogden was the General's grandson and he'd had the property left him. And 'twas part of the sailin' orders--in the old General's will, you understand--that it couldn't be sold, but must always be took care of and kept up. Ogden could rent it out but he couldn't sell it; that was the pickle *he* was in. Understand, don't you, Cap'n Sears?"

Kendrick nodded. "Why--yes, I guess likely I do," he said. "But this Minot boy could live in it himself, couldn't he? Why doesn't he do that? As I remember it, it was considerable of a house. I should think he would come here himself and live."

Judah nodded. "You would think so, wouldn't you?" he agreed. "But *he* don't think so, and what's a mighty sight more account, his wife don't think so. She's one of them kind of women that--that--well, when she gets to heaven--course I ain't layin' no bets on her gettin' there, but *if* she does--the fust thing she'll do after she fetches port is to find out which one of them golden streets has got the highest-toned gang livin' on it and then start in tryin' to tie up to the wharf there herself. *She* wouldn't live in no Bayport. No sir--ee! She's got winter moorin's up in one of them streets back of the Common, and summer times she's down to a place called--er--er--Nahum--Nehimiah--No--jumpin' prophets! What's the name of that place out on the rocks abaft Lynn?"

"Nahant?" suggested his companion.

"That's it. She and him is to Nahant summers. And what for *I* don't know, when right here in Bayport is a great, big, fine house and land around it and--and flower tubs in the front yard and--and marble top tables--and--and haircloth chairs and sofys, and--and a Rogers' statoo in the parlor and--and.... Why, say, Cap'n Sears, you ought to *see* that house and the things in it. They've spent money on that house same as if a five dollar bill wan't nawthin'. Wasted it, I call it. The second day I was there I wanted to brush off some dust that was on the chair seats and I was huntin' round from bow to stern lookin' for one of them little brush brooms, you know, same as you brush clothes with. Well, sir, I'd about give up lookin' when I happened to look on the wall of the settin'-room and there was one hangin' up. And, say, Cap'n Sears, I wisht you could have seen it! 'Twas triced up in a--a kind of becket, as you might say, made out of velvet--yes, sir, by creepin', velvet! And the velvet had posies and grass painted on it. And, I don't know as you'll believe it, but it's a fact, the handle of that brush broom was gilded! Yes sir, by Henry, *gilded*! 'Well,' thinks I to myself, 'if this ain't then I don't know what is!' I did callate that I was gettin' used to style, and high-toned money-slingin', but when it comes to puttin' gold handles onto brush-brooms, that had me on my beam ends, that did. And ain't it a sinful waste, Cap'n Sears, I ask you? Now ain't it? And what in time is the *good* of it? A brush-broom is just a broom, no matter if---

Again the captain interrupted. "Yes, yes, of course, Judah," he agreed, laughing; "but what do you do up there all by yourself? In that big house?"

"Oh, I don't live in the whole house. I could if I wanted to. Ogden, he don't care where I live or what I do. All he wants of me, he says, is to keep the place lookin' good, and the grass cut and one thing or 'nother. He keeps hopin' he's goin' to rent it, you know, but they won't nobody hire it. The only thing a place big as that would be good for is to keep tavern. And we've got one tavern here in Bayport already."

Kendrick seemed to be thinking. He pulled his beard. Of course he wore a beard; in those days he would have been thought queer if he had not. Even the Harvard students who came to Bayport occasionally on summer tramping trips wore beards or sidewiskers; the very callowest Freshman sported and nourished a moustache.

"So you don't occupy the whole house, Judah?" asked the captain.

"No, no," replied Mr. Cahoon. "I live out in the back part. There's the kitchen and woodshed and dinin'-room out there and a couple of bedrooms. That's all *I* want. There's nine more bedrooms in that house, Cap'n," he declared solemnly. "That makes eleven altogether. Now what in tunket do you callate anybody'd ever do with eleven bedrooms?"

Kendrick shook his head. "Give it up, Judah," he said. "For the matter of that, I don't see what you do with two. Do you sleep in one week nights and the other on Sundays?"

Judah grinned. "No, no, Cap'n," he said. "I don't know myself why I keep that other bedroom fixed up. Callate I do it just for fun, kind of makin' believe I'm going to have company, I guess. It gets kind of lonesome there sometimes, 'specially meal times and evenin's. There I set at mess, you know, grand as the skipper of the *Great Republic*, cloth on the table, silver knife and fork, silver castor with blue glass vinegar and pepper-sass bottles, great, big, elegant

mustache cup with 'Forget Me Not' printed out on it in gold letters--everything so fine it couldn't be no finer--but by creepin', sometimes I can't help feelin' lonesome! Seems foolish, don't it, but I be."

Captain Kendrick did not speak. He pulled at his beard with more deliberation and the look in his eye was that of one watching the brightening dawn of an idea.

"I told Ogden so last time he was down," continued Mr. Cahoon. "He asked me if I was comfortable and if I wanted anything more and I told him I didn't. 'Only thing that ails me,' I says, 'is that I get kind of lonesome bein' by myself so much. Sometimes I wisht I had comp'ny.' 'Well, why don't you *have* comp'ny?' says he. 'You've got room enough, lord knows.' 'Yes,' I says, 'but who'll I have?' He laughed. 'That's your lookout,' says he. 'You can't expect me to hire a companion for you.'"

"Humph!" Kendrick regarded him thoughtfully. "So you would like company, would you, Judah?"

"Sartin sure I would, if 'twas the right kind. I got a cat and that helps a little mite. And Cap'n Shubal Hammond's wife told me yesterday she'd give me a young pig if I wanted one. That's what I'm cartin' home this little mite of seaweed for, to bed down the pig sty. But cats and hogs, they're all right enough, but they ain't human."

"Do you keep hens?"

This apparently harmless question seemed to arouse Mr. Cahoon's ire. His whiskers bristled and his nose flamed.

"Hens!" he repeated. "Don't talk to me about hens! No, sir, by the prophets, I don't keep hens! But them everlastin' Fair Harborers keep 'em and if they'd keep 'em to home I wouldn't say a word. But they don't. Half the time they're over my side of the fence raisin' blue hob with my garden. Hens! Don't talk to me about 'em! I hate the sight of the critters."

Kendrick smiled. "And after all," he observed, "hens aren't human, either."

Judah snorted. "Some are," he declared, "and them's the worst kind."

There was, doubtless, a hidden meaning in this speech, but if so Sears Kendrick did not seek to find it. Laying a hand upon the broad shoulder of his former sea-cook he lifted himself to his feet.

"Judah," he asked, briskly, "is that seaweed in your cart there dry?"

"Eh? Dry? Yes, yes, dry as a cat's back. Been layin' on the beach above tide mark ever since last winter. Why?"

"Do you suppose you could help me hoist myself aboard?"

"Aboard? Aboard that truck-wagon? For the land sakes, what for?"

"Because I want a ride. I've been in drydock here till I'm pretty nearly crazy. I want to go on a cruise, even if it isn't but a half mile one. Don't you want to cart me down to your anchorage and let me see how you and General Minot and the gilt whisk broom get along? I can sprawl on that seaweed and be as comfortable as a gull on a clam flat. Come on now! Heave ahead! Give us a hand up!"

"But--limpin' prophets, Cap'n Sears, I couldn't cart you up the main road of Bayport in a seaweed cart. You, of all men! What do you call 'late folks would say if they see me doin' it? Course I'd love to have you ride down and see how I'm livin'. If you'd set up on the thawt there," indicating the high seat of the truck-wagon, "I'd be proud to have you. But to haul you along on a load of seaweed that's goin' to bed down a hog! Cap'n, you *know* 'twouldn't be fittin'! Course you do."

His horror at the sacrilege was so ludicrous that Kendrick laughed aloud. However, he insisted that there was nothing unfitting in the idea; it was a good idea and founded upon common-sense.

"How long do you think these sprung sticks of mine would last," he said, referring to his legs, "if they were jouncin' up and down on that seat aloft there? And I couldn't climb up even if I wanted to. But, you and I between us, Judah, can get me in on that seaweed, and that's what we're goin' to do. Come, come! Tumble up! All hands on deck now! Lively!"

The familiar order, given with a touch of the old familiar crispness and authority, had its effect. Mr. Cahoon argued no more. Instead he sprang to attention, figuratively speaking.

"Aye, aye, sir!" he said. "Here she goes. Take it easy, Cap'n; don't hurry. Ease yourself down that bankin'. If we was to let go and you come down with a run there'd be the divil and all to pay, wouldn't there? So ... so.... Here we be, alongside. Now---- Aloft with ye."

They had reached the road by the tailboard of the wagon. And now Judah stooped, picked up his former skipper in his arms and swung him in upon the load of dry seaweed as if he were a two year old boy instead of a full-grown, and very much grown, man.

"Well," he asked, as he climbed to the seat, "all ready to make sail, be we? Any message you want to leave along with Sary? She won't know what end you've made, will she?"

"Oh, she'll guess I've gone buggy-ridin' with the doctor. He's been threatenin' to take me with him 'most any day now. Sarah'll be all right. Get under way, Judah."

"Aye, aye, sir. Git dap! Git dap! Limpin', creepin', crawlin', hoppin', jumpin'.... Starboard! *starboard*, you son of a Chinee! Need a tug to haul this critter into the channel, I swan you do! Git dap! All shipshape aft there, Cap'n Sears? Good enough! let her run."

The old white horse--like the whisk broom and the Rogers group, a part of the furniture of the General Minot place--plodded along the dusty road and the blue truck-wagon rolled and rattled behind him. Captain Kendrick, settling his invalid limbs in the most comfortable fashion, lay back upon the seaweed and stared at the sky seen through the branches of elms and silver-leaf poplars which arched above. He made no attempt to look over the sides of the cart. Raising himself upon an elbow to do so entailed a good deal of exertion and this was his first trip abroad since his accident. Besides, seeing would probably mean being seen and he was not in the mood to answer the questions of curious, even if sympathetic, townfolk. Judah made several attempts at conversation, but the replies were not satisfactory, so he gave it up after a little and, as was his habit, once more broke forth in song. Judah Cahoon, besides being sea cook on many, many voyages, had been "chantey man" on almost as many. His repertoire was, therefore, extensive and at times astonishing. Now, as he rocked back and forth upon the wagon seat, he caroled, not the *Dreadnought* chantey, but another, which told of a Yankee ship sailing down the Congo River, evidently in the old days of the slave trade.

"Who do you think is the cap'n of her?
Blow, boys, blow!
Old Holy Joe, the darky lover,
Blow, my bully boys, blow!
'What do you think they've got for dinner?
Blow, boys, blow!
Hot water soup, but a dum sight thinner,
Blow, my bully boys, blow!
'Oh, blow to-day and blow to-morrer,
Blow, boys, blow!
And blow for all old salts in sorrer,
Blow, my bully----'

"Oh, say, Cap'n Sears!"

"Yes, Judah?"

"They've put up the name sign on the Fair Harbor since you was in Bayport afore, ain't they? We're right off abreast of it now. Can't you hist yourself up and look over the side? It's some consider'ble of a sign, that is. Lobelia she left word to have that sign painted and set up last time she was here. She's over acrost in one of them Eyetalian ports now, so I understand, her and that feller she married. Eh? Ain't that quite a sign, now, Cap'n?"

Kendrick, because his driver seemed to be so eager, sat up and looked over the sideboard of the truck-wagon. The vehicle was just passing a long stretch of ornate black iron fence in the center of which was a still more ornate gate with an iron arch above it. In the curve of the arch swung a black sign, its edges gilded, and with this legend printed upon it in gilt letters:

FAIR HARBOR
For Mariners' Women
"Without, the stormy winds increase,
Within the harbor all is peace."

Behind the fence was a good-sized tract of lawn heavily shaded with trees, a brick walk, and at the rear a large house. The house itself was of the stately Colonial type and its simple dignity was in marked contrast to the fence.

Captain Kendrick recognized the establishment of course. It, with its next door neighbor the General Minot place, was for so many years the home of old Captain Sylvanus Seymour. Captain Sylvanus, during his lifetime, was active claimant for the throne of King of Bayport. He was the town's leading Democratic politician, its wealthiest citizen, with possibly one exception--its most lavish entertainer--with the same possible exception--and when the Governor came to the Cape on "Cattle Show Day" he was sure to be a guest at the Seymour place--unless General Ashahel Minot, who was the exception mentioned--had gotten his invitation accepted first. For General Minot was Bayport's leading Whig, as Captain Sylvanus was its leading Democrat, and the rivalry between the two was intense. Nevertheless, they were, in public at least, extremely polite and friendly, and when they did agree--as on matters concerning the village tax rate and the kind of doctrine permitted to be preached in the Orthodox meeting-house--their agreement was absolute and overwhelming. In their day the Captain and the General dominated Bayport by sea and land.

But that day had passed. They had both been dead for some years. Captain Seymour died first and his place and property were inherited by his maiden daughter, Miss Lobelia Seymour. Sears Kendrick remembered Lobelia as a dressy, romantic spinster, very much in evidence at the church socials and at meetings of the Shakespeare Reading Society, and who sang a somewhat shrill soprano in the choir.

Now, as he looked over the side of Judah Cahoon's truck-wagon and saw the sign hanging beneath the arch above the gate of the Seymour place he began dimly to remember other things, bits of news embodied in letters which his sister, Sarah Macomber, had written him at various times. Lobelia Seymour had--she had done something with the family home, something unusual. What was it? Why, yes....

"Judah," he said, "Lobelia Seymour turned that place into a--a sort of home, didn't she?"

Judah twisted on the wagon seat to stare at him.

"What are you askin' me that for, Cap'n Sears?" he demanded. "You know more about it than I do, I guess likely. Anyhow, you ought to; you was brought up in Bayport; I wasn't."

"Yes, but I've been away from it ten times longer than I've been in it. I'd forgotten all about Lobelia. Seems to me Sarah wrote me somethin' about her, though, and that she had turned her father's place into a home for women."

"For mariners' women, that's what she calls it. Didn't you see it on the sign? Ho, ho! that's a good one, ain't it, Cap'n Sears? 'Mariners' women!' Course what it means is sea cap'ns widders and sisters and such, but it does sound kind of Brigham Youngy, don't it? Haw, haw! Well, fur's that goes I have known mariners that--Hi! 'Vast heavin' there! What in time you tryin' to do, carry away that gate post? Whoa! Jumpin' creepin', limpin'---- Whoa! *Look* at the critter!" in huge disgust and referring to the white horse, who had suddenly evinced a desire to turn in at a narrow driveway and to gallop while doing so. "Look at him!" repeated Judah. "When I go up to the depot he'll stand right in the middle of the railroad track and go to sleep. I have to whale the timbers out of him to get him awake enough to step ahead so's a train of cars won't stave in his broadside. But get him home here where he can see the barn, the place where he knows I stow the oats, and he wants to run right over top of a stone wall. Can't hardly hold him, I can't. Who-a-a!... Well, Cap'n Sears, here we be at the General Minot place. Here's where I sling my hammock these days."

Kendrick looked about him, at the grassy back yard, with the ancient settee beneath the locust tree, the raspberry and currant bushes along the wall, the venerable apple and pear trees on the other side of the wall, at the trellis over the back door and the grape vine heavily festooning it, at the big weather-beaten barn, carriage house and pig-pens beyond. Turning, he looked upward at the high rambling house, its dormers and gables, its white clapboards and green window blinds. The sunlight streamed over it, but beneath the vine-hung lattice and under the locust tree were coolness and shadow. The wing of the big house, projecting out to the corner of the drive, shut off the view to or from the road. Somehow, the whole yard, with its peace and quiet and sunshine and shadow, and above all, its retirement, made a great appeal. It seemed so homelike, so shut away, so comforting, like a sheltered little backwater where a storm-beaten craft might lie snug.

Mr. Cahoon made anxious inquiry.

"What do you think of it, Cap'n?" he asked.

His visitor did not reply. Instead he said, "Judah, I'd like to see your quarters inside, may I?"

"Sartin sure you may. Right this way. Look out for the rocks in the channel," indicating the brick floor beneath the lattice. "Two or three of them bricks stick up more'n they ought to. Twice since I've been here the stem of one of my boots has fetched up on them bricks and I've all but pitch-poled. Take your time, Cap'n Sears, take your time. Here, lean on my shoulder, I'll pilot you."

The captain smiled. "Much obliged, Judah," he said, "but I shan't need your shoulder. There aren't any stairs to climb, are there? Stair climbin' is too much for me yet awhile. Perhaps it will always be. I don't know."

The tone in which he uttered the last sentence caused his companion to turn his head and regard him with concern.

"Sho, sho, sho!" he exclaimed, hastily. "What kind of talk's that, Cap'n! I'll live to see you shin up and hang your hat on the main truck yet.... There, here's the galley. Like it, do you?"

The "galley" was, of course, the kitchen. It was huge and low and very old-fashioned. Also it was, just now, spotlessly clean. From it opened the woodshed, and toward the front, the dining room.

"I don't eat in here much," observed Judah, referring to the dining room. "Generally mess in the galley. Comes more natural to me. The settin' room, and back parlor and front parlor are out for'ard yonder. Come on, Cap'n Sears."

The captain shook his head. "Never mind them just now," he said. "I want to see the bedrooms, those you use, Judah. That is, unless they're up aloft."

"No, no. Right on the lower deck, both of 'em. Course there *is* plenty more up aloft, but, as I told you, I never bother 'em. Here's my berth," opening a door from the sitting room. "And here's what I call my spare stateroom. I keep it ready for comp'ny. Not that I ever have any, you understand."

Judah's bedroom was small and snug. The "spare stateroom" was a trifle larger. In both were the old-fashioned mahogany furniture of our great-grandfathers. Mr. Cahoon apologized for it.

"Kind of old-timey stuff down below here," he explained. "Just common folks used these rooms, I judge likely. But you'd ought to see them up on the quarter deck. There's your high-toned fixin's! Marble tops to the bureaus and tables and washstands, and fruit--peaches and pears and all sorts--carved out on the headboards of the beds, and wreaths on the walls all made out of shells, and--and kind of brass doodads at the tops of the window curtains. Style, don't talk!... Sort of a pretty look-off through that deadlight, ain't there, Cap'n Sears? Seems so to me."

Kendrick had raised the window shade of the spare stateroom and was looking out. The view extended across the rolling hills and little pine groves and cranberry bogs, to the lower road with its white houses and shade trees. And beyond the lower road were more hills and pines, a pretty little lake--Crowell's Pond, it was called--sand dunes and then the blue water of the Bay. The captain looked at the view for a few moments, then, turning, looked once more at the room and its furniture.

"So you've never had a passenger in your spare stateroom, Judah?" he asked.

"Nary one, not yet."

"Expectin' any?"

"Nary one. Don't know nobody to expect."

"But you think it would be all right if you did have some one? Your er--owner--young Minot, I mean, wouldn't object?"

"Object! No, no. He told me to. 'I should think you'd die livin' here alone,' he says. 'Why don't you take a boarder? I would if I was you.'"

Sears Kendrick stopped looking at the room and its furniture and turned his gaze upon his former cook.

"Take a boarder?" he repeated. "Did Ogden Minot tell you to take a boarder? And do you think he meant it?"

"Sartin sure he meant it. He don't care what I do--in reason, of course."

"Humph!... Well, then, Judah, why don't you take one?"

"Eh? Take one what? A boarder? Who'd I take, for thunder's sakes?"

Captain Kendrick smiled.

"Me," he said.

CHAPTER III

For the half hour which followed the captain's utterance of that simple little word, "Me," exclamation, protestation and argument heated and unwontedly disturbed the atmosphere of the Minot spare stateroom and when the discussion adjourned there, of the little back yard. The old white horse, left to himself and quite forgotten, placidly meandered on until he reached a point where he could reach the tender foliage of a young pear tree which leaned over the wall toward him. Then, with a sigh of content, he proceeded to devour the tree. No one paid the least attention to him. Captain Kendrick, now seated upon the bench beneath the locust, was quietly but persistently explaining why he desired to become a boarder and lodger at Mr. Cahoon's quarters on the after lower deck of the General Minot house, and Judah was vociferously and profanely expostulating against such an idea.

"It ain't fittin', I tell you," he declared, over and over again. "It ain't fittin', it's the craziest notion ever I heard tell of. What'll folks think if they know you're here--you, Cap'n Sears Kendrick, that all hands knows is the smartest cap'n that ever sailed out of Boston harbor? What'll they say if they know you've hove anchor along of me, stayin' here in the--in the fo'castle of this house; eatin' the grub I cook--"

"I've eaten your cookin' for a good many months at a stretch, Judah. You never heard me find any fault with it, did

you?"

"Don't make no odds. That's different, Cap'n Sears, and you know 'tis. It's ridiculous, stark, ravin' ridiculous."

"So you don't care for my company?"

"Don't tuk so! Wouldn't I be proud to have ye? Wouldn't I ruther have you aboard here than anybody else on earth? Course I would!"

"All right. And you're goin' to have me. So that's all settled."

"Settled! Who said 'twas settled? Course 'tain't settled. You don't understand, Cap'n Sears. 'Tain't how I feel about it. 'Tain't even maybe how you feel about it. But how'll your sister feel about it? How'll Joel feel? How'll the doctor feel? How'll the folks in town feel? How'll--"

"Oh, shh! shh! Avast, Judah! How'll the cat feel? And the pig? What do I care? How'll your old horse feel if he eats the other half of that pear tree? That's considerably more important."

Judah turned, saw the combination of ancient equine and youthful tree and rushed bellowing to the rescue of the latter. When he returned, empty of profanity and copiously perspiring, his former skipper was ready for him.

"Listen, Judah," he said. "Listen, and keep your main hatch closed for five minutes, if you can. I want to come here to board with you for a while and I've got the best reasons on earth. Keep still and I'll tell you again what they are."

He proceeded to give those reasons. They were that he had little money and must therefore live inexpensively. He would not remain at his sister's because she had more than enough care and work in her own family. George Kent boarded with her and one boarder was sufficient. Then--and this was the principal reason for selecting the General Minot spare stateroom--he wished to live somewhere away from observation, where he could be alone, or nearly alone, where he would not be plagued with questions.

"You see, Judah," he said, "I've had a bump in more ways than one. My pride was knocked flat as well as my pocket book. The doctor says I've got to stay ashore for a good while. He says it will be months before I'm ready for sea--if I'm ever ready--"

"Hold on, hold on! Cap'n Sears, you mustn't talk so. Course you'll be ready."

"All right, we'll hope I will. But while I'm gettin' ready to be ready I want to lie snug. I don't want to see a whole lot of people and have to listen to--to sympathy and all that. I've made a fool of myself, and that kind of a fool doesn't deserve sympathy. And I don't want it, anyhow. Give me a pair of sound spars and my health once more and you won't find me beggin' for sympathy--no, nor anything else.... But there," he added, straightening and throwing back his shoulders in the way Judah had seen him do so often on shipboard and which his mates had learned to recognize as a sign that the old man's mind was made up, "that's enough of that. Let's stick to the course. I like this place of yours, Judah, and I'm comin' here to live. I'm weak yet and you can throw me out, of course," he added, "but I tell you plainly you can't *talk* me out, so it's no use to try."

Nevertheless, Mr. Cahoon kept on trying and, when he did give in only gave in halfway. If Captain Sears was bound to do such a fool thing he didn't know how he was going to stop him, but at least he did insist that the captain should take a trial cruise before signing on for the whole voyage.

"I tell you what you do, Cap'n Sears," he said. "You make me a little visit of--of two, three days, say. Then, if you callate you can stand the grub--and me--and if the way Bayport folks'll be talkin' ain't enough to send you back to Sary's again, why--why, then I suppose you can stay right along, if you want to. 'Twould be fine to have you aboard! Whew!"

He grinned from ear to ear. The captain accepted the compromise.

"All right, Judah," he said. "We'll call the first few days a visit and I'll begin by stayin' to dinner now. How'll that do, eh?"

Mr. Cahoon affirmed that it would do finely. The only drawback was that there was nothing in the house for dinner.

"I was callatin' to go down to the shore," he said, "and dig a bucket of clams. Course they'll do well enough for me, but for you--"

"For me they will be just the ticket," declared Kendrick. "Go ahead and dig 'em, Judah. And on the way stop and tell Sarah I'm goin' to stay here and help eat 'em. After dinner--well, after dinner I shall have to go back there again, I suppose, but to-morrow I'm comin' up here to stay."

So, still under protest, Judah, having unloaded the seaweed, climbed once more to the high seat of the truck-wagon and the old horse dragged him out of the yard. After the row of trees bordering the road had hidden him from sight Kendrick could hear the rattle of the cart and a fragment of the *Dreadnought* chantey.

"Now the *Dreadnought's* becalmed on the banks of Newfoundland,
Where the water's all green and the bottom's all sand.
Says the fish of the ocean that swim to and fro:
'She's the Liverpool packet, good Lord, let her go.'"

Rattle and chantey died away in the distance. Quiet, warm and lazy, settled down upon the back yard of the General Minot place. A robin piped occasionally and, from somewhere off to the left, hens clucked, but these were the only sounds. Kendrick judged that the hens must belong to neighbors; Judah had expressed detestation of all poultry. There was not sufficient breeze to stir the branches of the locust or the leaves of the grapevine. The captain leaned back on the settee and yawned. He felt a strong desire to go to sleep.

Now sleeping in the daytime had always been a trick which he despised and against which he had railed all his life. He had declared times without number that a man who slept in the daytime--unless of course he had been on watch all night or something like that--was a loafer, a good for nothing, a lubber too lazy to be allowed on earth. The day was a period made for decent, respectable people to work in, and for a man who did not work, and love to work, Captain Sears Kendrick had no use whatever. Many so-called able seamen, and even first and second mates, had received painstaking instructions in this section of their skipper's code.

But now--now it was different. Why shouldn't he sleep in the daytime? There was nothing else for him to do. He had no business to transact, no owners to report to, no vessel to load or unload or to fit for sea. He had heard the doctor's whisper--not meant for his ears--that his legs might never be right again, and the word "might" had, he believed, been substituted for one of much less ambiguous meaning. No, all he was fit for, he reflected bitterly, was to sit in the sun and sleep, like an old dog with the rheumatism. He sighed, settled himself upon the bench and closed his eyes.

But he opened them again almost at once. During that very brief interval of darkness there had flashed before his mind a picture of a small park in New York as he had once seen it upon a summer Sunday afternoon. The park walks had been bordered with rows of benches and upon each bench slumbered at least one human derelict who, apparently, realized his worthlessness and had given up the fight. Captain Kendrick sat upright on the settee, beneath the locust tree. Was he, too, giving up--surrendering to Fate? No, by the Lord, he was not! And he was not going to drop off to sleep on that settee like one of those tramps on a park bench.

He rose to his feet, picked up his cane, and started to walk--somewhere. Direction made little difference, so long as he kept awake and kept going. There was a path leading off between the raspberry and currant bushes, and slowly, but stubbornly, he limped along that path. The path ended at a gate in a white picket fence. The gate was unlatched and there was an orchard on the other side of it. Captain Sears opened the gate and limped on under the apple trees. They were old trees and large and the shade they cast was cool and pleasant. The soft green slope beneath them tempted him strongly. He was beginning to realize that those shaky legs of his were tiring in this, the longest walk they had attempted since the accident. He had a mind to sit down upon the bank beneath the apple trees and rest. Then he remembered the mental picture of the tramps on the park benches and stubbornly refused to yield. Leaning more heavily upon his cane, he limped on.

The path emerged from beneath the apple trees, ascended a little rise and disappeared around the shoulder of a high thick clump of lilacs. Kendrick, tiring more and more rapidly, plodded on. His suffering limbs were, so to speak, shrieking for mercy but he would not give it to them. He set himself a "stint"; he would see what was beyond the clump of lilacs, then he would rest, and then he would hobble back to the Minot yard. Incidentally he realized that he had been a fool ever to leave it.

His teeth grimly set and each step a labor, he plodded up the little rise and turned the corner of the lilac bushes. There he stopped, not entirely because his "stint" was done, but because what he saw surprised him.

Beyond the lilacs was a small garden, or rather a series of small gardens. The divisions between them appeared to be exactly the same size and the plots themselves precisely the same size and shape. There were--although the captain did not learn this until later--seven of these plots, each exactly six by nine feet. But there resemblance ceased, for each was planted and arranged with a marked individuality. For example, the one nearest the lilac bushes was laid out in a sort of checkerboard pattern of squares, one square containing a certain sort of old-fashioned flower and its neighbors other varieties. The plot adjoining the checkerboard was arranged in diamonds and spirals; the planting here was floral also, whereas the next was evidently utilitarian, being given up entirely to corn, potatoes, onions, beets and other vegetables. And the next seemed to be covered with nothing except a triumphant growth of weeds.

At the rear of these odd garden plots was a little octagonal building, evidently a summer-house. Over its door, a door fronting steps leading down to the gardens, was a sign bearing the name "The Eyrie." And behind the summer-house was a stretch of rather shabby lawn, a half dozen trees, and the rear of a large house. Captain Sears recognized the house as the Seymour residence, now the "Fair Harbor." He had strayed off the course and was trespassing upon his neighbors' premises. This fact was immediately brought to his attention. From somewhere at the rear of the gardens a

shrill feminine voice exclaimed:

"Mercy on us! Who's that?"

And another feminine voice chimed in:

"Eh! I declare it's a man, ain't it?"

And the first voice observed sharply:

"Of course it is. You didn't think I thought it was a cow, did you?"

"But what's he doin' here? Is he a tramp?"

"I don't know, but I'm going to find out. Hi! Here! You--man--where are you going?"

Captain Sears had, by this time, located the voices as coming from the "Eyrie," the summer-house with the poetical name. He had so far, however, been able to see nothing of the speakers. But now the tangle of woodbine and morning-glory which draped the front of the summer-house was drawn aside and revealed a rustic window--or unglazed window opening--with two heads framed in it like a double portrait. Both of these heads were feminine, but one was thin-faced and sharp-featured, and gray-haired, while the other was like a full moon--a full moon with several chins--and its hair was a startlingly vivid black parted in the middle and with a series of very regular ripples on each side.

It was the thin face which was hailing him. The other was merely staring, open-eyed and open-mouthed.

"Here, you--man!" repeated the shrill voice--belonging to the thin face. "Where are you going?"

The captain smiled. "Why, nowhere in particular, ma'am," he replied. "I was just figurin' that I'd gone about as far as I could this voyage."

His smile became a chuckle, but there were no symptoms of amusement visible upon the faces framed in the window of the Eyrie. The thin lips merely pressed tighter and the plump ones opened wider, that was all.

"Why don't you answer my question?" demanded the thin woman. "What are you doing on these premises?"

"Why, nothin' in particular, ma'am. I was just tryin' to take a little walk and not makin' a very good job at it."

There was an interruption here. The full moon broke in to ask a question of its own.

"Who is he? What's he talkin' about?" it demanded.

"I don't know who he is--yet."

"Well, what's he talkin' about? Make him speak louder."

"I will, if you give me a chance. He says he is taking a walk. What are you taking a walk in here for? Don't you know it isn't allowed?"

"Why, no, ma'am, I didn't. In fact I didn't realize I was in here until I--well--until I got here."

"What is he sayin'?" demanded the moon-face again, and somewhat testily. "I can't hear a word."

Now the captain's tone had been at least ordinarily loud, so it was evident that the plump woman's hearing was defective. Her curiosity, however, was not in the least impaired.

"What's that man talkin' about now?" she persisted. Her companion became impatient.

"Oh, I don't know," she snapped. "Do give me a chance, won't you? I think he's been drinking. He says he doesn't know where he is or how he got here."

Kendrick thought it high time to protest. Also to raise his voice when doing so.

"That wasn't exactly it," he shouted. "I was takin' a little walk, that's all. I have to navigate pretty slow for my legs aren't just right."

"What did he say wa'n't right?" demanded the plump female.

"His legs."

"Eh! Legs! What's he talkin' about his legs for?"

"Oh, I don't know! Do be still a minute. It's his head that isn't right, I guess he means.... Don't you know you're trespassing? What do you mean by coming in here?"

"Well, ma'am, I didn't mean anything in particular. I just happened in by accident. I'm sorry."

"Humph! You didn't come in here to run off with anything that didn't belong to you, I hope."

The captain looked at her for a moment. Then his lip twitched.

"No, ma'am," he said, solemnly, "I didn't come with that idea--but--"

"But? What do you mean by 'but'?"

"But I didn't realize what there was in here to run off with. If I had.... There, I guess I'd better go. Good day, ladies. Sorry I troubled you."

He lifted his cap, turned, and limped out of sight around the clump of lilacs. From behind him came a series of indignant gasps and exclamations.

"Why--why--Well, I never in all my born days! The saucy, impudent--"

And the voice of the moon-faced one raised in bewildered entreaty:

"What was it? What did he say? Elviry Snowden, why don't you tell me what 'twas he *said*?"

Captain Kendrick hobbled back to the Minot yard. He hobbled through the orchard gate, leaving it ajar, and reaching the bench beneath the locust tree, collapsed upon it. For some time he was conscious of very little except the ache in his legs and the fact that breathing was a difficult and jerky operation. Then, as the fatigue and pain ceased to be as insistent, the memory of his interview with the pair in the Eyrie returned to him and he began to chuckle. After a time he fancied that he heard a sympathetic chuckle behind him. It seemed to come from the vegetable garden, Judah's garden, which, so Mr. Cahoon told his former skipper, he had set out himself and was "sproutin' and comin' up better'n any other garden in the town of Bayport, if I do say it as shouldn't."

Kendrick could not imagine who could be chuckling in that garden. Also he could not imagine where the chuckler could be hiding, unless it was behind the rows of raspberry and currant bushes. Slowly and painfully he rose to his feet and peered over the bushes. Then the mystery was explained. The "chuckles" were clucks. A flock of at least a dozen healthy and energetic hens were enthusiastically busy in the Cahoon beds. Their feet were moving like miniature steam shovels and showers of earth and infant vegetables were moving likewise. Judah had boasted that the fruits of his planting were "comin' up." If he had seen them at that moment he would have realized how fast they were coming up.

The sight aroused Captain Kendrick's ire. He was, in a way of speaking, guardian of that vegetable patch. Judah had not formally appointed him to that position, but he had gone away and, by the fact of so doing, had left it in his charge. He felt responsible for its safety.

"Shoo!" shouted the captain and, leaning upon his cane, limped toward the garden.

"Shoo!" he roared again. The hens paid about as much attention to the roar as a gang of ditch diggers might pay to the buzz of a mosquito. Obviously something more drastic than shooing was necessary. The captain stooped and picked up a stone. He threw the stone and hit a hen. She rose in the air with a frightened squawk, ran around in a circle, and then, coming to anchor in a patch of tiny beets, resumed excavating operations.

Kendrick picked up another stone, a bigger one, and threw that. He missed the mark this time, but the shot was not entirely without results; it hit one of Mr. Cahoon's cucumber frames and smashed a pane to atoms. The crash of glass had the effect of causing some of the fowl to stop digging and appear nervous. But these were in the minority.

The captain was, by this time, annoyed. He was on the verge of losing his temper. Beyond the little garden and between the raspberry and currant bushes he caught a glimpse of the path and the gate through which he had just come on his way back from the grounds of the Fair Harbor. That gate he saw, with a twinge of conscience, was wide open. Obviously he must have neglected to latch it on passing through, it had swung open, and the hens had taken advantage of the sally port to make their foray upon Judah's pet vegetables. They were Fair Harbor hens. Somehow this fact did not tend to deepen Sears Kendrick's affection for them.

"Shoo! Clear out, you pesky nuisances!" he shouted, and waving his cane, charged laboriously down upon the fowl. They retreated before him, but their retreat was strategic. They moved from beets to cabbages, from cabbages to young corn, from corn to onions. And they scratched and pecked as they withdrew. Nevertheless, they were withdrawing and in the direction of the open gate; in the midst of his panting and pain the captain found a slight comfort in the fact that he was driving the creatures toward the gate.

At last they were almost there--that is, the main body. Kendrick noted, with sudden uneasiness, that there were stragglers. A gaily decorated old rooster, a fowl with a dissipated and immoral swagger and a knowing, devil-may-care tilt of the head, was sidling off to the left. Two or three young pullets were following the lead of this ancient pirate, evidently fascinated by his recklessness. The captain turned to head off the wanderers. They squawked and ran hither and thither. He succeeded in turning them back, but, at the moment of his success, heard triumphant cluckings at his rear. The rest of the flock had, while his attention was diverted by the rooster and his followers, galloped joyfully back to the garden again. Now, as Captain Sears gazed, the rooster and his satellites flew to join them. All hands--or, more

literally, all feet--resumed excavating with the abandon of conscientious workers striving to make up lost time.

And now Sears Kendrick did lose his temper. Probably at another time he might have laughed, but now he was tired, in pain, and in no mood to see the humorous side of the situation. He expressed his opinion of the hens and the rooster, using quarter deck idioms and withholding little. If the objects of his wrath were disturbed they did not show it. If they were shocked they hid their confusion in the newly turned earth of Judah Cahoon's squash bed.

Whether they were shocked or not Sears did not stop to consider. He intended to shock them to the fullest extent of the word's meaning. At his feet was a stick, almost a log, part of the limb of a pear tree. He picked up this missile and hurled it at the marauders. It missed them but it struck in the squash bed and tore at least six of the delicate young squashlings from their moorings. Kendrick plunged after it--the hens separating as he advanced and rejoining at his rear--picked up the log and, turning, again hurled it.

"There!" roared the captain, "take that, damn you!"

One of the hens did "take it." So did some one else. The missile struck just beneath the fowl as she fled, lifted her and a peck or two of soil as well, and hurled the whole mass almost into the face of a person who, unseen until then, had advanced along the path from the gate and had arrived at that spot at that psychological instant. This person uttered a little scream, the hen fled with insane yells, the log and its accompanying shower fell back to earth, and Sears Kendrick and the young woman--for the newcomer was a young woman--stood and looked at each other.

She was bareheaded and her hair was dark and abundant, and she was wearing a gingham dress and a white apron. So much he noticed at this, their first meeting. Afterward he became aware that she was slender and that her age might perhaps be twenty-four or twenty-five. At that moment, of course, he did not notice anything except that her apron and dress--yes, even her hair and face--were plentifully besprinkled with earth and that she was holding a hand to her eyes as if they, too, might have received a share of the results of the terrestrial disturbance.

"Oh!" he stammered. "I'm awfully sorry! I--I hope I didn't hurt you."

If she heard him she did not answer, but, removing her hand, opened and shut her eyes rapidly. The captain's alarm grew as he watched this proceeding.

"I--I *do* hope I didn't hurt you," he repeated. "It--it didn't put your eyes out, did it?"

She smiled, although rather uncertainly. "No," she said.

"You're sure?"

"Yes." The smile became broader. "It's not quite as bad as that, I guess. I seem to be able to see all right."

He drew a relieved breath. "Well, I'm thankful for so much, then," he announced. "But it's all over your dress--and--and in your hair--and.... Oh, I *am* sorry!"

She laughed at this outburst. "It is all right," she declared. "Of course it was an accident, and I'm not hurt a bit, really."

"I'm glad of that. Yes, it was an accident--your part of it, I mean. I didn't see you at all. I meant the part the hen got, though."

Her laugh was over, but there was still a twinkle in her eye. Kendrick was, by this time, aware that her eyes were brown.

"Yes," she observed, demurely, "I--gathered that you did."

"Yes, I--" It suddenly occurred to him that his language had been as emphatic as his actions. "Good lord!" he exclaimed. "I forgot. I beg your pardon for that, too. When I lose my temper I am liable to--to make salt water remarks, I'm afraid. And those hens.... Eh? There they are again, hard at it! Will you excuse me while I kill three or four of 'em? You see, I'm in charge of that garden and.... *Get out!*"

This last was, of course, another roar at the fowl, who, under the leadership of the rake-helly rooster, were scratching harder than ever in the beds. The captain reached for another missile, but his visitor stepped forward.

"Please don't," she begged. "Please don't kill them."

"Eh? Why not? They ought to be killed."

"I know it, but I don't want them killed--yet, at any rate. You see, they are my hens."

"Yours?" The captain straightened up and looked at her. "You don't mean it?" he exclaimed.

"Yes, I do. They are mine, or my mother's, which is the same thing. I am dreadfully sorry they got in here. I'll have them out in just a minute. Oh, yes, I will, really."

Kendrick regarded her doubtfully.

"Well," he said, slowly, "I know it isn't polite to contradict a lady but if you'll tell me *how* you are goin' to get 'em out

without killin' 'em, I'll be ever so much obliged. You can't drive 'em, I know that."

"I shan't try. Just wait, I'll be right back."

She hurried away, down the path and through the open gate. Captain Sears Kendrick looked after her. Behind and about him the Fair Harbor hens clucked and scratched blissfully.

In very little more than the promised minute the young woman returned. She carried a round wooden receptacle--what Cape Codders used to call a "two quart measure"--and, as she approached, she shook it. Something within rattled. The hens, some of them, heard the rattle and ceased their digging.

"Come, chick, chick! Come, biddy, biddy, biddy!" called the young woman, rattling the measure. More of the fowl gave up their labors, and looked and listened. Some even began to follow her. She dipped a hand into the measure, withdrew it filled with corn, and scattered a few grains in the path.

"Come, biddy, biddy, biddy!" she said again.

And the biddies came. Forgetting the possibilities of Judah Cahoon's garden, they rushed headlong upon the golden certainties of those yellow kernels. The young woman retreated along the path, scattering corn as she went, and after her scrambled and pecked and squawked the fowl. Even the sophisticated rooster yielded to temptation and was among the leaders in the rush. The corn bearer and the flock passed through the open gate, along the path beneath the Fair Harbor apple trees, out of sight around the bend. Sears Kendrick was left alone upon the battle ground, amid the dead and wounded young vegetables.

But he was not left alone long. A few minutes later his visitor returned. She had evidently hurried, for there was a red spot on each of her cheeks and she was breathing quickly. She passed through the gate into the grounds of the General Minot place and closed that gate behind her.

"There!" she said. "Now they are locked up in the hen yard. How in the world they ever got out of there I don't see. I suppose some one left the gate open. I--What were you going to say?"

The captain had been about to confess that it was he who left the gate open, but he changed his mind. Apparently she had been on the point of saying something more. The confession could wait.

"What was it?" asked the young woman.

"Oh, nothin', nothin'."

"Well, I suppose it doesn't matter much how they got out, as long as they did. But I am *very* sorry they got into Mr. Cahoon's garden. I hope they haven't completely ruined it."

They both turned to survey the battlefield. It was--like all battlefields after the strife is ended--a sad spectacle.

"Oh, dear!" exclaimed the visitor. "I am afraid they have. What *will* Mr. Cahoon say?"

The captain smiled slightly.

"I hope you don't expect me to answer that," he observed.

"Why?... Oh, I see! Well, I don't know that I should blame him much. Have--have they left anything?"

"Oh, yes! Yes, indeed. There are a good many--er--sprouts left. And they dug up a lot of weeds besides. Judah ought to be thankful for the weeds, anyhow."

"I am afraid he won't be, under the circumstances."

"Maybe not, but there is one thing that, under the same circumstances, he *ought* to be thankful for. That is, that you came when you did. You may not know it, but I had been tryin' to get those hens out of that garden for--for a year, I guess. It seems longer, but I presume likely it wasn't more than a year."

She laughed again. "No," she said, "I guess it wasn't more than that."

"Probably not. If it had been any longer, judgin' by the way they worked, they'd have dug out the underpinnin' and had the house down by this time. How did you happen to come? Did you hear the--er--broad-sides?"

"Why, no, I--But that reminds me. Have you seen a tramp around here?"

"A tramp? What sort of a tramp?"

"I don't know. Elvira--I mean Miss Snowden--said he was a tall, dark man and Aurora thought he was rather thick-set and sandy. But they both agree that he was a dreadful, rough-looking creature who carried a big club and had a queer slouchy walk. And he came in this direction, so they thought."

"He did, eh? Humph! Odd I didn't see him. I've been here all the time. Where was he when they saw him first?"

"Over on our property. In the Fair Harbor grounds, I mean. He came out of the bushes, so Elvira and Aurora say, and spoke to them. Insulted them, Elvira says."

"Sho! Well, well! I wonder where he went."

"I can't think. I supposed of course you must have seen him. It was only a little while ago, not more than an hour. Have you been here all that time?"

"Yes, I've been here for the last two hours. What part of your grounds was it? Would you like to have me go over there and look around?"

"No, thank you. You are very kind, but I am sure it won't be necessary. He has gone by now, of course."

"I should be glad to try." Then, noticing her glance at his limp, he added: "Oh, I can navigate after a fashion, well enough for a short cruise like that. But it is funny that, if there was a tramp there such a little while ago, I didn't run afoul of him. Why, I was over there myself."

"You were?"

"Yes, you see, I----"

He stopped short. He had been about to tell of his short walk and how he had inadvertently trespassed within the Fair Harbor boundaries. But before he could speak the words a sudden and amazing thought flashed upon him.

"Eh?" he cried. "Why--why, I wonder----"

His visitor was leaning forward. Judging by her expression, she, too, was experiencing a similar sensation of startled surmise.

"Why----" repeated the captain.

"Oh!" exclaimed the young woman.

"You don't suppose----"

"It couldn't possibly be that----"

"Wait a minute, please. Just a minute." Sears held up his hand. "Where did those folks of yours see this tramp? Were they in a--in a kind of roundhouse--summer-house, you might call it?"

"Why, yes. They were in the Eyrie."

"That's it, the Eyrie. And is one of the--er--ladies rather tall and narrow in the beam, gray-haired, and speaks quick and--school-marmy?"

"Yes. That is Miss Elvira Snowden."

"Of course--Elvira. That's what the other one called her. And she--the other one--is short and broad and--and hard of hearin'?"

"Yes. Her name is Aurora Chase. Is it possible that you----"

"Just a second more. Has this short one got a--a queer sort of hair rig? Black as tar and with kind of--of wrinkles in it?"

She smiled at this description. "Yes," she said. "Do you mean that *you* are----"

"The tramp? I guess likely I am. I was over on your premises just a little while ago and met those two ladies."

"But you can't be. They said he--the tramp--was a dreadful, rough man, with a club and--and----"

"Here's the club." Captain Kendrick exhibited his cane. "And these lame legs of mine would account for that slouchy walk they told you about. I guess there isn't much doubt that I am the tramp. But I'm sorry if they thought I insulted 'em. I surely didn't mean to."

He described the meeting by the Eyrie and repeated the dialogue as he remembered it.

"So you see," he said, in conclusion, "that's all there is to it. I suppose that hint of mine about bein' tempted to run off with one of 'em is the nearest to an insult of any of it. Perhaps I shouldn't have said it, but--but it popped into my head and I couldn't hold it back. I didn't really mean it," he added solemnly. "I wouldn't have run off with one of 'em for the world."

This, and the accompanying look, was too much. His visitor had been listening and trying to appear grave, although her eyes were twinkling. But now she burst out laughing.

"Honest I wouldn't," reiterated Captain Sears. "And I'm sorry for that insult."

"Absurd! You needn't be. If there was any insult it was the other way about. The idea of Elvira's suggesting that you

came over there to steal. Well, we've settled the tramp, at any rate, and I apologize for the way you were treated, Mr.----"

"Kendrick. My name is Kendrick."

"Yes, Mr. Kendrick. And I am very sorry about the garden, too. Please tell Mr. Cahoon so, and tell him I think I can promise that the gate won't be left open again."

"I'll tell him when he comes back. He'll be here pretty soon, I guess. He and I are old shipmates. He shipped cook aboard of me for a good many voyages."

She was moving toward the path and the gate, but now she paused and turned to look at him. There was a new expression on her face, an expression of marked interest.

"Oh!" she exclaimed. "Are you--are you Cap'n Sears Kendrick? The one who was--hurt?"

"Wrecked in the train smash up? Yes, I'm the one. Look like a total wreck, don't I?"

He laughed as he said it, but there was a taint of bitterness in the laugh. She did not laugh. Instead she took a step toward him and involuntarily put out her hand.

"Oh, I'm *so* sorry!" she said.

"Eh? Oh, you needn't be. I'm gettin' along tip-top. Able to walk and ride and--er--chase hens. That's doin' pretty well for one day."

"I know. But they were my--our--hens and they must have tired you so. Please forgive us. I won't," with a smile, "ask you to forgive them."

"Oh, that's all right, that's all right, Miss--er----"

"Berry. I am Elizabeth Berry. My mother is in charge here at the Harbor."

"Harbor? Oh, yes, over yonder. Berry? Berry? The only Berry I remember around here was Cap'n Isaac Berry. Cap'n Ike, we young fellows used to call him. I went to sea with him once, my first voyage second mate."

"Did you? He was my father. But there, I *must* go. Good-bye, Cap'n Kendrick. I hope you will get well very fast now."

"Thanks. Good-bye. Oh, by the way, Miss Berry, what made you think I might be Sears Kendrick? There are half a dozen Kendricks around Bayport."

"Yes, but--excuse me--there is only one Cap'n Sears Kendrick. You are one of Bayport's celebrities, Cap'n."

"Humph! Notorieties, you mean. So all hands have been talkin' about me, eh? Humph! Well, I guessed as much."

"Why, of course. You are one of our shining lights--sea lights, I mean. You must expect to be talked about."

"I do--in Bayport, and I'll be talked about more in a day or two, I guess."

"Why?"

"Eh? Oh, nothin', nothin'. I was thinkin' out loud, didn't realize I spoke. Good-bye."

"Good-bye."

The gate closed behind her. Kendrick sat down once more upon the bench beneath the locust tree.

When Judah returned with the bucket of clams he found his guest and prospective boarder just where he had left him.

"Well, by Henry, Cap'n Sears!" he exclaimed. "Still at the same old moorin's, eh? Been anchored right there ever since I sot sail?"

"Not exactly, Judah. Pretty nearly, though."

"Sho! Kind of dull music for you, I'm afraid. Whoa, you lop-sided hay-barge! Stand still till I give you orders to move, will ye! That's what I warned you, Cap'n Sears; not much goin' on around here. You'll be pretty lonesome, I guess likely."

"Oh, I guess I can stand it, Judah. I haven't been lonesome so far."

"Ain't, eh? That's good. Well, I got my clams; now I'll steer this horse into port and come back and get to work on that chowder. Oh, say, Cap'n Sears; I see Sary and told her you was call'latin' to stay here for dinner."

"Did you? Much obliged. What did she say?"

"Say? She said a whole lot. Wanted to know how in time you got up here. 'You didn't let him *walk* all that great long ways, Judah Cahoon?' she says. 'I ain't altogether a fool, be I?' says I."

Mr. Cahoon paused to search his pockets for a match.

"What answer did she make to that?" asked the captain. Judah grinned.

"Wa--ll," he drawled, "she said, 'Perhaps not--altogether.' 'Twan't much, but it was enough of the kind, as the feller said about the tobacco in the coffee pot. Oh, say, that reminds me, Cap'n Sears; there was somebody else talkin' about you. I--whoa, you camel, you! Creepin', crawlin', jumpin'---- Well, go ahead, then! I'll tell you the rest in half a shake, Cap'n. Git dap!"

Horse, cart and driver jogged and jolted into the barn. After a brief interval Mr. Cahoon reappeared, carrying the clam bucket. They entered the kitchen together. Then the captain said:

"Judah, you said some one beside Sarah was talkin' about me. Who was it?"

"Hey? Oh, 'twas Emeline Tidditt, her that's keepin' house for Judge Knowles. She says the old judge is gettin' pretty feeble. Don't callate he'll last out much longer, Emeline don't. Says it's nothin' but just grit and hang-on that keeps him alive. He's a spunky old critter, Judge Knowles is, 'cordin' to folks's tell. Course I don't know him same as some, but I callate he's a good deal on the general build and lines of a man name of George Dingo that I run afoul of one time to a place called Semurny--over acrost. You know Semurny, don't ye, Cap'n? One of them Med'terranean port 'tis."

"Smyrna, do you mean?"

"Um-hm. That's it, Semurny. I was there aboard the *William Holcomb*, out of Philadelphia. We was loadin' with figs and truck like that. You remember the old *Holcomb*, don't you, Cap'n Sears? Sartin sure you do. Horncastle and Grant of Philadelphia they owned her. Old Horncastle was a queer man as ever I see. Had a cork leg. Got the real one shot off in the Mexican war or run over by a horse car, some said one and some said t'other. Anyhow he had a cork one spliced on in place of it, and--ho, ho! 'twas as funny a sight as ever I see--one time he fell off the wharf there in Philadelphia. Yes, sir, fell right into the dock, he did. And when they scrabbled down the ladder to haul him in there wasn't nothin' in sight but that cork leg, stickin' up out of water. The rest of him had gone under, but that cork leg hadn't--no, sire-ee! Haw, haw! Well ... er ... er... What did I start to talk about, Cap'n Sears?"

"I don't know, Judah. It was a good while ago. You began by sayin' that you met Judge Knowles's housekeeper."

"Hey? Why, sure and sartin!" Mr. Cahoon slapped his leg. "Sartin sure, Cap'n Sears, that was it. And I said she and me got to talkin' about you. Well, well, well! I started right there and I fetched up way over in Semurny, along of George Dingo. Well, by Henry! Ain't that queer, now?"

He rubbed his legs and shook his head, apparently overcome by the queerness of it. Kendrick, judging that another Mediterranean cruise was imminent, made a remark calculated to keep him at home.

"What did this--what's-her-name--this Tidditt woman say about me?" he asked.

"Hey? Oh, she said that Judge Knowles wanted to see you. Said that he asked about you 'most every day, wanted to know how you was gittin' along, because just as soon as you was well enough to cruise on your own hook he wanted you to come in and see him."

"Judge Knowles wanted me to come in and see him? Why, that's funny! I don't know the judge well. Haven't seen him for years, and then only two or three times. What on earth can Judge Knowles have to say to me?.... Humph! I can't think."

He tried to think, nevertheless. Judah busied himself with the sloppy process of clam opening. A little later he observed:

"So you wan't lonesome all alone here by yourself while I was gone, Cap'n? That's good. Glad to hear it."

"Thanks, Judah. I wasn't alone, though."

"You wan't? Sho! Do tell! Have company, did ye? Somebody run in?"

"Yes. And they wouldn't run out again, not for a good while. They came on business."

"Business? What kind of business?"

"Well, I suppose you might call it gardening. They were interested in raisin' vegetables, I know that."

Judah laid down the clam knife and regarded his former skipper. "Raisin' vegetables?" he repeated slowly. "What--? Look here Cap'n Sears, who was they? Where'd they come from?"

"I believe they came from next door?"

"Next door? From the Harbor?" He rose to his feet, suspicion dawning upon his face above the whiskers.

"Yes, Judah."

"Cap'n Sears, answer me right straight out. Have those dummed everlastin' Fair Harbor hens been in my garden again?"

"Yes, Judah."

"Have they--have they?----" Words failed him. He strode up the path to the garden. Then, after a moment's comprehensive gaze upon the scene of ruin, the words returned.

CHAPTER IV

Sears Kendrick's prophecy that Bayport would, within the next day or two, talk about him even more than it had before was a true one. As soon as it became known that he had left the Macomber home and was boarding and lodging with Judah Cahoon in the rear portion of the General Minot house every tongue in the village--tongues of animals and small children excepted--wagged his name. At the sewing-circle, at the Shakespeare Reading Society--convening that week at Mrs. Tabitha Crosby's--after Friday night prayer-meeting at the Orthodox meeting-house, in Eliphalet Bassett's store at mail times, in the sitting-rooms and kitchens and around breakfast, dinner and supper tables from West Bayport to East Bayport Neck and from Poverty Lane to Woodchuck's Misery--the principal topic was Captain Kendrick's surprising move.

"Why?" that was the question.

Various answers were offered, many reasons suggested, but none satisfied everybody.

At the Shakespeare Society meeting, just before the reading aloud of "Cymbeline" began--"Cymbeline" carefully edited, censored and kalsomined by the selective committee, Mrs. Reverend David Dishup and Miss Tryphosa Taylor--the feelings of the genteel section of the community were expressed by no less a personage than Mrs. Captain Elkanah Wingate. Mrs. Wingate, speaking from the Mount Sinai of Bayport's aristocracy, made proclamation thus:

"Why, if the man must leave his sister's and go somewhere else to live, *why* in the world does he choose to go *there*? Aren't there good, respectable, genteel boarding-houses like--well, like yours, Naomi, for instance? *I* should say so."

Mrs. Naomi Newcomb, whose home sheltered a few "paying guests," smiled and shook her head. The shake indicated not a doubt of Mrs. Wingate's judgment, but complete loss as to Sears Kendrick's reasons for behaving as he had. Other members shook their heads also. Mary-Pashy Foster, who had spent a winter in France when her husband was ill with the small-pox at Havre, shrugged her shoulders.

"And," continued Mrs. Captain Wingate, "when you consider the place he has gone to and the person he has gone with! Good heavens, *I* say! Good heavens!"

More words and exclamations of approval. Several others declared that they said so, too.

"Gone to live," went on Mrs. Wingate, "not in the General Minot house proper--there might be some explanation for *that*, perhaps--but they tell me that this Judah Cahoon only uses the back part of the house and that Cap'n Kendrick has got a room just off the kitchen or thereabouts."

"And Judah himself!" broke in Miss Taylor. "He is as rough and common as--as--I don't know what. How a man like Cap'n Kendrick can lower himself--debase himself to such a person's level *I do* not see. You would as soon expect a needle to go through a camel's eye, as the saying is."

There was a slight interval of embarrassment after this outburst. The majority of those present realized that the speaker had gotten her proverb twisted, but, she being Miss Tryphosa Taylor, no one felt like venturing to set her right. Mrs. Captain Godfrey Peasley relieved the situation; she had a habit of relieving situations--when she did not make them tenser. She had gotten into the Shakespeare Reading Society purely by persistence and the possession of adamantine self-confidence. From that shot-proof exterior snubs, hints and reproofs glanced like blown peas from the hull of a battleship. "Heaven knows," confided Mrs. Captain Wingate to Miss Taylor and the Reverend Mrs. Dishup, "why Amelia Peasley ever wanted to join the Society. She doesn't know whether Shakespeare is a man or a disease." Which may or not have been true, the fact remaining that Mrs. Peasley *had* wanted to join the Society and--joined.

Now, while others hesitated, following Miss Tryphosa's little blunder, she spoke.

"I think," she declared, with conviction, "that Sears Kendrick ought to be ashamed of himself. *I* think such actions are degradatin'--yes, indeed, right down degradatin'."

After that, further comments upon the captain's conduct would have seemed like anti-climaxes. Therefore the Society

proceeded to read "Cymbeline." Mrs. Peasley had something to say about "Cymbeline," also.

Captain Sears himself merely grinned when told of the sensation his conduct was causing.

"All right," he said, "let 'em talk. If they aren't talkin' about me they will be about somebody else."

Judah, to whom this remark was made, snorted.

"Humph!" he growled. "They *be* talkin' about somebody else. Don't you make no mistake about that, Cap'n Sears."

"That so, Judah? Who's the other lucky man?"

"Me. Jumpin', creepin'---- Why, some of them womenfolks seem to cal'late I lammed you over the head with a marlinspike and then towed you up here by main strength; seems if they did, by Henry! And some of the men ain't a whole lot better. Makes me madder'n a sore nose. I was down to the store--down to 'Liphalet's--and there was a crew of ha'f a dozen there and they all wanted to know how you was gittin' along.

"Well, he ain't dead yit,' says I. 'He was lively enough when I left him. I ain't come to buy no spade to bury him with.'

"You'd think that would satisfy 'em, wouldn't ye? Well, it didn't! Cap'n Noah Baker was there and he wanted to know this, and that little runt of a Thad Black he wanted to know that--and kept on wantin'. And that brother-in-law of yours, Cap'n Sears, that Joel Macomber, I declare to man if he wan't the wust of all. You'd think *he* ought to keep quiet about your doin's, wouldn't ye, now? But he didn't. 'Don't ask me, boys,' he says. 'I don't know why Sears quit my house and went to Judah's. We manage to bear up without him somehow,' says he, winkin' to the gang, 'but if you ask me his *reasons* for goin' I can't tell ye. I presume likely Judah can, though,' he says. 'Well, I can see *one* reason plain enough,' says I, lookin' right at him."

Kendrick burst out laughing. "Did he get the idea, Judah?" he inquired.

"Him? Nary a bit. Wanted me to tell him what the reason was. Limpin', creepin' prophets! What did a woman like Sary ever marry him for, anyway, Cap'n? Not that it's any of my business, you understand."

"I understand. Well, it wasn't any of mine either, Judah."

"No, I presume likely not. But that George Kent, he's a nice young feller, ain't he, Cap'n?"

"Seems to be," replied Kendrick.

"Um--hm. Come up to me, after the gang had quit havin' their good time, and shook hands nice and chummy and wanted to know how you was. 'Tell the cap'n I'm goin' to come in and see him some day,' he says, 'if you and he want callers.' 'Good land, yes,' says I, 'course we do. Don't stop to call, come right along in.' He's a nice boy that young Kent.... But--but some of these days I'm goin' to *hit* that Thad Black--hit him with somethin' soft like--like an anvil. If that critter fell overboard I wouldn't heave him no life-preserver. No, sir, by Henry, I'd heave him the sheet anchor. The longer he hung on to that the better 'twould suit *me*."

To his sister only did Sears give his reasons for leaving her home. With her he was perfectly frank.

"You know why I'm doin' this, Sarah," he said. "Now don't you--honest?"

Mrs. Macomber hesitated. "Why, Sears," she faltered reluctantly, "I--I suppose I can guess why you *think* you're doin' it. But that doesn't make it right for you to do it, really."

"Oh, yes, it does. Be sensible, Sarah. Here are you with six children to support and work for, not to mention one boarder and--a husband. The house is crowded, aloft and alow. There isn't a bit of room for me."

"Now, Sears, how can you talk so? You've *had* room here, haven't you?"

"Yes, I've had it, plenty of it. But how much room have the rest of you had?"

"Why--why, we've had enough. Nobody's complained that I know of."

"Good reason why. You wouldn't let 'em, Sarah. And of course you never would complain yourself. But that is only part of it. The real thing is that I will not live on you."

"But you pay board."

"Stuff and nonsense! How much do I pay in comparison with what it costs to keep me?"

"You pay me all you can afford, I'm sure; and I rather guess, from what you said about your money affairs the other day, that you pay me more than you ought to afford. And I don't believe you're goin' to pay that Judah Cahoon any high board for livin' in that old rats' nest of his. If you are I shall begin to believe you've gone crazy."

Her brother laughed. "I don't mind payin' Judah little or nothin', Sarah," he declared. "What I get will be worth it, probably, and besides he's a strong, healthy man. Then, too--well, I shouldn't say it to any one but you, but there is a

little obligation on his side and that keeps me from feelin' like too much of a barnacle.... But there, what is the use of our threshin' this all over again? As I said in the beginnin', Sarah, you know why I'm doin' it perfectly well."

Mrs. Macomber sighed.

"I suppose I do," she admitted. "It's because you are Sears Kendrick and as independent and--and proud as--as your own self."

So the move was made and Captain Sears Kendrick's sea chest and its owner moved into Judah Cahoon's spare stateroom at the General Minot's place. And Bayport talked and talked more and more and then less and less until at the end of the captain's first week in his new quarters the move had become old news and people ceased to be interested in it, a state of affairs which pleased Mr. Cahoon immensely.

"There, by Henry!" he declared, on his return from what he called a "cruise down the road along." "I honestly do believe you and me has got so we can bat our weather eye without all hands and the ship's cat tryin' to see us do it. I met no less than seven folks while I was down along just now and only two of 'em hailed to ask how you liked bein' aboard here, Cap'n Sears. Yes, sir, by creepin', only two of 'em; the rest never said a word. What do you think of that? Some considerable change, I call it."

So being forgotten by the majority of Bayporters--which was what he desired to be--the captain settled down to live, or exist, and to wait. Just what he was waiting for he would have found hard to tell. Of course he told his sister when she came to see him, which was at least once every other day, that he was waiting for his legs to get whole and strong again, and then he should, of course, go to sea. He told Doctor Sheldon much the same thing, and the doctor said, "Why, of course, Cap'n Kendrick. We'll have you on your own quarter deck again one of these days." He said it with heartiness and apparent sincerity, but Sears was skeptical. After the doctor's visits he was likely to be blue and dejected for a time, and Judah noticed this fact but attributed it to quite a different cause.

"It's high time that doctor swab quit comin' here to see you," declared Judah. "Runnin' in here and lettin' go anchor and settin' round and sayin', 'Well, how goes it to-day?' and 'Nice spell of weather we're havin',' and the like of that, and then goin' home and chalkin' up another dollar on the bill. No sense to it, I say. No wonder you look glum, Cap'n Sears. Makes *me* glum, and 'tain't *my* money that's bein' talked out of me, nuther. Hear what he said just now? 'I must go,' he says. 'And what did you say? Why, you said, 'Don't hurry, Doctor. What do you want to go for?' All I could do to keep from bustin' out in a laugh. I know what you was sayin' to yourself, you see. 'Stead of sayin', 'What do you want to go for?' you was thinkin', 'What in blue blazes do you want to *come* for?' Haw, haw! That was it, wan't it, Cap'n?"

"Why, no, Judah. I'm always glad to see the doctor."

"Ye--es, you be!" with sarcasm. "Glad to see his back. Well, no use, Cap'n, I've got to think up some notion to keep him from comin' here. How would it do to run up a signal 'Small-pox aboard,' or somethin' like that? Think that would keep him off?... No, he's a doctor, ain't he? All he'd read out of that set of flags would be, 'More dollars. Come on in.' Haw, haw! Well, I got to think up some way."

Judah's chatter kept his lodger from being too lonely. Mr. Cahoon talked about everybody and everything, and when he was not talking he was singing. He sang when he turned out in the morning to get breakfast, he sang when he turned in at bedtime. He sang while working in the garden repairing the damages done by the Fair Harbor hens. His repertoire was extensive, embracing not only every conceivable variety of chantey and sea song, but also an assortment of romantic ballads, running from "The Blue Juniata," in which:

"Wild rowed an Indian girl,
Bright Al-fa-ra-ta,"

to the ancient ditty of twenty-odd verses describing how

"There was a rich merchant in London did dwell,
He had for his daughter a very fine gel,
Her name it was Dinah, just sixteen years old,
With a very large fortune in silver and gold.

"Singing Too-ral-i-ooral-i-ooral-i-ay,
Singing Too-ral-i-ooral-i-ooral-i-ay,"

and continuing to sing "Too-ral-i-ooral-i-ooral-i-ay" four times after each of the twenty-odd verses to the tragical finish of Dinah and the ballad.

As some men take to drink upon almost any or no excuse, so Judah Cahoon took to song. And if the effect upon him was not as unsteady as an over indulgence in alcohol, that upon his hearers was at times upsetting and disastrous. For example, upon the occasion when Captain Sears again encountered his acquaintances of the Fair Harbor summer-

house, Mr. Cahoon's singing completely wrecked what might possibly have been a meeting tending to raise the captain in the estimation of those ladies.

Sears happened to be taking what he liked to call his exercise. Judah called it "pacin' decks." He was hobbling back and forth along the path leading to the gate opening upon the Fair Harbor grounds. His landlord was at work in the garden. The captain had limped as far as the gate and was about to turn and limp back again when, behold, along the path beyond that gate appeared two feminine figures strolling with what might be called careful carelessness, looking up, down and on every side except that upon which stood Captain Sears Kendrick. And the captain recognized the pair, the one tall, slim, slender--unusually slim and remarkably slender--the other short and plump--very decidedly plump--as the ladies with whom he had held brief but spirited discourse the fortnight before, the ladies who had peered forth at him from the vine-draped window of the Eyrie--in short, for Miss Elvira Snowden and Mrs. Aurora Chase.

The pair came scrolling along the path. They were almost at the gate when Miss Snowden looked up--she would have said she happened to look up--and saw the captain standing there. She was embarrassed and surprised--any one might have noticed the surprise and embarrassment. She started, gasped and uttered a little exclamation. Mrs. Chase, taking her affliction into account, could not possibly have heard the exclamation, but no doubt there was a telepathic quality in it, for she, too, started, looked up and was surprised and embarrassed.

"Why--why, oh, dear!" faltered Miss Snowden.

"Why! My soul and body!" exclaimed Mrs. Chase.

Captain Sears raised his hat. "Good mornin'," he said politely.

The ladies looked at each other. Then Miss Elvira, evidently the born leader, inclined her head ever so little and said, "Good morning." Mrs. Aurora looked up at her in order to see what she said.

Captain Sears tried again.

"It's a nice day for a walk," he observed.

Miss Elvira nodded and agreed, distantly--yet not too distant.

"I understand," said the captain, "that I gave you ladies a little bit of a scare the other day. Understand you thought I was a tramp. I'm real sorry. Of course I know I hadn't any business over on your premises, but, as a matter of fact, I didn't exactly realize where I was. It was the first cruise I'd made in these latitudes, as you might say, and I didn't think about keepin' on my own side of the channel buoys. I beg your pardon. I'll hope you'll excuse me."

Miss Snowden nodded elegantly and murmured that she understood.

"You are our new neighbor, I believe," she said.

"Why, yes'm, I suppose I am."

"Cap'n Kendrick, isn't it?"

"Yes."

"I hope, Cap'n Kendrick, that you won't think there was any--ah--anything personal in our mistaking you for a tramp the other day. Of course there wasn't. Oh, dear, no!"

The captain hesitated. He was wondering just what answer he was supposed to make to this speech. Did the lady wish him to infer that it was the Fair Harbor custom to consider all male strangers tramps until they were proven innocent? Or--but Mrs. Chase saved him the trouble of reply.

"Elviry," she demanded, "what are you and him whisperin' about? Why don't you talk so's a body can hear you? He's Cap'n Kendrick, ain't he? Have you told him who we be, same as you said you was goin' to?"

Miss Snowden, after looking at the rotund Aurora as if she would like to bite her, smiled instead and began a rather tangled explanation to the effect that she and Mrs. Chase had felt that perhaps they had been a--ah--they might have seemed "kind of hasty--you know, Cap'n Kendrick, in what--in speaking as we did that time, and so--and so I told her if we ever *did* meet you--if we ever *should*, you know--- But we haven't really met yet, have we? Shall we introduce ourselves? I don't see why not; neighbors, you know. Cap'n Kendrick, this is Mrs. Aurora Chase, widow of the late Cap'n Ichabod Chase. No doubt, you knew Cap'n Chase in the old days, Cap'n Kendrick."

And then Aurora, who had been listening with all her ears, and hearing with perhaps a third of them, broke in to say that her husband was not a captain. "He was second mate when he died," she explained. "Aboard the bark *Charles Francis* he was, bound for New Bedford from the West Indies with a load of guano."

Miss Snowden, favoring the veracious Aurora with another look, hastily introduced herself and began to speak of the beauties of the day, of the surroundings, and particularly of the select and refined joys of life at the Fair Harbor.

"We have our little circle there," she said. "We live our lives, quiet, retired, away from the world----"

Mrs. Chase broke in once more to ask what she was talking about. When the substance of the Snowden rhapsody was given her, she nodded--as well as her several chins would permit her to nod--and announced that she agreed.

"We like livin' at the home first-rate," she declared. Elvira flushed.

"It is *not* a home," she said, sharply. "It is a select retreat, that is all. It is not a home in *any* sense of the word. Every one knows that it is not. Aurora, I wish to goodness you---- But of course Cap'n Kendrick doesn't want to hear about us all the time. He is interested in his own new quarters. Do you like it here, Cap'n Kendrick? I--ah--understand you are, so to speak, a guest of Mr. Cahoon's. He is--ah--a relation of yours?"

Sears explained the acquaintanceship between Judah and himself. Miss Snowden nodded comprehension.

"That explains it," she said. "I thought he could hardly be a relation of *yours*, Cap'n Kendrick. He is--he is a little bit queer, isn't he? I mean eccentric, you know. Of course I've never met him, and I'm sure he's real good-hearted, but----"

She paused, leaving the rest of the sentence to be inferred. Captain Sear's answer was prompt and crisp.

"Judah Cahoon is one of the best fellows that ever lived," he said.

"Yes, I know. I am sure he is. I didn't mean that. I meant is he--is he----"

And then Judah himself, at work in the garden behind the screen of bushes, too busy to hear or even be aware of the conversation at the gate, chose this untoward moment to burst into song, to sing at the top of his voice, and the top of Judah's voice was an elevation from which sound traveled far. He sang:

"Oh, Sally Brown was a bright mulatter,
Way, oh, roll and go!
She drinks rum and chews terbacker,
Spend my money on Sally Brown.
Whee--yip!"

Miss Elvira's thin figure stiffened to an exclamation point of disapproval. Captain Kendrick turned uneasily in the direction of the singer. Mrs. Chase, aware that something was going on and not wishing to miss it, cupped her ear with her hand. And Judah began the second verse.

"Oh, Sally Brown, I'll surely miss you,
Way, oh, roll and go!
How I'd love to hug and kiss you!
Spend my money on Sally Brown.
Whee--yip!"

"Judah!" roared the captain, who was suffering acute apprehension. "Judah!"

"Oh, Sally Brown----"

"*Judah!*"

"Eh? What is it, Cap'n Sears?"

"Shut up."

"Eh! Shut up what? What's open?"

"Stop that noise."

"What noise?"

"That noise of yours. That singin'."

"Eh? Oh, all right, sir. Aye, aye, Cap'n, just as you say."

Captain Sears, relieved, turned again to his visitors. But the visitors were rapidly retreating along the path, the lines of Miss Elvira's back indicating disgust and outraged gentility. Mrs. Chase, however, looked back. Obviously she still did not know what it was all about.

Sears, although he chuckled a good deal over the affair, was a trifle annoyed, nevertheless. It was a good joke, of course, and he certainly cared little for the approval or disapproval of Miss Elvira Snowden. But when he considered what the prim spinster's version of the happening was likely to be and the reputation her story was sure to confer, inside the Fair Harbor fences at least, upon him and his household companion, he was tempted to wish that that companion's musical talent had been hidden under a napkin, or, better still, a feather bed. He--Kendrick--was to live, for a time indefinite, next door to the Fair Harborites, and it is always pleasant to be on good terms with one's neighbors.

True, those neighbors might be, the majority of them, what Mr. Cahoon called them--which was whatever term of approbrium he happened to think of at the moment, "pack of old hens" being the mildest--but the captain knew that one, at least, was not an "old hen." "That Berry girl," which was his way of thinking of her, was attractive and kind and a lady. They had met but once, it is true, but she had made a most favorable impression upon him. He had caught glimpses of her on two occasions, in the Fair Harbor grounds, and once she had waved a greeting. She was a nice girl, he was sure of it. If she thought at all of the cripple next door he would like her to think of him in a kindly way, as a decent sort of hulk, so to speak. It was provoking to feel that she would next hear of him as a dissipated ruffian, friend and defender of another ruffian who howled ribald songs in the presence--or at least in the hearing--of ladies.

He questioned Judah concerning the Fair Harbor, its founder and the dwellers within its gates. Judah told him what he knew of the story, which was very little more than the captain already knew, his knowledge gained from his sister's letters. Captain Sylvanus Seymour had had but one child, his daughter Lobelia. At his death she, of course, inherited all his property. According to Bayport gossip, as reported by Mr. Cahoon, the old man had died worth anywhere from one half a million to three or five millions. "Richer'n dock mud, I call'ate he was," declared Judah. "Made a lot of money out of his Boston shippin' business and a lot more out of stocks and city real estate and one thing or 'nother." For years after Captain Sylvanus died Lobelia lived alone in the big house. Then she had married. Judah could tell little about the man she married.

"He was a music teacher that come to town here one winter, that's about all I can swear to," said Judah. "Down here for his health, so he said, and taught singin' school while he was gittin' healthy. His last name was Phillips, which is all right, but he had the craziest fust name ever I heard. Egbert 'twas. Hoppin', creepin' Henry! Did you ever *hear* such a name? *Egbert!* Jumpin' prophets! Boys round town, they tell me, used to call him 'Eg' behind his back. Some of 'em, them that didn't like him, called him 'Soft biled.' Haw, haw! See what they meant, don't you, Cap'n Sears? Egbert, you know, that's 'Eg' for short, and then 'Soft biled' meanin' a soft biled egg.... Hey? Yes, I call'ated you'd see it, you're pretty sharp at a joke, Cap'n, but there *has* been them I've told that to that never.... Hey? Aye, aye, sir, I was just goin' to tell the rest of it."

According to Judah's report, which was a second or third hand report of course, Egbert Phillips had not been too popular among the males in Bayport. But with the females--ah, there it was different.

"He was one of them kind, they tell me," said Judah. "One of them smooth, slick, buttery kind of fellers that draws womenfolks same as molasses draws flies. Hailed from Philadelphia he did. I used to know a good many Philadelphia folks myself once. Why, one time----"

The captain broke in to head off the Philadelphia reminiscence. Brought back to Bayport and Egbert and Lobelia, Judah went on to tell what more he knew of the Fair Harbor beginnings. Sears gathered that after the marriage Egbert who, it seemed, was not in love with the Cape as a place of residence, would have liked his wife to sell the old house and move away. But there was a clause in the will of Captain Sylvanus which prevented this. Under that will the property could not be sold while his daughter lived. It was then that Lobelia was seized with her great idea. She, a mariner's daughter, had--until the Providential appearance of the peerless Egbert--faced a lonely old age. But she had at least a comfortable home. There were so many women--sea-captains' widows and sisters--who faced their lonely future without a home. Why not turn the Seymour property into a home for them--a limited number of them?

"So she done it," said Judah. "And that's how the Fair Harbor got off the ways."

"But you called it a home," objected Captain Sears. "The other day that Snowden woman, the thin one, gave the other, the stout one--what's her name?--Northern lights--Aurora, that's it--she gave Aurora fits for speakin' of the place as a home. She declared it wasn't a home."

Mr. Caboon chuckled. "Did, eh?" he observed. "Well, you might call a mackerel gull a canary bird, I presume likely, but 'twouldn't make the thing sing no better. That Elviry critter likes to make believe she's the Queen of Sheby. *She* wouldn't live in no home--no sir-ee! 'Cordin' to her the Fair Harbor ain't a home because they only take six or eight passengers, or visitors, or patients, or jailbirds--whatever you might to call 'em, and it costs four hundred dollars to pay your way in and a hundred a year to keep you there. So 'tain't a home, you see. It's a--a genteel henhouse, I'd say. That Elviry Snowden she----"

Then the captain asked the question to which he had been leading since the beginning.

"That Berry girl's mother runs the place, doesn't she?" he asked.

Judah snorted. "Yeah," he drawled, "she runs it about the way the skipper's poll parrot runs the vessel. The poll parrot talks a barrel a minute and the skipper goes right along navigatin'. That's about the way 'tis over yonder," with a jerk of the head in the general direction of the Fair Harbor.

His lodger was a trifle surprised.

"Why, I understood Mrs. Berry--Cap'n Isaac Berry's widow--was manager there," he said.

"Um-hm. So she is, the poll parrot manager. But it's that girl of hers, that 'Lizabeth Berry, that really handles the ropes. There's a capable little craft, if you want to know," declared Judah, with emphasis.

He whittled a pipe full of tobacco from the mutilated remnant of a plug, and continued to expatiate on the capabilities of Miss Berry. According to him whatever was as it should be within the Fair Harbor boundaries was due to the young woman's efforts, not to those of her mother.

"It's kind of queer, ain't it, Cap'n Sears," he observed, "how things average up sometimes. Seems if whoever 'tis works out the course up aloft sort of fixed 'em that way."

"What's that got to do with the Berrys?"

"Cause it worked that way with them. *You* knew Cap'n Ike Berry, Cap'n Sears. Sharp, shrewd, able and all that, but rough and hard as the broadside of a white-oak plank. Well, he married a woman from down in the Carolinas somewhere. Her folks was well-off and she was brought up in cotton wool, as you might say. They wouldn't have nothin' to do with her after she married Cap'n Ike. He fell in love with her and carried her off by main strength, as you might say. She'd been treated like a plaything afore he got her and he treated her that way till he died. She is soft-spoken, and kind of good-lookin', and polite and all that--but about as much practical use for bossin' a place like the Fair Harbor as a--well as a paper umbrella would be in a no'theaster. But 'Lizabeth now, she's different. She's got her mother's good looks and nice manners and--and kind of genteelness, you understand, and with 'em she's got her dad's sense and capableness. She's all right, that girl. Don't you think so, Cap'n Sears?"

The captain nodded.

"I never met her but that once, Judah," he replied. "She was all right then, surely."

"I bet you! She's all right most of the time, I guess.... That young George Kent, he thinks so, they tell me."

"Oh ... does he?"

"Um-hm! He's cruisin' up to the Fair Harbor 'bout every once or twice a week, 'cordin' to tell. If it ain't to see 'Lizabeth I don't know what 'tis. It might be Queen Elviry he's after, but I have my doubts.... Oh, say, Cap'n, speakin' of the Harbor reminds me of Judge Knowles. You ain't been in to see him yet, same as he wanted you to."

"That's so, Judah, I haven't. I must pretty soon, I suppose. I can't think what the old judge wants to see me for. But why did talkin' of the Fair Harbor and the rest of it make you think of Judge Knowles?"

"Hey? Oh, 'cause the judge is kind of commodore of the fleet there, looks after the money matters for 'em, I understand. He's Lobelia's lawyer, same as he was old Cap'n Sylvanus's afore he died.... I declare I can't guess what he wants to see you for, Cap'n Sears. Do you s'pose----"

Judah proceeded to suppose several things, each supposition more far-fetched and improbable than its predecessor. Sears paid little attention to them. He again expressed his intention of calling upon the judge before long and changed the subject.

The next day it rained and he did not go and the following day he did not feel like going. On the day after that, however, further procrastination was rendered impossible. Mrs. Tidditt, the judge's housekeeper, visited the General Minot place with another message from her employer. Emmeline was gray-haired, brisk and, as Judah expressed it, "straight up and down," both in figure and manner of speaking.

"Good mornin', Cap'n Kendrick," she said. "Judge Knowles wants to know if 'twill be convenient for you to come over and see him this afternoon? Says if 'tis he'll send Mike and the hoss-'n'-buggy around for you at two o'clock."

The captain's guilty conscience made him a trifle embarrassed. "Why--why, yes, certainly," he stammered. "I--- Well, I'm ashamed of myself for not goin' over there sooner. Beg Judge Knowles's pardon for me, will you, and tell him I'll be on hand at two sharp. And tell him not to bother to send the horse and team. I'll get there all right."

Mrs. Tidditt sniffed. "I'll tell him the first part," she said. "And Mike'll have the hoss-'n'-buggy here at ten minutes of. Judah Cahoon, why in the land of Canaan don't you scrub up that back piazza floor once in a while? It's dirty as a fish shanty."

Judah's back fin rose. "Say, who's keepin' house aboard here, anyway?" he demanded. Mrs. Tidditt sniffed again. "Nobody, by the looks," she said, and departed in triumph.

At two the Knowles horse and buggy drove into the yard. It was piloted by Mike Callahan, an ancient, much bewhiskered Irishman who had been employed by the judge almost as long as had Mrs. Tidditt. He and Judah assisted Sears into the vehicle and the captain started upon his cruise, which was a very short one, the Knowles establishment being but a few hundred yards from the Minot place. On the way he inquired concerning the judge's health. Mike

shook his head.

"Bad," he grunted. "It's close *to*, the ould judge is."

"Oh, I'm sorry."

"Sure ye are. So are we all. He is a fine man, none better--barrin' he's a grand ould curmudgeon. Here ye are, Cap'n. Git up till I lift ye down."

Judge Knowles's house--Sears Kendrick had never been in it before--was a big square mansion built in the '50's. There was the usual front door leading to a dark front hall from which, to right and left respectively, opened parlor and sitting rooms. Emmeline ushered the visitor into the latter apartment. It was high studded, furnished in black walnut and haircloth, a pair of tall walnut cases filled with books against one wall, on the opposite wall a libellous oil portrait of the judge's wife, who died twenty years before, and a pair of steel engravings depicting "Sperm Whale Fishing in the Arctic"; No. 1, portraying "The Chase," No. 2, "the Capture." Beneath these stood a marble-topped table upon which were neatly piled four gigantic volumes, bound copies of Harper's Weekly, 1861 to '65, the Civil War period.

At the end of the room, where two French windows opened--that is, could have opened, they never were--upon the narrow, iron-railed veranda, sat Judge Marcus Aurelius Knowles, in an old-fashioned walnut armchair, his feet upon a walnut and haircloth footstool--Bayport folk in those days called such stools "crickets"--a knitted Afghan thrown over his legs and a pillow beneath his head. And in that dark, shadowy room, its curtains drawn rather low, so white was the judge's hair and his face that, to Sears Kendrick, just in from the light out of doors, it was at first hard to distinguish where the pillow left off and the head began.

But the head on the pillow stirred and the judge spoke.

"Ah--good afternoon, Kendrick," he said. "Glad to see you.... Humph. Can't see much of you, can I? Here, Emmeline, put those shades up, will you?"

The housekeeper moved toward the windows, but she protested as she moved.

"Now, Judge," she said, "I don't believe you want them winder curtains strung way up, do you? I hauled 'em down purpose so's the sun wouldn't get in your eyes."

"Um--yes. Well, you haul 'em up again. And don't you haul 'em down till I'm dead. You'll do it then, I know, and I don't want to attend my funeral ahead of time."

Mrs. Tidditt gasped.

"Oh, Judge Knowles, how *can* you talk so!" she wailed.

"I intend to talk as I choose--while I can talk at all.... There, there, woman, that's enough. Put the blasted things up.... Umph! That's better. Sit down, Cap'n, sit down. I want to look at you."

The captain took one of the walnut and haircloth chairs. The judge looked at him and he looked at the judge. He remembered the latter as a tall, broad-shouldered figure, with a ruddy face, black hair slightly sprinkled with gray, and a nose and eye like an eagle's. The man in the armchair was thin and shrunken, the face was deeply lined, and face and hands and hair were snow white. The nose was, however, more eagle-like than ever, and the eyes beneath the rough white brows had the old flash.

Sears waited an instant for him to speak, but he did not. So the captain did.

"I beg your pardon, Judge," he began, "for not comin' over here sooner. I got your message----"

Knowles interrupted. "Oh, you got it, did you?" he said. "Humph! I told Emmeline to get word to you and she said---- Oh, well, never mind that. Can't waste time. I haven't got any too much of it, or strength either. Sorry to hear about your accident, Cap'n. Doctor Sheldon says you had a close call of it. How are the legs?"

"Oh, I can navigate with 'em after a fashion, but not far. How are you, Judge? Gettin' better fast, I hope."

The head on the pillow gave an impatient jerk. "Your hope is lost then. Don't waste time talking about me. I'm going to die and I know it--and before long.... There, there," as his caller uttered a protest, "don't bother to pretend, Kendrick. We aren't children, either of us, although you're a good many years younger than I am; but we're both too old to make-believe. I'm almost through. Well, it's all right. I've lived past my three score and ten and I'm alone in the world and ought not to mind leaving it, I suppose. I don't much. It's an interesting place and there are two or three matters I should like to straighten up before.... Humph! I'm the one's who's wasting the time. How are you? I don't mean how would you like to be or how do your fool friends and the doctor tell you you are--but how *are* you?"

Captain Sears smiled. It had been a long, long time since any one had talked to him like this. Not since he relinquished a mate's rating for that of a master. But he did not resent it; he, too, was sick of pretending.

"I'm in bad shape, Judge," he said. "My legs are better and I can hobble around on 'em, as you saw when I hobbled in here. But as to whether or not they will ever be fit for sea again I--well, I doubt it. And I rather guess the doctor doubts it, too. I don't say so to many, haven't said it to any one but you, but it looks to me as if I were on a lee shore. I may get out of the breakers some day--or I may just lay there and rot and drop to pieces.... Well, as you say, what's the use of wastin' time talkin' about me?"

"I've got a reason for talking about you, Cap'n. So you're not confined to your bed. And your head is all right, eh?"

Kendrick hesitated. He could not make out what in the world the man was driving at.

"Eh?" repeated the judge.

"Yes, as right as it ever was, I presume likely. Sometimes I think that may not be sayin' much."

"When a man thinks that way it is a favorable symptom, according to my experience. From what I've heard and know, Cap'n Kendrick, your head will do very well. Now there's another question. Have you got all the money you need?"

The captain leaned back in his chair. He did not answer immediately. From the head upon the pillow came a rasping chuckle.

"Go on," observed Judge Knowles, "ask it."

Kendrick stared at him. "Ask what?" he demanded.

"The question you had in mind. If I hadn't been a man with one foot in the grave you would have asked me if I considered the amount of money you had any of my damned business. Isn't that right?"

Sears hesitated. Then he grinned. "Just about," he said.

"I thought so. Well, in a way it is my business, because, if you have all the money you need, fifteen hundred a year for the next two or three years won't tempt you any. And I want to tempt you, Cap'n."

Again the captain was silent for an interval.

"Fifteen hundred a year?" he repeated, slowly.

"Yes."

"For what?"

"For services to be rendered. I've been looking for a man with time on his hands, who has been used to managing, who can be firm when it's necessary, has had enough experience of the world to judge people and things and who won't let a slick tongue get the better of him. And he must be honest. I think you fill the bill, Cap'n Kendrick."

The visitor tugged at his beard.

"Look here, Judge Knowles," he said crisply, "what are you talkin' about? What's the joke?"

"It isn't a joke."

"Well, then what is it? You'll have to give me my bearin's, I'm lost in the fog. Do I understand you to mean that you are offerin' me a berth, a job where I can earn--no, I won't put it that way, where I will be paid fifteen hundred a year?"

"I am, and," with another sardonic chuckle, "I rather think you'll earn all you get. Of course fifteen hundred dollars a year isn't a large salary, it isn't a sea captain's wage and share--not such a captain as you've been, Kendrick. But, as I see it, you can't go to sea for a year or two at least. You are planning to stay right here in Bayport. Well, while you are here this thing I am offering you will," there was another chuckle, "keep you moderately busy, and you will be earning something. It may be that fifteen hundred won't be enough to be worth your while. Perhaps I shouldn't venture to offer it if I hadn't heard--hadn't heard----"

Sears interrupted.

"What you heard was probably true," he said crisply. "True enough, at any rate. Fifteen hundred a year looks like a lot to me now. But what am I to do to get it, that's the question. I'm a cripple, don't forget that."

"I should remember it if I thought it necessary. You won't handle this job with your legs. It is your head I want. Cap'n Kendrick, I want you to take charge--take command, if you had rather we used seafaring lingo, of that establishment next door to where you are living now. I want you to act as--well, we'll call it captain of the Fair Harbor."

Captain Sears's eyes and mouth opened. His chair creaked as he leaned forward and then slowly leaned back again.

"You--you--" he gasped, "you want me to--to manage that--that *old women's home*?"

"Yes."

"Me?"

"Yes.... Here! where are you going?"

The visitor had risen.

"Stop!" shouted Judge Knowles. "Where are you going?"

The captain breathed heavily.

"I'm goin' to send for the doctor," he declared. "One of us two needs him."

CHAPTER V

Judge Knowles's answer to his caller's assertion concerning the need of a physician's services was another chuckle.

"Sit down, Cap'n," he ordered.

Kendrick shook his head. "No," he began, "I'm----"

"Sit down."

"Judge, look here: I don't suppose you're serious, but if you are, I tell you----"

"No, I'm going to tell *you*. SIT DOWN."

This time the invalid's voice was raised to such a pitch that Mrs. Tidditt came hurrying from the kitchen.

"My soul and body, Judge!" she exclaimed. "What is it? What *is* the matter?"

Her employer turned upon her.

"The matter is that that confounded door is open again," he snapped.

"Why--why, of course 'tis. I just opened it when I came in."

"Umph! Yes. Well then, hurry up and shut it when you go out. *Shut* it!"

Emmeline, going, not only shut but slammed the door. The judge smiled grimly.

"Sit down, Kendrick," he commanded once more, panting. "Sit down, I--I'm out of breath. Confound that woman! She seems to think I'm four years old. Ah--ah--whew!"

His exhaustion was so apparent that Sears was alarmed.

"Don't you think, Judge----" he began, but was interrupted.

"Sshh!" ordered Knowles. "Wait.... Wait.... I'll be all right in a minute!"

The captain waited. It took more than a minute, and even then the judge's voice was husky and his sentences broken, but his determination was unshaken.

"I want you to listen to me, Cap'n Kendrick," he said. "I know it sounds crazy, this proposal of mine, but it isn't. How much do you know about this Fair Harbor place; its history and so on?"

Captain Sears explained that his sister had written him some facts concerning it and that recently Judah Cahoon had told him more details. The judge wished to know what Judah had told. When informed he nodded.

"That's about right, so far as it goes," he admitted. "Fairly straight, for a Bayport yarn. It doesn't go far enough, though. Here is the situation:

"Lobelia, when she first conceived the fool notion," he said, "came to me, of course, to arrange it. I was her father's lawyer for years, and so naturally I was looking out for her affairs. I said all I could against it, but she was determined, and had her way. She, through me, set aside the Sylvanus Seymour house and land to be used as a home for what she called 'mariners' women' as long as--well, as long as she should continue to want it used for that purpose. She would have been contented to pay the bills as they came, but, of course, there was no business method in that, so we arranged that she was to hand over to me fifty thousand dollars in bonds, the income from that sum, plus the entrance fees and one hundred dollars yearly paid by each inmate, was to run the place. That is the way it has been run. She

christened it the Fair Harbor. Heaven knows I had nothing to do with that.

"For a year or so she lived there herself and had a beautiful time queening it over the inmates. Then that Phillips chap drifted into Bayport."

The captain interrupted here. "Oh, then the Fair Harbor was off the ways before she married Phillips?" he said. "Judah told me it was afterwards."

"He's wrong. No, the thing had been running two years when that confounded.... Humph! You never met Egbert Phillips, did you, Cap'n?"

"No."

"You've heard about him?"

"Only what Judah told me the other day."

"Humph! What did he tell?"

"Why, he--he gave me to understand that this Phillips was a pretty smooth article."

"Smooth! Why, Kendrick, he is.... But there, you'll meet him some day and no feeble words of mine could do him justice. Besides all my words are getting too feeble to waste--even on anything as beautiful as Egbert the great.... And that condemned doctor will be here pretty soon, so we must get on.... Ah.... Well, he came here to teach singing, Phillips did, and he had all the women in tune before the first lesson was over. They said he was wonderful, and he was--good God, yes! They kept on thinking he was wonderful until he married Lobelia Seymour."

"Then they changed their minds, eh?"

"Humph! You don't know women, do you, Cap'n? Never mind, you've got time enough left to learn in.... No, they didn't change their minds. They thought Egbert was as wonderful as ever, but they agreed that Lobelia had roped him in. *She* had roped *him* in! Oh, lord!... Well, they were married and went to Boston to live. Afterwards they went to Europe. Five years ago they came back here for a week's visit. Cahoon tell you about that?"

"No."

"Probably he didn't know about it. They did, though, and stayed here with me, of course. Lobelia settled that, I imagine--one of the times when she settled something herself. And while she was here she and I settled something else. She added a codicil to her will making the fifty thousand dollars in my possession and the house and Seymour land a gift, absolute, to the Fair Harbor. And she appointed me as sole trustee of the fund and financial manager of the home, with authority to appoint my own successor. And her husband didn't know a thing about it. Didn't when they went away; I'm sure I don't know whether he does now or not, but he didn't then. No, sir, we settled the Fair Harbor fund and Egbert's hash, so far as it was concerned. Ha, ha! And a blessed good job, too, Kendrick.... Hand me that glass of water, will you? Thanks."

He drank a swallow or two of water and lay back upon the pillow. Captain Sears was a little anxious. He suggested that, perhaps, he had better be told the rest another time.

"I think you had better rest now, Judge," he counseled. The judge consigned the "rest" idea to a place where, according to tradition, there is very little of it.

"I want you to hear this," he snapped. "Don't bother me, but listen.... Where was I?... Oh, yes.... Well, Lobelia and her husband went away, to Europe again. They have been there ever since, living in Italy. Egbert finds the climate there agrees with him, I suppose---- Humph!... I have had letters from Lobelia. The later ones were shorter and not encouraging. She wrote that she wasn't well and the doctors didn't seem to help her much. After two or three of these letters I wrote one, myself--to the American consul at Florence. He is the son of a good friend of mine. I explained the situation and asked him to find out just what ailed her and what the prospects were. His reply explained things. Poor Lobelia is in my position--except that my age entitles me to be there and hers doesn't; she has an incurable disease and she is likely to die at any time. No hope for her. And now, it seems she has found it out. About a month ago I had another letter from her.... Humph!... Wait a minute, Cap'n. Give me that glass again, will you. Sorry to be such a condemned nuisance--particularly to other people.... Wait! Hold on! When I've finished you can talk. Hear the rest of it first.

"Lobelia's latest--last, I shouldn't wonder--letter was a sad sort of a thing. I'm a tough old fellow, but I declare I'm sorry for that poor woman. Fool to marry Phillips? Of course she was, but most of us are fools, some time or other. And, if I don't miss my guess, she has repented of her foolishness many times and all the time. She wrote me she knew she was going to die. And she said---- But here is the letter. Read it, that page of it."

He fumbled among the papers and books on the table beside him, selected a sheet of paper, covered with closely

written lines, and extended it in a shaking hand to his caller.

"That explains things a little," he said. "It's illuminating. Read it."

Captain Sears read.... "And so I am *very* anxious, dear Judge Knowles, whatever else happens, that the Fair Harbor shall always be as it is, a home for sisters and widows and daughters of men who went down to the sea in ships, as father did. I know he would have liked it. And *please*, after I'm gone, don't let it be sold or given up, or anything like that. I am asking this of you, because I know I can trust you. You have proved it so many times. And--I never have written you this before but it is true--I have so little left except the Fair Harbor and its endowment. You will wonder where the money has gone. I do not know. It seems to have slipped away little by little and neither my husband nor I can account for..."

The page ended there. The captain would have handed it back to Knowles, but the latter asked him to put it on the table.

"Put it in the envelope and put the envelope in the drawer, will you, Kendrick?" he said. "My housekeeper is a good housekeeper, but what is mine is hers--including correspondence.... Well, you see? She can't account for the disappearance of the money. I can. When you have a five thousand dollar income and spend ten thousand you can account for a lot.... Humph! Well, the fact is that I am expecting to hear of Lobelia's death at any time. She may be dead to-day--or to-morrow--or next week. And as soon as I hear of it I shall say to myself.... Humph! Cap'n, you know how the Old Farmer's Almanac, along in November, prophesies the weather, don't you? 'About this time look out for snow.' Yes, well, on a date about a month after the day I hear of Lobelia Phillips's death I should write on the calendar: 'About this time look for Egbert.' ... Humph.... Eh? See, don't you, Cap'n Kendrick?"

Kendrick smiled, he couldn't help it. He tugged thoughtfully at his beard.

"Yes," he admitted, "I guess likely I see. But I don't see where I come in. You can handle Egbert, Judge, or I don't know much about men."

The judge snorted. "Handle him," he repeated. "I think I could handle him--and enjoy the job. The trouble is I shan't have the chance. I won't be here. I'll be in the graveyard."

He spoke of it as casually as he might of Boston or New York. Again his listener could not help but protest.

"Why, Judge," he began, "that's perfectly ridiculous. You----"

The judge interrupted. "Perhaps," he said, drily. "In fact, I agree with you. The graveyard is a ridiculous place for anybody to be, but I shall be there--and soon. But I am not going to let it interfere with my plans concerning the Fair Harbor. Lobelia Seymour I've known since she was a little girl, and whether I'm dead or alive, I'm going to have her wishes carried out. That's why I'm telling you these things, Sears Kendrick. I am counting on you to carry them out."

The captain leaned back in his chair.

"Why pick on me?" he asked, drily.

"Why? Because I've got to pick on somebody and do it while I have the strength to pick. You and I have never been close friends, Kendrick, but I've watched you and kept track of you for years, in a general sort of way. Your sister and I have had a long acquaintanceship. There's another woman who made a mistake.... Eh?"

Sears nodded.

"I'm afraid so," he admitted. "Joel is a good enough fellow, in his way, but----"

"But--that's it. Well, he's got a good wife and she's your sister. I know you can handle this Fair Harbor job if you will and if you take it on I shall go to--well, to that graveyard we were talking about, with an easier mind. Look here--why----"

"Hold on a minute, Judge. Heave to and let me say a word. If there wasn't any other reason why I shouldn't feel like takin' the wheel of an old woman's home there would be this one: You need a business man there and I'm no business man."

"How do you know you're not?"

"Because I've just proved it. You heard somethin' of how my voyage in business ashore turned out. I'll tell you the truth about it."

He did, briefly, giving the facts of his disastrous sojourn in ship-chandlery.

"So that's how good a business man I am," he said in conclusion. "And I'm a cripple besides. Much obliged, Judge, but you'll have to ship another skipper, I'm afraid."

He was rising but Judge Knowles barked a profane order for him to keep his seat.

"I know all that," he snapped. "Knew about it just after it happened. And I know, too, that you paid your share of the debts dollar for dollar. I'll risk you in this job I'm offering you.... Yes, and you're the only man I will risk--the only one in sight, that is. Come now, don't say no. Think it over. I'll give you a week to think it over in. I'd give you a month, but I might not be here at the end of it.... Will you take the offer under consideration and then come back and have another talk with me? Eh? Will you?"

The captain hesitated. He wanted to say no, of course, should say it sooner or later, but he hated to be too abrupt in his refusal. After all, the offer, although absurd, was, in a way, a compliment and he liked the old judge. So he hesitated, stammered and then asked another question.

"You've got a skipper aboard the Fair Harbor already, haven't you?" he inquired. "Judah told me that Cap'n Ike Berry's widow was runnin' the place."

"Humph! That isn't all he told you, is it?"

Kendrick smiled. "Why"--he hesitated, "I--"

"Come, come, come! Of course he told you that Cordelia Berry was another one of those mistakes we've been talking about. She is, but her husband was one of my best friends and his daughter is another. No mistake there, Cap'n Kendrick, I tell you.... But you've met Elizabeth, I understand, eh?"

He chuckled as he said it. Sears was surprised and a trifle confused. Evidently she had told of their encounter in Judah's garden.

"Well, yes," he admitted. "We met."

"Ha, ha! So I heard. Handled the poultry pretty well, didn't she? She ought to, she's had experience in handling old hens for some time."

"I presume likely. Then I don't see why you don't let her keep on handlin' 'em. What do you want me for?"

"Oh, damnation, man, haven't I told you! I want you because I'm going to die and somebody--some man--must take my place.... Look here, Kendrick. I appoint you general manager of the Fair Harbor, take it or leave it. But *if* you leave it don't do it for a week, and, before you do, promise me you'll go over there some day and look around. Meet Cordelia and talk to her, meet Elizabeth and talk to her. Meet some of the--er--hens and talk to them. But, this is the main thing, look around, listen, see for yourself. Then you can come back and, if you accept, we'll discuss details. Will you do that much?"

Captain Sears looked troubled. "Why, yes, I suppose so," he said, reluctantly, "to oblige you, Judge. But it's wasted time, I shan't accept. Of course I thank you for the offer and all that, but I might as well, seems to me, say no now as next week."

"No such thing. And you will go there and look around?"

"Why--yes, I guess so. But won't the Berry woman and the rest of 'em think I'm nosin' in where I don't belong? I should, if I were they, and I'd raise a row about it, too."

"Nonsense. They can't object to your making a neighborly call, can they? And if they do, let 'em. A healthy row won't do a bit of harm over there. Give 'em the devil, it's what they need.... See here, will you go?"

"Yes."

"Good! And, remember, you are appointed to this job this minute if you want it. Or you may take it at any time during the week; don't bother to speak to me first. Fifteen hundred a year, live with Cahoon or whoever you like, precious little to do except be generally responsible for the Fair Harbor--oh, how I hate that syrupy, sentimental name!--financially and in a business way.... Easy berth, as you sailors would say, eh? Ha, ha!... Well, good day, Cap'n. Can you find your way out? If not call that eternally-lost woman of mine and she'll pilot you.... Ah.... yes.... And just hand me that water glass once more.... Thanks.... I shall hope to hear you've accepted next time I see you. We'll talk details and sign papers then, eh?... Oh, yes, we will. You won't be fool enough to refuse. Easy berth, you know, Kendrick. And don't forget Egbert; eh? Ha, ha.... Umph--ah, yes.... Where's that damned housekeeper?"

Mike Callahan asked no questions as he drove his passenger back to the General Minot place--no direct questions, that is--but it was quite evident that his curiosity concerning the reasons for Captain Kendrick's visit was intense.

"Well, the ould judge seen you at last, Cap'n," he observed.

"Yes."

"I expect 'twas a great satisfaction to him, eh?"

"Maybe so. Looks as if it was smurrin' up for rain over to the west'ard, doesn't it?"

Mr. Callahan delivered his passenger at the Minot back door and departed, looking grumpy. Then Mr. Cahoon took his turn.

"Well, Cap'n Sears," he said, eagerly, "you seen him."

"Yes, Judah, I saw him."

"Um-hm. Pretty glad to see you, too, wan't he?"

"I hope so."

"Creepin' prophets, don't you *know* so? Ain't he been sendin' word by Emmeline Tidditt that he wanted to see you more'n a million times?"

"Guess not. So far as I know he only wanted to see me once."

"No, no, no. You know what I mean, Cap'n Sears.... Well--er--er--you seen him, anyway?"

"Yes, I saw him."

"Um-hm... so you said."

"Yes, I thought I did."

"Oh, you did--yes, you did.... Um-hm--er--yes."

So Judah, too, was obliged to do without authentic information concerning Judge Knowles's reason for wishing to meet Sears Kendrick. He hinted as far as he dared, but experience gained through years of sea acquaintanceship with his former commander prevented his doing more than hint. The captain would tell just exactly what he wished and no more, Judah knew. He knew also that attempting to learn more than that was likely to be unpleasant as well as unprofitable. It was true that his beloved "Cap'n Sears" was no longer his commander but merely his lodger, nevertheless discipline was discipline. Mr. Cahoon was dying to know why the judge wished to talk to the captain, but he would have died in reality rather than continue to work the pumps against the latter's orders, expressed or intimated. Judah was no mutineer.

CHAPTER VI

Sears put in a disagreeable day or two after his call upon the judge. He was dissatisfied with the ending of their interview. He felt that he had been foolishly soft-hearted in promising to call at the Fair Harbor, or, to consider for another hour the preposterous offer of management of that institution. He must say no in the end. How much better to have said it then and there. Fifteen hundred a year looked like a lot of money to him. It tempted him, that part of the proposition. But it did not tempt him sufficiently to overcome the absurdities of the remaining part. How could *he* manage an old woman's home? And what would people say if he tried?

Nevertheless, he had promised to visit the place and look it over and the promise must be kept. He dreaded it about as much as he had ever dreaded anything, but--he had promised. So on the morning of the third day following that of his call upon Judge Knowles he hobbled painfully and slowly up the front walk of the Fair Harbor to the formidable front door, with its great South Sea shells at each end of the granite step--relics of Captain Sylvanus's early voyages--and its silver-plated name plate with "SEYMOUR" engraved upon it in Gothic lettering. To one looking back from the viewpoint of to-day such a name plate may seem a bit superfluous and unnecessary in a village where every one knew not only where every one else lived, but how they lived and all about them. The fact remains that in Bayport in the '70's there were many name plates.

Sears gave the glass knob beside the front door a pull. From the interior of the house came the resultant "*JINGLE*; *jingle*; jingle, jing, jing." Then a wait, then the sound of footsteps approaching the other side of the door. Then a momentary glimpse of a reconnoitering eye behind one of the transparent urns engraved in the ground glass pane. Then a rattle of bolt and latch and the door opened.

The woman who opened it was rather good looking, but also she looked--well, if the captain had been ordered to describe her general appearance instantly, he would have said that she looked "tousled." She was fully dressed, of course, but there was about her a general appearance of having just gotten out of bed. Her hair, rather elaborately

coiffured, had several loose strands sticking out here and there. She wore a gold pin--an oval brooch with a lock of hair in it--at her throat, but one end was unfastened. She wore cotton gloves, with holes in them.

"Good mornin'," said the captain.

The woman said "Good morning." There was no "r" in the "morning" so, remembering what he had heard concerning Mrs. Isaac Berry's rearing, Kendrick decided that this must be she.

"This is Mrs. Berry, isn't it?" he inquired.

"Yes." The lady's tone was not too gracious, in fact there was a trace of suspicion in it, as if she was expecting the man on the step to produce a patent egg-beater or the specimen volume of a set of encyclopedias.

"How do you do, Mrs. Berry," went on the captain. "My name is Kendrick. I'm your neighbor next door, and Judge Knowles asked me to be neighborly and cruise over and call some day. So I--er--so I've cruised, you see."

Mrs. Berry's expression changed. She seemed surprised, perhaps a little annoyed, certainly very much confused.

"Why--why, yes, Mr. Kendrick," she stammered. "I'm so glad you did.... I am so glad to see you.... Ah--ah---- Won't you come in?"

Captain Sears entered the dark front hall. It smelt like most front halls of that day in that town, a combination smell made up of sandal-wood and Brussels carpet and haircloth and camphor and damp shut-up-ness.

"Walk right in, do," urged Mrs. Berry, opening the parlor door. The captain walked right in. The parlor was high-studded and square-pianoed and chromoed and oil-portraited and black-walnutted and marble-topped and hairclothed. Also it had the fullest and most satisfying assortment of whatnot curios and alum baskets and whale ivory and shell frames and wax fruit and pampas grass. There was a majestic black stove and window lambrequins. Which is to say that it was a very fine specimen of a very best parlor.

"Do sit down, Mr. Kendrick," gushed Mrs. Berry, moving about a good deal but not, apparently, accomplishing very much. There had been a feather duster on the piano when they entered, but it, somehow or other, had disappeared beneath the piano scarf--partially disappeared, that is, for one end still protruded. The lady's cotton dusting-gloves no longer protected her hands but now peeped coyly from behind a jig-sawed photograph frame on the marble mantelpiece. The apron she had worn lay on the floor in the shadow of the table cloth. These habiliments of menial domesticity slid, one by one, out of sight--or partially so--as she bustled and chatted. When, after a moment, she raised a window shade and admitted a square of sunshine to the grand apartment, one would scarcely have guessed that there was such drudgery as housework, certainly no one would have suspected the elegant Mrs. Cordelia Berry of being intimately connected with it.

She swept--in those days the breadth of skirts made all feminine progress more or less of a sweep--across the room and swished gracefully into a chair. When she spoke she raised her eyebrows, at the end of the sentence she lowered them and her lashes. She smiled much, and hers was still a pretty smile. She made attractive little gestures with her hands.

"I am *so* glad you dropped in, Mr. Kendrick," she declared. "So very glad. Of course if we had known when you were coming we might have been a little better prepared. But there, you will excuse us, I know. Elizabeth and I--Elizabeth is my daughter, Mr. Kendrick.... But it is *Captain* Kendrick, isn't it? Of course, I might have known. You look the sea--you know what I mean--I can always tell. My dear husband was a captain. You knew that, of course. And in the old days at my girlhood home so many, *many* captains used to come and go. Our old home--my girlhood home, I mean--was always open. I met my husband there.... Ah me, those days are not these days! What my dear father would have said if he could have known.... But we don't know what is in store for us, do we?... Oh, dear!... It's such charming weather, isn't it, Captain Kendrick?"

The captain admitted the weather's charm. He had not heard a great deal of his voluble hostess's chatter. He was there, in a way, on business and he was wondering how he might, without giving offence, fulfill his promise to Judge Knowles and see more of the interior of the Fair Harbor. Of the matron of that institution he had already seen enough to classify and appraise her in his mind.

Mrs. Berry rambled on and on. At last, out of the tumult of words, Captain Sears caught a fragment which seemed to him pertinent and interesting.

"Oh!" he broke in. "So you knew I was--er--hopeful of droppin' in some time or other?"

"Why, yes. Elizabeth knew. Judge Knowles told her you said you hoped to. Of course we were delighted.... The poor dear judge! We are *so* fond of him, my daughter and I. He is so--so essentially aristocratic. Oh, if you knew what that means to me, raised as I was among the people I was. There are times when I sit here in this dreadful place in utter despair--utter.... Oh--oh, of course, Captain Kendrick, I wouldn't have you imagine that Elizabeth and I don't like this house. We *love* it. And dear 'Belia Seymour is my *closest* friend. But, you know----"

She paused, momentarily, and the captain seized the opportunity----

"So Judge Knowles told you I was liable to call, did he?" he queried. He was somewhat surprised. He wondered if the Judge had hinted at a reason for his visit.

"Why, yes," replied Mrs. Berry, "he told Elizabeth. She said---- Oh, here you are, dearie. Captain Kendrick, our next door neighbor, has run in for a little call. Isn't it delightful of him? Captain Kendrick, this is my daughter, Elizabeth."

She had entered from the door behind the captain's chair. Now she came forward as he rose from it.

"How do you do, Cap'n Kendrick?" she said. "I am very glad to see you again. Judge Knowles told me you were planning to call."

She extended her hand and the captain took it. She was smiling, but it seemed to him that the smile was an absent-minded one. In fact--of course it might be entirely his imagination--he had a feeling that she was troubled about something.

However, he had no time to surmise or even reply to her greeting. Mrs. Berry had caught a word in that greeting which to her required explanation.

"Again?" she repeated. "Why, Elizabeth, have you and Captain Kendrick met before?"

"Yes, Mother, that day when our hens got into Mr. Cahoon's garden. You remember I told you at the time."

"I don't remember any such thing. I remember Elvira said that she and Aurora met him one afternoon, but I don't remember your saying anything about it."

"I told you. No doubt you have forgotten it."

"Nonsense! you know I never forget. If there is one thing I can honestly pride myself on it is a good memory. You may have thought you told me, but---- Why, what's that noise?"

The noise was a curious babble or chatter, almost as if the sound-proof door--if there was such a thing--of a parrot cage had been suddenly opened. It came from somewhere at the rear of the house and was, apparently, produced by a number of feminine voices all speaking very fast and simultaneously.

Elizabeth turned, glanced through the open door behind her, and then at Mrs. Berry. There was no doubt now concerning the troubled expression upon her face. She was troubled.

"Mother--" she began, quickly. "Excuse us, Cap'n Kendrick, please--mother, have Elvira and Susan Brackett been talking to you about buying that collection of--of what they call garden statuary at Mrs. Seth Snowden's auction in Harniss?"

And now Mrs. Berry, too, looked troubled. She turned red, stammered and fidgeted.

"Why--why, Elizabeth," she said, "I--I don't see why you want to discuss that now. We have a visitor and I'm sure Captain Kendrick isn't interested."

Her daughter did not seem to care whether the visitor was interested or not.

"Tell me, mother, please," she urged. "*Have* they been talking with you about their plan to buy that--those things?"

Mrs. Berry's confusion increased. "Why--why, yes," she admitted. "Elvira did tell me about it, something about it. She said it was beautiful--the fountain and the--the deer and--and how pretty they would look on the lawn and----"

"Mother, you didn't give them the least encouragement, did you? They say--Elvira and Mrs. Brackett say you told them you thought it a beautiful idea and that you were in favor of what they call their committee going to the sale next Monday and buying those--those cast-iron dogs and children with the Fair Harbor money? I am sure you didn't say that, did you, mother?... I'm awfully sorry, Cap'n Kendrick, to bring this matter into the middle of your call, but really it is very important and it can't be postponed, because.... Tell me, Mother, they will be here in a moment. You didn't say any such thing, did you?"

Mrs. Berry's fine eyes--they had been called "starlike" twenty years before, by romantic young gentlemen--filled with tears. She wrung her hands.

"I--I only said--" she stammered, "I---- Oh, I don't think I said anything except--except that---- Well, they were so sure they were lovely and a great bargain--and you know Captain Snowden's estate in Harniss was perfectly *charming*. You know it was, Elizabeth!"

"Mother, you didn't tell them they might buy them?"

"Why--why, no, I--I don't think I did. I--I couldn't have because I never do anything like that without consulting you.... Oh, Elizabeth, *please*, don't let us have a scene here, with Captain Kendrick present. What *will* he think? Oh, dear,

dear!"

Her handkerchief was called into requisition. Sears Kendrick rose from his chair. Obviously he must go and, just as obviously, he knew that in order to fulfill his promise to the judge in spirit as well as letter he ought to stay. This was just the sort of situation to shed light upon the inner secrets of the Fair Harbor and its management.... Nevertheless, he was not going to stay. His position was much too spylike to suit him. But before he could move there were other developments.

While Miss Berry and her mother had been exchanging hurried questions and answers the parrot-cage babble from the distant places somewhere at the end of the long entry beyond the door had been continuous. Now it suddenly grew louder. Plainly the babblers were approaching along that entry and babbling as they came.

A moment more and they were in the room, seven of them. In the lead was the dignified Miss Elvira herself, an impressive figure of gentility in black silk and a hair breast pin. Close behind her, of course, was the rotund Mrs. Aurora Chase, and equally close--yes even a little in advance of Aurora, was a solidly built female with gray hair, a square chin, and a very distinct mustache. The others were in the rear, but as they came in one of these, a little woman in a plain gingham dress, who wore steel spectacles upon a sharp little nose, left the group and took a stand a little apart, regarding the company with lifted chin and a general air of determination and uncompromising defiance. Later on Captain Sears was destined to learn that the little woman was Mrs. Esther Tidditt, and the lady with the mustache Mrs. Susanna Brackett. And that the others were respectively Mrs. Hattie Thomas, Miss Desire Peasley, and Mrs. Constance Cahoon. Each of the seven was, of course, either a captain's widow or his sister.

Just at the moment the captain, naturally, recognized nobody except Miss Snowden and Mrs. Chase. Nor did he notice individual peculiarities except that something, excitement or a sudden jostle or something, had pushed Aurora's rippling black locks to one side, with the result that the part which divided the ripples, instead of descending plumb-line fashion from the crown of the head to a point directly in the center of the forehead, now had a diagonal twist and ended over the left eye. The effect was rather astonishing, as if the upper section of the lady's head had slipped its moorings.

He had scarcely time to notice even this, certainly none in which to speculate concerning its cause. Miss Snowden, who held a paper in her hand, stepped forward and began to speak, gesticulating with the paper as she did so. She paid absolutely no attention to the masculine visitor. She was trembling with excitement and it is doubtful if she even saw him.

"Mrs. Berry," she began, "we are here--we have come here, these ladies and I--we have come here--we---- Oh, what *is* it?"

This last was addressed to Mrs. Chase, who was tugging at her skirt.

"Talk louder," cautioned Aurora, in a stage whisper. "I can't hear you."

With an impatient movement Miss Snowden freed her garment and began again.

"Mrs. Berry," she repeated, "we are here, these ladies and I, to--to ask a question and to express our opinion on a very important matter. We are all agreed----"

Here she was again interrupted, this time by Mrs. Esther Tidditt, the little woman in the gingham dress. Mrs. Tidditt's tone was brisk and sharp.

"No, we ain't agreed neither," she announced, with a snap of her head which threatened shipwreck to the steel spectacles. "*I* think it's everlastin' foolishness. Don't you say *I'm* agreed to it, Elvira Snowden."

Elvira drew her thin form erect and glared. "We are practically agreed," she proclaimed crushingly. "You are the only one who doesn't agree."

"Humph! And I'm the only one that is practical. Of all the silly----"

"Esther Tidditt, was you appointed to do the talking for this committee or was I?"

"You was, but that don't stop me from talkin' when I want to. I ain't on the committee, thank the good lord. I'm my own committee."

This declaration of independence was received with an outburst of indignant exclamations, in the midst of which Mrs. Chase could be heard demanding to be told what was the matter and who said what. Elizabeth Berry stilled the hubbub.

"Hush, hush!" she pleaded. "Don't, Esther, please. You can say your word later. I want mother--and Cap'n Kendrick--to hear this, all of it."

The captain was still standing. He had risen when the "committee" entered the room. Its members, most of them, had been so intent upon the business which had brought them there that they had ignored his presence. Now, of course,

they turned to look at him. There was curiosity in their look but by no means enthusiastic approval. Miss Snowden's nod was decidedly snippy. She looked, sniffed and turned again to Mrs. Berry.

"We want your mother to hear it," she declared. "We've come here so she shall hear it--all of it. If--if *others*--who may not be 'specially interested want to hear they can, I suppose. I don't know why not.... *We* haven't anything to hide. *We* ain't ashamed--are not, I should say. Are we?" turning to those behind and beside her.

Mrs. Brackett announced that she certainly should say not, so did several others. There was a general murmur of agreement. Every one continued to look at the captain. He was embarrassed.

"I think perhaps I had better be goin'," he said, addressing Miss Berry. "I ought to be gettin' home, anyway."

But the young lady would not have it.

"Cap'n Kendrick," she said, earnestly, "I hope you won't go. Judge Knowles told me you were going to call. I was very glad when I found you had called now--at this time. And I should like to have you stay. You can stay, can't you?"

Sears hesitated. "Why--why, yes, I presume likely I can," he admitted.

"And will you--please?"

He looked at her and she at him. Then he nodded.

"I'll stay," he said, and sat down in his chair.

"Thank you," said Elizabeth. "Now, Elvira.... Wait, mother, please."

Miss Snowden sniffed once more. "Now that that important matter is settled I *suppose* I may be allowed to go on," she observed, with sarcasm. "Very good, I will do so in spite of the presence of--of those not--ahem--intimately concerned. Mrs. Berry, on behalf of this committee here, a committee of the whole----"

"No such thing," this from Mrs. Tidditt. "I'm part of the whole but I ain't part of that committee. Stick to the truth, Elviry--pays better."

"Hush, Esther," begged Miss Berry. "Let her go on, please. Go on, Elvira."

The head of the committee breathed fiercely through her thin nostrils. Then she made another attempt.

"I address you, Mrs. Cordelia Berry," declaimed Elvira, "because you are supposed--I say *supposed*--to be officially the managing director--or directress, to speak correct--of this institution. Not," she added, hastily, "that it is an institution in any sense of the word--like a home or any such thing. We all know that, I hope and trust. Although," with a venomous glance in the direction of Mrs. Esther, "there appear to be *some* that know precious little. I mention no names."

"You don't need to," retorted the Tidditt lady promptly. "Never mind, I know enough not to vote to buy a lot of second-handed images and critters just because they belong to one of your relations. I know that much, Elviry Snowden."

This was a body blow and Elvira visibly winced. For just an instant Captain Sears thought she was contemplating physical assault upon her enemy. But she recovered and, white and scornful, proceeded.

"I shan't deign to answer such low--er--insinuations," she declared, her voice shaking. "I scorn them and her that makes them. I scorn them--both. *BOTH!*"

This last "Both" was fired like a shot from a "Big Bertha." It should have annihilated the irreverent little female in the gingham gown. It did not, however; she merely laughed. The effect of the blast was still further impaired by Mrs. Chase, who although listening with all her ears, such as they were, had evidently heard neither well nor wisely.

"That's right, Elviry," proclaimed Aurora, "that's just what I say. Why, the lion alone is worth the money."

Mrs. Brackett touched the Snowden arm. "Never mind, Elvira," she said. "Don't pay any attention. Go right ahead and read the resolutions."

Elvira drew a long breath, two long breaths. "Thank you, Susanna," she said, "I shall. I'm going to. Mrs. Berry," she added, turning to that lady, who was quite as much agitated as any one present and was clutching her chair arm with one hand and her daughter's arm with the other. "Mrs. Berry," repeated Miss Snowden, "this resolution drawn up and signed by the committee of the whole here present--signed with but one exception, I should say, one *trifling* exception--" this with a glare at Mrs. Tidditt--"is, as I said, addressed to you because you are supposed--" a glare at Elizabeth this time--"to be in charge of the Fair Harbor and what goes on and is done within its--er--porticos. Ahem! I will now read as follows."

And she proceeded to read, using both elocution and gestures. The resolutions made a rather formidable document. They were addressed to "Mrs. Cordelia Imogene Berry, widow of the late Captain Isaac Stephens Berry, in charge of the

Fair Harbor for Mariners' Women at Bayport, Massachusetts, United States of America. Madam: Whereas----

There were many "Whereases." Captain Kendrick, listening intently, found the path of his understanding clogged by them and tangled by Miss Elvira's flowers of rhetoric. He gathered, nevertheless, that the "little group of ladies resident at the Fair Harbor, having been reared amid surroundings of culture, art and refinement" were, naturally, desirous of improving their present surroundings. Also that a "truly remarkable opportunity" had come in their way by which the said surroundings might be improved and beautified by the expenditure of a nominal sum, seventy-five dollars, no more. With this seventy-five dollars might be bought "the entire collection of lawn statuary and the fountain which adorned the grounds of the estate of the late lamented deceased Captain Seth Snowden at Harniss and now the property of his widow, namely to wit, Mrs. Hannah Snowden."

"And I'll say this," put in Elvira, before reading further, "although hints and insinuations have been cast at me in the hearing of those present to-day about my being a relation--relative, that is--of Captain Seth, and he was my uncle on my father's side, nevertheless it's just because I am a relation--relative--that we are able to buy all those elegant things for as cheap a price as seventy-five dollars when they cost at least five hundred and.... But there! I will proceed.

"The said statuary, etcetera, consisting of the following, that is to say:

"No. 1. Item ... 1 Lawn Fountain. Hand painted iron. Representing two children beneath umbrella."

"And it's the cutest thing," put in the hitherto silent Desire Peasley, with enthusiastic suddenness. "There's them two young ones standin' natural as life under that umbrella--just same as anybody *would* stand under an umbrella if 'twas rainin' like fury--and the water squirts right down over top of 'em and drips off the ribs--off the ribs of the umbrella, I mean--and there they stand and--and---- Well, when I see *that* I says, 'My glory!' I says, 'what'll they contrive next?' That's what I said. All hands heard me.... What's that you're mutterin', Esther Tidditt?"

"I wasn't mutterin', 'special. I just said I bet they heard you if they was anywheres 'round."

"Is that so? Do tell! Well, I'll have you to understand----"

Elvira and Miss Berry together intervened to calm this new disturbance. Then the former went on with the reading of the "resolutions."

"No. 2. Item ... 1 Hand painted lion. Iron....' Hush, Aurora!... Yes, 'lion,' that's right.... I did say 'iron.' It's an iron lion, isn't it?... Oh, *do* be quiet! We'll never get through if everybody keeps interrupting. 'No. 2 ... Item ... 1 Hand painted lion iron'-iron lion, I mean.... Oh, my soul and body! If everybody keeps talking I shan't know what I mean.... 'A very wonderful piece of statuary. In perfect condition. Paint needs touching up, that's all.

"No. 3--Item.... 1 Deer. Hand painted iron. Perfectly lovely--"

"Stuff!" This from the irrepressible Mrs. Tidditt, of course. "One horn is broke off and it looks like the Old Harry. No, I'll take that back; the Old Harry is supposed to have two horns. But that deer image is a sight, just the same. Why, it ain't got any paint left on it."

"Nonsense! It may need a little paint, here and there, but----"

"Humph! A little here and a lot there and a whole lot more in between. Elvira Snowden, that image looks as if 'twas struck with leprosy, like Lazarus in the Bible; you know it well as I do."

Sears Kendrick enjoyed the reading of these resolutions. If it were not for certain elements in the situation he would have considered the morning's performance the most amusing entertainment he had witnessed afloat or ashore. He managed not to laugh aloud, although he was obliged to turn his head away several times and to cough at intervals. Once or twice he and Elizabeth Berry exchanged glances and the whimsical look of resignation and humorous appreciation in her eyes showed that she, too, was keenly aware of the joke.

But at other times she was serious enough and it was her expression at these times which prevented the captain's accepting the whole ridiculous affair as a hilarious farce. Then she looked deeply troubled and careworn and anxious. He began to realize that this affair, funny as it was, was but one of a series, a series of annoyances and trials and petty squabbles which, taken in the aggregate, were anything but funny to her. For it was obvious, the truth of what Judah Cahoon had said and Judge Knowles intimated, that this girl, Elizabeth Berry, was bearing upon her young shoulders the entire burden of responsibility for the conduct and management of affairs in the Fair Harbor for Mariners' Women at Bayport. Her mother was supposed to bear this burden, but it was perfectly obvious that Cordelia Berry was incapable of bearing any responsibilities, including her own personal ones.

Miss Snowden solemnly read the concluding paragraph of the resolutions. It summed up those preceding it and announced that those whose names were appended, "being guests at the Fair Harbor, the former home of our beloved benefactress and friend Mrs. Lobelia Phillips, *nee* Seymour, are unanimously agreed that as a simple matter of duty to the institution and those within its gates, not to mention the beautifying of Bayport, the collection of lawn statuary and

fountain now adorning the estate of the late deceased Captain Seth Snowden be bought, purchased and obtained from that estate at the very low price of seventy-five dollars, this money to be paid from the funds in the Fair Harbor treasury, and the said statuary and fountain to be erected and set up on the lawns and grounds of the Fair Harbor. Signed----"

Miss Elvira read the names of the signers. They included, as she took pains to state, the names of every guest in the Fair Harbor with one--ahem--exception.

"And I'm it, praise the lord," announced Mrs. Tidditt, promptly. "I ain't quite crazy yet, nor I ain't a niece-in-law of Seth Snowden's widow neither."

"Esther Tidditt, I've stood your hints and slanders long enough."

"Nobody's payin' *me* no commissions for gettin' rid of their old junk for 'em."

"Esther, be still! You shouldn't say such things. Elvira, stop--stop!" Miss Berry stepped forward. Mrs. Tidditt was bristling like a combative bantam and Elvira was shaking from head to feet and crooking and uncrooking her fingers. "There mustn't be any more of this," declared Elizabeth. "Esther, you must apologize. Stop, both of you, please. Remember, Cap'n Kendrick is here."

This had the effect of causing every one to look at the captain once more. He felt unpleasantly conspicuous, but Elizabeth's next speech transferred the general gaze from him to her.

"There isn't any use in saying much more about this matter, it seems to me," she said. "It comes down to this: You and the others, Elvira, think we should buy the--the statues and the fountain because they would, you think, make our lawns and grounds more beautiful."

"We don't think at all--we know," declared Elvira. Mrs. Brackett said, "Yes indeed, we do," and there was a general murmur of assent. Also a loud sniff from the Tidditt direction.

"And your mother thinks so, too," spoke up Miss Peasley, from the group. "She told me herself she thought they were lovely. Didn't you, Cordelia? You know you did."

Before Mrs. Berry could answer--her embarrassment and distress seemed to be bringing her again to the verge of tears--her daughter went on.

"It doesn't make a bit of difference what mother and I think about their--beauty--and all that," she said. "The whole thing comes down to the matter of whether or not we can afford to buy them. And we simply cannot. We haven't the money to spare. Spending seventy-five dollars for anything except the running expenses of the Harbor is now absolutely impossible. I told you that, Elvira, when you first suggested it."

Miss Snowden, still trembling, regarded her resentfully. "Yes, *you* told me," she retorted. "I know you did. You are always telling us we can't do this or that. But why should *you* tell us? That is what we can't understand. *You* ain't--aren't--manager here, so far as we know. We never heard of your appointment. *We* always understood your mother was the manager, duly appointed. Isn't she?"

"Of course she is, but----"

"Yes, and when we have spoken to *her*--two or three of us at different times--she has said she thought buying these things was a lovely idea. I shouldn't be surprised if she thought so now.... Cordelia, don't you think the Fair Harbor ought to buy those statues and that fountain?"

This pointed appeal, of course, placed Mrs. Berry directly in the limelight and she wilted beneath its glare. She reddened and then paled. Her fingers fidgetted with the pin at her throat. She picked up her handkerchief and dropped it. She looked at Elvira and the committee and then at her daughter.

"Why--why, I don't know," she faltered. "I think--of course I think the--the statuary is very beautiful. I--I said so. I--I am always fond of pretty things. You know I am, Elizabeth, you----"

"Wait a minute, Cordelia. Didn't you tell me you thought the Fair Harbor ought to buy them? Didn't you tell Suzanna and me just that?"

Mrs. Berry squirmed. She did not answer but, so far as Sears Kendrick was concerned, no answer was necessary. He was as certain as if she had sworn it that she had told them just that thing. And, looking at Elizabeth's face, he could see that she, too, was certain of it.

"Didn't you, Cordelia?" persisted Miss Snowden.

"Why--why, I don't know. Perhaps I did, but--but what difference does it make? You heard what Elizabeth said. She says we can't afford it. She always attends to such matters, you know she does."

"Yes," with sarcastic emphasis, "we do, but we don't know *why* she should. And in this case we aren't going to stand it. You are supposed to be managing this place, Cordelia Berry, and if you are willing to turn your duties over to a--a mere child we aren't willing to let you. Once more I ask you----"

Elizabeth interrupted. "There, there, Elvira," she said, "what *is* the use? It isn't a question of mother's opinion or what she has said before. It is just a matter of money. We can't afford it."

Miss Snowden ignored her. "We shall not," she repeated, "permit our future and--and all like that to be ruined by the whims of a mere child. *That* is final."

She pronounced the last sentence with solemn emphasis. The pause which followed should have been impressive but Mrs. Tidditt spoiled the effect.

"Mere child!" she repeated, significantly. "Well, I presume likely she *is* a mere child compared to some folks. Only she just looks childish and they act that way."

There was another outburst of indignant exclamations from the committee. The head of that body turned to her followers.

"It is quite evident," she declared, furiously, "that this conference is going to end just as the others have. But this time we are not going to sit back and be trampled on. There are those higher up to be appealed to and we shall appeal to them. Come!"

She stalked majestically to the door and marched out and down the hall, the committee following her. Only Mrs. Tidditt remained, and she but for a moment.

"They're goin' to the back room to have another meetin'," she whispered. "If there's anything up that amounts to anything, 'Lizabeth, I'll come back and let you know."

Elizabeth did not answer, but Kendrick offered a suggestion. "You don't belong to this committee," he observed. "Perhaps they won't let you into the meetin'."

The eyes behind the steel spectacles snapped sparks. "I'd like to see 'em try to keep me out," declared Mrs. Esther, and hurried after the others. Elizabeth turned to her mother.

"Mother," she said, earnestly, "we must be very firm in this matter. We simply can't afford to spend any money just now except for necessities. If they come to you again you must tell them so. You will, won't you?"

And now Mrs. Berry's agitation reached its climax. She turned upon her daughter.

"Oh, I suppose so," she cried hysterically, "I suppose so! I shall have to go through another scene and be spoken to as if--as if I were dirt under these women's feet instead of being as far above them in--in position and education and refinement as the clouds. Why can't I have peace--just a little peace and quiet? Why must I *always* have to undergo humiliation after humiliation? I----"

"Mother, mother, please don't----"

But her mother was beyond reason.

"And you--" she went on, "you, my own daughter, why must you always take the other side, and put me in such positions, and--and humiliate me before--before---- Oh, why can't I die? I *wish* I were dead! I do! I do!"

She burst into a storm of hysterical sobs and hurried toward the door. Elizabeth would have gone to her but she pushed her aside and rushed into the front hall and up the stairs. They heard her sobs upon the upper landing.

Sears Kendrick, feeling more like an interloper than ever, looked in embarrassment at the flowered carpet. He did not dare look at the young woman beside him. He had never in his life felt more sorry for any one. Judge Knowles had said he hoped that he--Kendrick--might obtain a general idea of the condition of affairs in the Fair Harbor. The scenes he had just witnessed had given him a better idea of that condition than anything else could have done. And, somehow or other, it was the last of those scenes which had affected him most. Elizabeth Berry had faced the sarcasms and sneers of the committee, had never lost her poise or her temper, had never attempted to shift the responsibility, had never reproached her mother for the hesitating weakness which was at the base of all the trouble. And, in return, her mother had accused her of--all sorts of things.

And yet when Elizabeth spoke it was in defence of that mother.

"I hope, Cap'n Kendrick," she said, "that you won't misunderstand my mother or take what she just said too seriously. She is not very well, and very nervous, and, as you see, her position here is a trying one sometimes."

The captain could not keep back the speech which was at his tongue's end.

"*Your* position is rather tryin', too, isn't it?" he observed. "It sort of would seem that way--to me."

She smiled sadly. "Why, yes--it is," she admitted. "But I am younger and--and perhaps I can bear it better."

It occurred to him that the greatest pity of all was the fact that she should be obliged to bear it. He did not say so, however, and she went on, changing the subject and speaking very earnestly.

"Cap'n Kendrick," she said, "I am very glad you heard this--this disagreement this morning. Judge Knowles told me you were going to call at the Harbor here and when he said it he--well, I thought he looked more than he said, if you know what I mean. I didn't ask any questions and he said nothing more, but I guess perhaps he wanted you to--to see--well, to see what he wasn't well enough to see--or something like that."

She paused. The captain was embarrassed. He certainly felt guilty and he also felt as if he looked so.

"Why--why, Miss Berry," he stammered, "I hope you--you mustn't think----"

She waved his protestations aside.

"It doesn't make a bit of difference," she said. "No matter why you came I am very glad you did. This ridiculous statutory business is just one--well, symptom, so to speak. If it wasn't that, it might be something else. It comes, you see, from my position here--which really isn't any position at all--and their position, Elvira Snowden's and the rest. They pay a certain sum to get here in the first place and a small sum each year. There is the trouble. They think they pay for board and lodging and are guests. Of course what they pay amounts to almost nothing, but they don't realize that, or don't want to, and they expect to have their own way. Mother is--well, she is nervous and high strung and she hates scenes. They take advantage of her, some of them--no doubt they don't consider it that, but it seems to me so--and so I have been obliged to take charge, in a way. They don't understand that and resent it. I don't know that I blame them much. Perhaps I should resent it if I were in their place. Only.... But never mind that now.

"This is only one of a good many differences of opinion we have had," she went on. "In the old days--and not older than a year ago, for that matter--if the differences were too acute I used to go to Judge Knowles. He always settled everything, finally and sensibly. But now, since he has been so sick, I--well, I simply can't go to him. He has been very kind to us, to mother and me, and I am very fond of him. He was a great friend of my father's and I think he likes me for father's sake. And now I will not trouble him in his sickness with my troubles--I will *not*."

She raised her head as she said it and Captain Sears, regarding her, was again acutely conscious of the fact that it was a very fine head indeed.

"I understand," he said.

"Yes, I knew you would. And I know I could fight this out by myself. And shall, of course. But, nevertheless, I am glad you were here as--well, as a witness, if it ever comes to that. You heard what Elvira--Miss Snowden--said about appealing to those higher up. I suppose she means Mrs. Phillips, the one who founded the Harbor. If they should write to her I--- What is it, Esther?"

Mrs. Tidditt had rushed into the room, bristling. She waved her arms excitedly.

"Lizbeth, 'Lizbeth," she whispered, "they're goin' to tell him. They're makin' up the yarn now that they're goin' to tell him."

"Tell him? Tell who?"

"Judge Knowles. They've decided to go right straight over to the judge's house and--and do what they call appeal to him about them images. Elvira she's goin', and Susanna, and Desire Peasley, too, for what I know. What do you want me to do? Ain't there any way I can help stop 'em?"

For the first time in that distressing forenoon Captain Kendrick saw Miss Berry's nerve shaken. She clasped her hands.

"Oh dear!" she cried. "Oh, dear, that is the very thing they mustn't do! I wouldn't have Judge Knowles worried or troubled about this for the world. I have kept everything from him. He is *so* ill! If those women go to him and---- Oh, but they mustn't, they mustn't! I can't let them."

Mrs. Tidditt, diminutive but combative, offered a suggestion.

"Do you want me to go out and stop 'em?" she demanded. "I'll go and stand in the kitchen doorway, if you want me to. They won't get by if I'm there, not in a hurry, anyway."

"Oh no, no, Esther, of course not."

"I tell you what I'll do. I'll go and tell Emmeline not to let 'em in the judge's house. She's my cousin and she'll do what I ask--sometimes--if I don't ask much."

"No, that wouldn't do any good, any permanent good. But they must not go to the judge. They must not. He has been so kind and forbearing and he is so very sick. The doctor told me that he.... They shan't go. They can say anything

they please to me, but they shan't torment him."

She started toward the door through which Mrs. Tidditt had entered. At the threshold she paused for an instant and turned.

"Please excuse me, Cap'n Kendrick," she said. "I almost forgot that you were here. I think I wouldn't wait if I were you. There will be another scene and I'm sure you have had scenes enough. I have, too, but.... Oh, well, it will be all right, I'm sure. Please don't wait. Thank you for calling."

She turned again but the captain stopped her. As she faced him there in the doorway their eyes had met. Hers were moist--for the first time she was close to the breaking point--and there was a look in them which caused him to forget everything except one, namely, that the crowd in the "parrot cage" at the other end of that hall should not trouble her further. It was very seldom that Captain Sears Kendrick, master mariner, acted solely on impulse. But he did so now.

"Stop," he cried. "Miss Elizabeth, don't go. Stay where you are.... Here--you--" turning to Mrs. Tidditt. "You go and tell those folks I want to see 'em. Tell 'em to come aft here--now."

There was a different note in his voice, a note neither Elizabeth nor the Tidditt woman had before heard. Yet if Judah Cahoon had been present he would have recognized it. He had heard it many times, aboard many tall ships, upon many seas. It was the captain's quarter-deck voice and it meant business.

Mrs. Tidditt and Elizabeth had not heard it, and they looked at the speaker in surprise. Captain Sears looked at them, but not for long.

"Lively," he commanded. "Do you hear? Go for'ard and tell that crew in the galley, or the fo'castle, or wherever they are, to lay aft here. I've got somethin' to say to 'em."

It was seldom that Esther Tidditt was at a loss for words. As a usual thing her stock was unlimited. Now she merely gasped.

"You--you--" she stammered. "You want me to ask--to ask Elviry and Susanna and them to come in here?"

"Ask? Who said anything about askin'? I want you to tell 'em I say for them to come here. It's an order, and you can tell 'em so, if you want to."

Mrs. Tidditt gasped again. "Well!" she exclaimed. "Well, my good lordy, if this ain't--- A-ll right, I'll tell 'em."

She hastened down the corridor. Elizabeth ventured a faint protest.

"But, Cap'n Kendrick--" she began. He stopped her.

"It is all right, Miss Elizabeth," he said. "I'm handlin' this matter now. All you've got to do is look on.... Well, are they comin' or must I go after 'em?"

Apparently he had forgotten that his lameness made going anywhere a slow proceeding. As a matter of fact he had. He had forgotten everything except the business of the moment and the joy of being once more in supreme command.

The message borne by Mrs. Tidditt had, presumably, been delivered. The messenger had left the dining room door open and through it came a tremendous rattle of tongues. Obviously the captain's order had created a sensation.

Elizabeth listened.

"Well?" repeated Sears, again. "Are they goin' to come?"

Miss Berry smiled faintly. "I think they will come," she answered. "If they are as--as curious as I am they will."

They were. At any rate they came. Miss Snowden, Mrs. Brackett and Mrs. Chase in the lead, the others following. Mrs. Tidditt brought up the rear, marshaling the stragglers, as it were.

Elvira was, of course, the spokeswoman. She was the incarnation of dignified and somewhat resentful surprise.

"We have been told," she began, loftily, "we have been *told*, Cap'n Kendrick, that you wished to speak to us. We can't imagine why, but we have come--come, I should say. *Do* you wish to speak to us?"

Kendrick nodded. "Yes," he said crisply, "I do. I want to tell you that you mustn't go to Judge Knowles about buyin' those iron statues of Cap'n Seth's or about anything else. He is sick and mustn't be worried. Miss Berry says so, and I agree with her."

He paused. From the committee came a gasp, or concert of gasps and muttered exclamations, indicating astonishment. Elvira voiced the feeling.

"You agree with her!" she exclaimed. "*You* agree? Why--I never did!"

"Yes. And I agree with her, too, about buyin' those--er--lions and dogs and--hogs, or whatever they are. I don't say

they aren't worth seventy-five dollars or more--or less--I don't know. But I do say that, until I have had time to look into things aboard here, I don't want any money spent except for stores and other necessities. There isn't a bit of personal feelin' in this, you must understand, it is business, that's all."

He paused once more, to let this sink in. It sank apparently and when it again came to the surface an outburst of incoherent indignation came with it. Every committee-woman said something, even Mrs. Chase, although her observations were demands to know what was being said by the rest. Elizabeth was the only one who remained silent. She was gazing, wide-eyed, at the captain, and upon her face was a strange expression, an expression of eagerness, dawning understanding, and--yes, of hope.

Miss Snowden was so completely taken aback that she was incapable of connected speech. Mrs. Susanna Brackett, however, was of a temperament less easily upset. She stepped forward.

"Cap'n Kendrick," she demanded, "what are you talkin' about? What right have you got to say how the Fair Harbor money shall be spent? What are you interferin' here for I'd like to know?"

"I'm not interferin'. I'm taking charge, that's all.

"Takin' *charge*?... My land of love!... Charge of what?"

"Of this craft here, this Fair Harbor place. Judge Knowles offered me the general management of it three days ago."

Even the Brackett temperament was not proof against such a shock. Susanna herself found difficulty in speaking.

"You--you--" she sputtered. "My soul to heavens! Do you mean--- Are you crazy?"

"Um--maybe. But, anyhow, crazy or not, I'm in command aboard here from now on. Miss Elizabeth here--and her mother, of course--will be captain and mate, same as they've always been, but I'll be--well, commodore or admiral, whichever you like to call it. It's a queer sort of a job for a man like me," he added, with a grim smile, "but it looks as if it was what we'd all have to get used to."

For a moment there was silence, absolute silence, in the best parlor of the Fair Harbor for Mariners' Women. Then that silence was broken.

"What is he sayin'?" wailed Mrs. Aurora Chase. "Elviry Snowden, why don't you tell me what he's a-sayin'?"

CHAPTER VII

The bomb had burst, the debris had fallen, the smoke had to some extent cleared, the committee, still incoherent but by no means speechless, had retired to the dining room to talk it over. Mrs. Tidditt had accompanied them; and Sears Kendrick and Elizabeth Berry were saying good-bye at the front door.

"Well," observed the captain, dubiously, "I'm glad you don't think I'm more than nine tenths idiot. It's some comfort to know you can see one tenth of common-sense in the thing. It's more than I can, and that's honest. I give you my word, Miss Elizabeth, when I set sail from Judah's back entry this mornin' I hadn't any more idea that I should undertake the job of handlin' the Fair Harbor than--well, than that Snowden woman had of kissin' that little spitfire that was flyin' up in her face every minute or two while she was tryin' to read that paper... Ha-ha! that was awfully funny."

Elizabeth smiled. "It was," she agreed. "And it looks so much funnier to me now than it did then, thanks to you, Cap'n Kendrick. You have taken a great load off my mind."

"Um--yes, and taken it on my own, I shouldn't wonder. I do hope you'll make it clear to your mother that all I intend doin' is to keep a sort of weather eye on money matters, that's all. She is to have just the same ratin' aboard here that she has always had--and so will you, of course."

"But I haven't had any real rating, you know. And now I will be more of a fifth wheel than ever. You and mother can manage the Harbor. You won't need me at all. I can take a vacation, can't I? Won't that be wonderful!"

He looked at her in unfeigned alarm.

"Here, here!" he exclaimed. "Lay to! Come up into the wind! Don't talk that way, Miss Berry, or I'll jump over the rail before I've really climbed aboard this craft. I'm countin' on you to do three thirds of the work, just as I guess you've

been doin' for a good while. All I shall be good for--if anything--is to be a sort of reef in the channel, as you might say, something for committees like this one to run their bows on if they get too far off the course."

"And that will be the most useful thing any one can do, Cap'n Kendrick. Oh, I shall thank Judge Knowles--in my mind--so many, many times a day for sending you here, I know I shall. I guessed, when he told me you were going to call, that there was something behind that call. And there was. What a wise old dear he is, bless him."

"Is he? Well I wish I was surer of the wisdom in trappin' me into takin' this command. However, I have taken it, so I'll have to do the best I can for a while, anyhow. Afterwards--well, probably I won't last *but* a little while, so we won't worry about more than that. And you'll have to stand by the wheel, Miss Elizabeth. If it hadn't been for you--I mean for the way that committee lit into you--I don't think I should ever have taken charge."

"I know. And I sha'n't forget. You may count on me, Cap'n Kendrick, for anything I can do to help."

His face brightened. "Good!" he exclaimed. "That's as good as an insurance policy on the ship and cargo. With you to pilot and me to handle the crew she ought to keep somewhere in deep water... Well, I'll be gettin' back to port. Judah's dinner will be gettin' cold and he won't like that. And to-morrow mornin' I'll come again and we'll have a look at the figures."

"Yes. I'll have the books and bills and everything ready.... Oh, be careful! Can't I help you down the step?"

He shook his head. "I can navigate after a fashion," he said, grimly. "I get along about as graceful as a brick sloop in a head tide, but, by the Lord Harry, I'll get along somehow.... No, don't, please. I'd rather you didn't help me, if you don't mind."

Slowly, painfully, and with infinite care he lowered himself down the step. On level ground once more, leaning heavily on his cane, he turned to her and smiled a somewhat shame-faced apology.

"It's silly, I know," he said, panting a little, "but I've always been used to doin' about as I pleased and it--somehow it plagues me to think I can't go it alone still. Just stubborn foolishness."

She shook her head. "No, it isn't," she said, quickly. "I understand. And I do hope you will be better soon. Of course you will."

"Will I?... Well, maybe. Good mornin', Miss Berry. Be sure and tell your mother she's to be just as much cap'n as she ever was."

He hobbled along the walk to the gate. As he passed beneath the sign he looked back. She was still standing in the doorway and when he limped in at the entrance of the General Minot place she was there yet, watching him.

He said no word to Judah of his acceptance of the post of commander of the Fair Harbor. He felt that Judge Knowles should be the first to know of it and that he, himself, should be the one to tell him. So, after dinner was over, and Judah had harnessed the old horse to go to the Minot wood lot for a load of pine boughs and brush for kindling, he asked his ex-cook to take him across to the judge's in the wagon, leave him there, and come for him later. Mr. Cahoon, of course, was delighted to be of service but, of course also, he was tremendously curious.

"Hum," he observed, "goin' to see the judge again, be you, Cap'n Sears?"

"Yes."

"Hum.... Ain't heard that he's any sicker, nor nothin' like that, have you?"

"No."

"I see.... Yūs, yūs.... Just goin' to make a--er--sort of--what you might call a--er--a call, I presume likely."

"I shouldn't wonder."

"Um-hm.... I see.... Yūs, yūs, I see.... Um-hm.... Well, I suppose we might as well--er--start now as any time, eh?"

"Better, I should say, Judah. Whenever you and the Foam Flake are ready, I am."

The Foam Flake was the name with which Judah had rechristened the old horse. The animal's name up to the time of the rechristening had been Pet, but this, Mr. Cahoon explained, he could *not* stand.

"'Whatever else he is,' says I to young Minot, 'he ain't no pet--not of mine. The only way I ever feel like pettin' that oat barrel,' I says, 'is with a rope's end.' 'Well, why don't you give him a new name?' says he. 'What'll I call him?' says I. 'Anything you can think of,' he says. 'By Henry,' says I. 'I have called him about everything I can think of, already.' Haw, haw! That was a pretty good one, wan't it Cap'n Sears?"

"But where did you get 'Foam Flake' from?" the captain had wanted to know.

"Oh, it just come to me, as you might say, same as them things do come sometimes. I was tellin' the Methodist minister

about it one day and he said 'twas a--er--one of them--er--inflammations. Eh? Don't seem as if it could have been 'inflammation,' but 'twas somethin' like it."

"Inspiration, maybe."

"That's the ticket, inspiration's what 'twas. Well, I was kind of draggin' a seine through my head, so to speak, tryin' to haul aboard a likely name for the critter, and fetchin' the net in empty every time, when one day that--er--what-d'ye-call-it?--inflammation landed on me. I'd piloted 'Pet' and the truck wagon over to Harniss--and worked my passage every foot of the way--and over there to Brett's store I met Luther Wixon, who was home from a v'yage to the West Indies. Lute and me had been to sea together half a dozen times, and we got kind of swappin' yarns about the vessels we'd been in.

"Have you heard about the old *Foam Flake*?' says Lute. 'She was wrecked on the Jersey coast off Barnegat,' he says, 'and now they've made a barge out of her hull and she's freightin' hay in New York harbor,' he says.

"Well, sir, I hauled off and fetched the broadside of my leg a slap you could have heard to Jericho. 'By the creepin', jumpin',' says I. 'I've got it!' 'Yes,' he says, 'you act as if you had. But what do you take for it?' 'I wouldn't take a dollar note for it right now,' I told him. And I wouldn't have, nuther. The old *Foam Flake*--maybe you remember her, Cap'n Sears--was the dumdest, lop-sidedest, crankiest old white tub of a bark that ever carried sail. When I was aboard of her she wouldn't steer fit to eat, always wanted to go to port when you tried to put her to starboard, walloped and slopped along awkward as a cow, was the slowest thing afloat, and all she was ever really fit for was what they are usin' her for now, and that was to stow hay in. If that wan't that old horse of Minot's all over then I hope I'll never smoke a five-cent cigar again. 'You ain't "Pet" no more,' says I to the critter; 'your name's "Foam Flake!"' Haw, haw! See now, don't you, Cap'n Sears?"

Foam Flake and the truck-wagon landed the captain at the Knowles gate and, a few minutes later, Kendrick was, rather shamefacedly, announcing to the judge his acceptance of the superintendency of the Fair Harbor. The invalid, as grimly sardonic and indomitable as ever, chuckled between spasms of pain and weakness.

"Good! Good!" he exclaimed. "I thought you wouldn't say no if you once saw how things were over there. Congratulations on your good sense, Kendrick."

Sears shook his head. "Don't be any more sarcastic than you can help, Judge," he said.

"No sarcasm about it. If you hadn't stepped in to help that girl I should have known you didn't have any sense at all. By the way, I didn't praise her too highly when we talked before, did I? She is considerable of a girl, Elizabeth Berry, eh, Cap'n?"

The captain nodded.

"She is," he admitted. "And she was so confoundedly plucky, and she stood up against that crowd of--of----"

"Mariners' women. Yes. Ho, ho! I should like to have been there."

"I am glad you wasn't. But when I saw how she stood up to them, and then when her mother----"

"Yes. Um ... yes, I know. Isaac Berry was my friend and his daughter is a fine girl. We'll remember that when we talk about the family, Kendrick.... Whew! Well, I feel better. With you and Elizabeth to handle matters over there, Lobelia's trust will be in good hands. Now I can go to the cemetery in comfort."

He chuckled as if the prospect was humorous. Captain Sears spoke quickly and without considering exactly how the words sounded.

"Indeed you can't," he protested. "Judge Knowles, I'm goin' to need you about every minute of every day from now on."

"Nonsense! You won't need me but a little while, fortunately. And--for that little while, probably--I shall be here and at your disposal. Come in whenever you want to talk matters over. If the doctor or that damned housekeeper try to stop you, hit 'em over the head. Much obliged to you, Cap'n Kendrick. He, he! We'll give friend Egbert a shock when he comes to town.... Oh, he'll come. Some of these days he'll come. Be ready for him, Kendrick, be ready for him."

That evening the captain told Judah of his new position and Judah's reception of the news was not encouraging. Somehow Sears felt that, with the voice of Judah Cahoon was, in this case, speaking the opinion of Bayport.

Judah had been scrubbing the frying-pan. He dropped it in the sink with a tremendous clatter.

"*No!*" he shouted. "You're jokin', ain't you, Cap'n Sears?"

"It's no joke, Judah."

"My creepin' Henry! You can't mean it. You ain't really, honest to godfreys, callatin' to pilot that--that Fair Harbor craft,

be you?"

"I am, Judah. Wish me luck."

"Wish you *luck!* Jumpin', creepin', crawlin', hoppin'---- Why, there ain't no luck *in* it. That ain't no man's job, Cap'n Sears. That's a woman's job, and even a woman'd have her hands full. Why, Cap'n, they'll--that crew of--of old hens in there they'll pick your eyes out."

"Oh, I guess not, Judah. I've handled crews before."

"Yes--yes, you have--men crews aboard ship. But this ain't no men crew, this is a woman crew. You can't lam *this* crew over the head with no handspike. When one of those fo'mast hands gives you back talk you can't knock *her* into the scuppers. All you can do is just stand and take it and wait for your chance to say somethin'. And you won't *git* no chance. What chance'll you have along with Elviry Snowden and Desire Peasley and them? Talk! Why, jumpin' Henry, Cap'n Sears, any one of them Shanghais in there can talk more in a minute than the average man could in a hour. Any one of 'em! Take that Susanna Brackett now. Oh, I've heard about *her*! She had a half-brother one time. Where is he now? Ah ha! Where is he? Nobody knows, that's where he is. Him and her used to live together. Folks that lived next door used to hear her tongue a-goin' at him all hours day or night. Wan't no 'watch and watch' in that house--no sir-ee! She stood *all* the watches. She----"

"There, there, Judah. I guess I can stand the talk. If it gets too bad I'll put cotton in my ears."

"Huh! Cotton! Cotton won't do no good. Have to solder your ears up like--like a leaky tea-kettle, if you wanted to keep from hearin' Susanna Brackett's clack. Why, that brother of hers--Ebenezer Samuels, seems to me his name was. Seems to me they told me that Susanna's name was Samuels afore she married Brackett. Maybe twan't Samuels. Seems to me, now I think of it, as if 'twas Schwartz. Yet it don't hardly seem as if it could be, does it? I guess likely I'm gettin' him mixed with a feller name of Samuel Schwartz that I knew on South Street in New York one time. Run a pawn shop, he did. I remember *that* Schwartz 'cause he used to *take* stuff, you know--er--er--same as a Chinaman. One of them oakum eaters, that s what he was--an oakum eater. Why one time he----"

Sears never did learn what happened to Mrs. Brackett's brother. Judah's reminiscent fancy, once started, wandered far and wide, and in this case it forgot entirely to return to the missing Samuels--or Schwartz. But Mr. Cahoon expressed himself freely on the subject of his beloved ex-captain and present lodger taking charge of the establishment next door. Sears' explanations and excuses bore little weight. Time and time again that evening Mr. Cahoon would come out of a dismal reverie to exclaim: "Skipper of the Fair Harbor for Mariners' Women! You! Cap'n Sears Kendrick, skipper of *that* craft! Don't seem possible, somehow, does it?"

"Look here Judah," the captain at last said, in desperation, "if you feel so almighty bad about it, perhaps you won't want me here. I can move, you know."

Judah turned a horrified face in his direction. "Move!" he repeated "*Don't* talk so, Cap'n Sears. That's the one comfort I see in the whole business. Livin' right next door to 'em the way you and me do, you can always run into port here if the weather gets too squally over yonder. Yes, sir there'll always be a snug harbor under my lee when the Fair Harbor's too rugged. Eh? Ha, ha!"

Just before retiring Sears said, "There's just one thing I want you to do, Judah. You may feel--as I know you do feel--that my takin' this job is a foolish thing. But don't you let any one else know you feel that way."

Judah snorted. "Don't you worry, Cap'n Sears," he said. "If any one of them sea lawyers down to Bassett's store gets to heavin' sass at me about your takin' the hellum at the Harbor I'll shut their hatches for 'em. I'll tell 'em the old judge and Lobelia was undecided between you and Gen'ral Grant for the job, but finally they picked you. Don't mistake me now, Cap'n. Your goin' over there is the best thing for the--the henroost that ever was or ever will be. It's you I'm thinkin' about. It ain't--well, by the crawlin' prophets, 'tain't the kind of berth you've been used to. Now is it, Cap'n Sears?"

Kendrick smiled, a one-sided smile.

"Maybe not, Judah," he admitted. "It is a queer berth, but it's a berth, and, unless these legs of mine get well a lot quicker than I think they will, I may be mighty thankful to have any berth at all."

He told his sister this when she called to learn if the rumor she had heard was true. She shook her head.

"Perhaps it is all right, Sears," she said. "I suppose you know best. But, somehow, I--well, I hate to think of your doin' it."

"I know. You're proud, Sarah. Well, I used to be proud too, before the ship-chandlery business and the Old Colony railroad dismasted me and left me high and dry."

She put a hand on his arm. "Don't, Sears," she pleaded. "You know why I hate to have you do it. It don't seem--it don't seem--you know what I mean."

"A man's job. I know. Judah said the same thing. I took Judge Knowles' offer because it seemed the only way I could earn my salt. If I didn't take it you and Joel might have had a poor relation to board and lodge. And you've got enough on your hands already, Sarah."

She sighed. "Of course I knew that was why you took it," she said.

Yet, even as he said it, he realized that the statement was not the whole truth. The fifteen hundred a year salary had tempted him, but if he had not gone to the Fair Harbor on that forenoon and seen Elizabeth Berry brave the committee and her mother, it is extremely doubtful if he would have yielded. In all probability he would have declined the judge's offer and have risked the prospect of the almost hopeless future, for a time longer at least.

But, having accepted, he characteristically cast doubts, misgivings and might-have-beens over the side, as he had cast wreckage over the rails of his ships after storms, and, while Bayport buzzed with gossip and criticism and surmise concerning him, took up his new duties and went ahead with them. The morning following that of his dramatic scene with the committee he limped to the door of the Fair Harbor and, for the first time, entered that door as general manager.

He anticipated, and dreaded, a perhaps painful and surely embarrassing scene with Mrs. Berry, but was pleasantly disappointed. Elizabeth, true to her promise, had evidently broken the news to her mother and, also, had reconciled the matron to her partial deposing. Mrs. Berry was, of course, a trifle martyrlike, a little aggrieved, but on the whole resigned.

"I presume, Captain Kendrick," she said, "that I should have expected something of the sort. Dear 'Belia is abroad and Judge Knowles is ill, and, from what I hear, his mind is not what it was."

Sears, repressing a smile, agreed that that might be the case.

"But, of course, Mrs. Berry," he explained, "I did not take the position with the least idea of interferin' with you. You will be--er--er--well, just what you have been here, you know. I've shipped to help you and the judge and Miss Elizabeth in any way I can, that's all."

With the situation thus diplomatically explained Mrs. Berry brightened, restored her handkerchief to her pocket--in the '70s ladies' gowns had pockets--and announced that she was sure that she and the captain would get on charmingly together.

"And, after all, Captain Kendrick," she gushed, "a man's advice is so often *so* necessary in business, you know, and all that. Just as a woman's advice helps a man at times. Why, Captain Berry--my dear husband--used to say that without my advice he would have been absolutely at sea, yes, absolutely."

According to Bayport gossip, as related by Judah, Captain Isaac Berry had been, literally, during the latter part of his life, absolutely at sea as much as he possibly could. "And mighty thankful to be there, too," so Mr. Cahoon was wont to add.

Elizabeth heard a portion of Sears' interview with her mother, but she made no comment upon it, to him at least. When he announced his intention of interviewing Miss Snowden, however, she was greatly surprised and said so. "You want to speak with Elvira, Cap'n Kendrick?" she repeated. "You do, really? Do you--of course I am not interfering, please don't think I am--but do you think it a--a wise thing to do, just now?"

The captain nodded. "Why, yes, I do," he said. "Oh, it's all right, Miss Elizabeth, I'm not goin' to start any rows. You wouldn't think it to look at me, probably, but I've got an idea in my head and I'm goin' to try it out on this Elvira."

It was some time before he was able to catch Miss Snowden alone, but at last he did and, as it happened, in that same summer-house, the Eyrie, where he had first seen her. The interview began, on her part, as frostily as a February morning in Greenland, but ended like a balmy evening in Florida. The day following he laid his plans to meet and speak with Mrs. Brackett and the militant Susanna thereafter became as peaceful, so far as he was concerned, as a dove-cote in spring. Elizabeth Berry, noticing these changes, and surmising their cause, regarded him with something like awe.

"Really, Cap'n Kendrick," she said, "I'm beginning to be a little afraid of you. When you first spoke of interviewing Elvira Snowden alone I--well, I was strongly tempted to send for the constable. I didn't know what might happen. She was saying--so Esther Tidditt told me--the most dreadful things about you and I was frightened for your safety. And Mrs. Brackett was just as savage. And now--why, Elvira this very morning told me, herself, that she considered your taking the management here a blessing. I believe she did call it a blessing in disguise, but that doesn't make any real difference. And Susanna--three days ago--was calling upon all our--guests here to threaten to leave in a body, as a protest against the giving over of the management of their own Harbor to a--excuse me--man like you. I don't know she meant by that, but it is what she said. And now----"

"Just a minute, Miss Elizabeth. Called me a man, did she? Well, comin' from her that's a compliment, in a way. She ought to know she's the nearest thing, herself, to a man that I've about ever seen in skirts. But that's nothin'. What interests me is that idea of all the crew aboard here threatenin' to leave. They could, I suppose, if they wanted to same as

anybody aboard a ship could jump overboard. But in both cases the question would be the same, wouldn't it? Where would they go to after they left?"

Miss Berry smiled. "They have no idea of leaving," she said. "But they like to think--or pretend to think--that they could if they wanted to and that the Fair Harbor would go to rack and ruin if they did. It comes, you see, of paying that hundred dollars a year. That, to their mind--and I imagine Mrs. Phillips had it in her mind too, when she planned this place--prevents it being a 'home' in the ordinary sense of the word. But Susanna's threatening to leave amounts to nothing. What I am so much interested in is to know how you changed her attitude and Elvira's from war to peace? How did you do it, Cap'n Kendrick?"

The captain's left eyelid drooped. He smiled. "Well," he said, slowly, "I tell you. I've sailed in all sorts of weather and I've come to the conclusion that when you're in a rough sea the first thing to do, if you can, is to smooth it down. If you can't--why, then fight it. The best treatment I know for a rough sea is to sling a barrel of oil over the bows. It's surprisin' what a little bit of oil will do to make things smoother for a vessel. It's always worth tryin', anyway, and that's how I felt in this case of Elvira and Susanna. When I started to beat up into their neighborhood I had a barrel of oil slung over both my port and starboard bows. I give you my word, Miss Elizabeth, I was the oiliest craft afloat in these waters, I do believe."

His smile broadened. Elizabeth smiled too, but her smile was a bit uncertain.

"I--I *think* I understand you, Cap'n Kendrick," she said. "But I'm not quite sure. How did you---- Would you mind being just a little more clear? Won't you explain a little more fully?"

"Surely. Easiest thing in the world. Take Sister Snowden. I cast anchor under her lee--and 'twas like tyin' up to an iceberg at first. Ha, ha!--and I began by sayin' that I had been waitin' for a chance to speak with her alone. There were a few things I wanted to explain, I said. I told her that of course I realized she was not like the average, common run of females here in the Harbor. I knew that so far as brains and refinement and--er--beauty were concerned she was far, far ahead, had all the rest of 'em hull down, so to speak."

"Cap'n Kendrick, you didn't!"

"Eh! Well, maybe I left out the 'beauty,' but otherwise than that I told her just that thing. The ice began to melt a little and when I went on to say that I realized how much the success of the Fair Harbor depended on her sense and brains and so on she was obliged to give in that she agreed with me. It was what she had thought all the time, you see; so when I told her I thought so too, we began to get on a common fishin' ground, so to speak. And the more I hinted at how wonderful I thought she was the smarter she began to think *I* was. It ended in a sort of understandin' between us. I am to do the best I can as skipper here and she is to help along in the fo'castle, as you might say. When I need any of her suggestions I'm to go and ask her for 'em. And we aren't either of us goin' to tell the rest of the crew--or passengers, or whatever you call 'em--a word. When she and I separated there was a puddle of oil all around that Eyrie place, but there wasn't a breaker in sight. Ha, ha! Oh, dear!"

He laughed aloud. Miss Berry laughed, too, but she still seemed somewhat puzzled.

"But, Cap'n Kendrick," she said, "you're not going to ask for her suggestions, are you?"

"Only when I need 'em. The agreement was that I was to ask when I needed 'em. I have a pretty strong feelin' that I shan't need 'em much."

"But it was her idea, the buying of that ridiculous statuary."

"Yes, I know. We talked about that. I told her that I was sure the iron menagerie that belonged to her uncle, or whoever it was, would have made this place look as lovely as the Public Garden in Boston. I said you and your mother thought so, too, but that the trouble was we couldn't afford 'em at present. If ever another collection hove in sight that we could afford, I'd let her know. But, whatever happened, she must always feel that I was dependin' on her. She said she was glad to know that and that I *could* depend on her. So it'll be fair weather in her latitude for a while."

"And Susanna--Mrs. Brackett? What did you say to her?"

"Oh, exactly what I said to Elvira. I can depend on her, too, she said so. And I can have *her* advice--when I need it. The main thing, Miss Elizabeth, was, it seemed to me, to smooth down the rough water until I could learn a little of my new job, at least enough to be of some help to you. Because it is plain enough that if this Fair Harbor is to keep afloat and on an even keel, you will keep it so--just as you have been keepin' it for the last couple of years. I called myself the admiral here the other day, when I was talkin' to that committee. I realize that all I really am, or ever will be, is a sort of mate to you, Miss Elizabeth. And a good deal of a lubber even at that, I am afraid."

The lubber mate was, at least, a diligent student. Each morning found him hobbling to the door of the Fair Harbor--the side door now, not the stately and seldom-used front door--and in the room which Cordelia Berry called her "study" he and Elizabeth studied the books and accounts of the institution. These were in good condition, surprisingly good

condition, and he of course realized that that condition was due to the capability and care of the young woman herself. Mrs. Berry professed a complete knowledge of everything pertaining to the Fair Harbor, but in reality her knowledge was very superficial. In certain situations she was of real help. When callers came during hours when Elizabeth and Sears were busy Cordelia received and entertained them and was in her element while doing so. At dinner--on one or two occasions the captain dined at the Harbor instead of limping back to Judah's kitchen--she presided at the long table and was the very pattern of the perfect hostess. A stranger, happening in by chance, might have thought her the owner of palaces and plantations, graciously dispensing hospitality to those less favored. As an ornament--upon the few occasions when the Fair Harbor required social ornamentation--Cordelia Berry left little to be desired. But when it came--as it usually did come--to the plain duties of housekeeping and managing, she left much. And that much was, so Sears Kendrick discovered, left to the willing and able hands of her daughter.

As, under Elizabeth's guidance, Captain Sears plodded through the books and accounts, he was increasingly impressed with one thing, which was how very close to the wind, to use his own seafaring habit of thought and expression, the Fair Harbor for Mariners' Women was obliged to sail. The income from the fifty thousand dollar endowment fund was small, the seven hundred dollars paid yearly by the guests helped but a little, and expenses, even when pared down as closely as they had been, seemed large in comparison. Mrs. Berry's salary as matron was certainly not a big one and Elizabeth drew no salary at all. He spoke to her about it.

"Don't they pay you any wages for all the work you do here?" he queried.

She shook her head. "Of course not," she replied. "How could they? Where would the money come from?"

"But--why, confound it, you run the whole craft. It isn't fair that you should do it for nothin'."

"I do it to help mother. Her salary as matron here is practically all she has. She needs me. And, of course, the Fair Harbor is our home, just as it is Elvira's and Esther Tidditt's, and the rest."

He glanced at her quickly to see if there was any trace of bitterness or resentment in her expression. He had detected none in her voice. But she was, apparently, not resentful, not as resentful as he, for that matter.

"Yes," he said, and if he had paused to think he would not have said it, "it is your home now, but it isn't goin' to be always, is it? You're not plannin' to stay here and help your mother for the rest of your life?"

She did not reply at once, when she did the tone was decisive and final.

"I shall stay as long as I am needed," she said. "Here are the bills for the last month, Cap'n Kendrick."

That evening the captain employed Judah and the Foam Flake to carry him to and from Judge Knowles'. The call was a very brief one. Sears had determined to trouble the judge as little as was humanly possible.

"Judge," he said, coming to the point at once, "I've been lookin' over the books and runnin' expenses of that Harbor place and for the life of me I can't see how it can carry another cent and keep afloat. As it is, that Berry girl ought to draw at least a hundred a month, and she doesn't get a penny."

Knowles nodded. "I know it," he agreed. "But you say yourself that the Fair Harbor can't spare another cent. How could we pay her?"

"I don't know. And what I don't know a whole lot more is how I'm goin' to be paid fifteen hundred a year. Where's that comin' from; can you tell me?"

From the bed--the invalid was in bed most of the time now--came a characteristic chuckle. "He, he, he," laughed the judge. "So you've got on far enough to wonder about that, eh?"

"I certainly have. And I want to say right here that----"

"Hold on! Hold on, Kendrick! Don't be a fool. And don't make the mistake of thinkin' I'm one, either. I may have let you guess that the Fair Harbor was to pay your salary. It isn't because it can't. *I'm* paying it and I'm going to pay it--while I'm alive and after I'm dead. You're my substitute and so long as you keep that job you'll get your pay. It's all arranged for, so don't argue."

"But, Judge, why----"

"Shut up. I want to do it and I can afford to do it. Let a dead man have a little fun, can't you. You'll earn your money, I tell you. And when that Egbert comes I'll get the worth of mine--dead or alive, I'll get it. Now go home and let me alone, I'm tired."

But Sears still hesitated.

"That's all right, Judge," he said. "You've got the right to spend your own money, I presume likely, so I won't say a word; although I may have my own opinion as to your judgment in spendin' it. But there's one more thing I can't quite get over. Here am I, about third mate's helper aboard that Harbor craft, bein' paid fifteen hundred a year, and that girl--as

fine, capable, sensible--er--er--nice girl as ever lived, I do believe--workin' her head off and runnin' the whole ship, as you might say, and bein' paid nothin' at all. It isn't right. It isn't square. I won't stand it. I'll heave up my commission and you pay her the fifteen hundred. *She* earns it."

Silence. Then another slow chuckle from the bed.

"Humph!" grunted Judge Knowles. "Fine, capable, sensible, nice--! Getting pretty enthusiastic, aren't you, Kendrick? He, he, he!"

Taken by surprise, and suddenly aware that he had spoken very emphatically, the captain blushed, and felt, himself a fool for so doing.

"Why--I--I--" he stammered, then laughed, and declared stoutly, "I don't care if I am. That girl deserves all the praise anybody's got aboard. She's a wonder, that's what she is. And she isn't bein' treated right."

The answer was of a kind quite unexpected.

"Well," rasped the judge, "who said she was?"

"Eh? What----"

"Who said she was? Not I. Don't you suppose I know what Elizabeth Berry is worth to Lobelia Seymour's idiot shop over yonder? And what she gets--or doesn't get? And didn't I tell you that her father was my best friend? Then.... Oh, well! Kendrick, you go back to your job. And don't you fret about that girl. What she doesn't get now she.... Humph! Clear out, and don't worry me any more. Good night."

So the captain departed. In a way his mind was more at rest. He was nearer to being reconciled to the fifteen hundred a year now that he knew it was not to come from the funds of the Fair Harbor. Judge Knowles was reputed to be rich. If he chose to pay a salary to gratify a whim--why, let him. He, Kendrick, would do his best to earn that salary. But, nevertheless, he did not intend to let Elizabeth Berry remain under any misapprehension as to where the salary was coming from. He would tell her the next time they met. A new thought occurred to him. Why not tell her then--that very evening? It was not late, only about nine o'clock.

"Judah," he said, "I've got to run in to the Harbor a minute. Drive me around to the side door, will you? And then wait there for me, that's a good fellow."

So, leaving the Foam Flake and its pilot to doze comfortably in the soft silence of the summer evening, Sears--after Judah had, as was his custom, lifted him down from the wagon seat and handed him his cane--plodded to the side door of the Harbor and knocked. Mrs. Brackett answered the knock.

"Why, how d'ye do, Cap'n Kendrick?" she said, graciously. "Come right in. We wasn't expectin' you. You don't very often call evenin's. Come right in. I guess you know everybody here."

He did, of course, for the group in the back sitting room was made up of the regular guests. He shook hands with them all, including Miss Snowden, who greeted him with queenly condescension, and little Mrs. Tidditt, who jerked his arm up and down as if it was a pump handle, and affirmed that she was glad to see him, adding, as an after thought, "Even if I did see you afore to-day."

"Now you are just in time, Cap'n Kendrick," said Miss Elvira. "We are going to have our usual little 'sing' before we go to bed. Desire--Miss Peasley--plays the melodeon for us and we sing a few selections, sacred selections usually, it is our evening custom. Do join us, Cap'n Kendrick. We should love to have you."

The captain thanked them, but declined. He had run in only for a moment, he said, a matter of business, and must not stop.

"Besides, I shouldn't be any help," he added. "I can't sing a note."

Miss Snowden would have uttered some genteel protest, but Mrs. Tidditt spoke first.

"Humph! *That* won't make any difference," she announced. "Neither can any of the rest of us--not the right notes."

Possibly Elvira, or Susanna, might have retorted. The former looked as if she were about to, but Mrs. Aurora Chase came forward.

"And it wasn't more'n ha'f past six neither," she declared with conviction.

Just why or when it was half past six, or what had happened at that time, or what fragment of conversation Aurora's impaired hearing had caught which led her to think this happening was being discussed, the captain was destined never to learn. For at that instant Miss Berry came into the room, entering from the hall.

"Who is it?" she asked. "Why, good evening, Cap'n Kendrick."

She was what two thirds of Bayport would have called "dressed up." That is to say, she was wearing a simple afternoon gown instead of the workaday garb in which he had been accustomed to seeing her. It was becoming, even at the first glance he was sure of that.

"Good evening, Cap'n Kendrick," she said, again. "I wasn't expecting you this evening. Is anything the matter?"

"Oh no, no! I just ran over for a minute. I--um--yes, that's all."

He scarcely knew how to explain his errand. He had referred to it as a matter of business, but it was scarcely that. And he could not explain it at all in the presence of the guests, each one so obviously eager to have him do so.

"I just ran in," he repeated. She looked a little puzzled, and it seemed to him that she hesitated, momentarily. Then--

"Won't you come into the parlor?" she asked. Was it the captain's imagination, or did Elvira and Susanna and Desire and the rest--except Aurora, of course, who had not heard--cast significant looks at each other? It seemed to him that they did, but why? A moment later he understood.

"Come right in, Cap'n," she urged. "George is here, but you know him, of course."

They had walked the length of the hall and were almost at the door when she made this announcement. He paused.

"George?" he repeated.

"Why, yes, George Kent. But that doesn't make a bit of difference. Come in."

"But, Miss Elizabeth, I didn't realize you had company. I---"

"No, no. Stop, Cap'n Kendrick. George isn't company. He is--just George. Come in."

So he went in and George Kent, tall and boyish and good looking, rose to shake hands. He appeared very much at home in that parlor, more so than Sears Kendrick did just then. The latter knew young Kent well, of course, had met him first at Sarah Macomber's and had, during his slow convalescence there, learned to like him. They had not seen much of each other since the captain became Judah Cahoon's lodger, although Kent had dropped in once for a short call.

But Sears had not expected to find him there, that evening, in the best parlor of the Fair Harbor. There was every reason why he should have expected it. Judah had told him that George was a regular visitor and had more than hinted at the reason. But, in the whirl of interest caused by his acceptance of his new position and the added interest of his daily labors with Elizabeth, the captain had forgotten about everything and every one else, Kent included.

But there he was, young, broad-shouldered, handsome, optimistic, buoyant. And there, too, was Elizabeth, also young, and pretty and gayly chatty and vivacious. And there, too, was he, Sears Kendrick, no longer young, even in the actual count of years, and feeling at least twice that count--there he was, a cripple, a derelict.

His call was very brief. The contrast between himself and those two young people was too great, and, to him, at least, too painful. He did not, of course, mention the errand which had brought him there. He could tell Elizabeth the facts concerning the payment of his wages at some other time. He gave some more or less plausible reason for his running in, and, at the end of fifteen minutes or so, ran out. Kent shook hands with him at parting and declared that he was going to call at the Minot place at an early date.

"We've all missed you there at the Macomers', Cap'n," he said. "Your sister says it doesn't seem like the same place. And I agree with her, it doesn't. I'm coming to see you within a day or two, sure. May I?"

Sears said of course he might, and tried to make his tone cordial, but the attempt was not too successful. Elizabeth accompanied him to the side door. This meant a return trip through the back sitting room, where, judging by the groans of the melodeon and the accompanying vocal wails, the "sing" had been under way for some minutes. But, when Captain Sears and Miss Berry entered the room, there was absolute silence. Something had stopped the sing, had stopped it completely and judging by the facial expressions of the majority of those present, painfully.

Miss Snowden sat erect in her chair, frigidly, icily, disgustedly erect. Beside her Mrs. Brackett sat, scorn and mental nausea plain upon her countenance. Every one looked angry and disgusted except Mrs. Chase, who was eagerly whispering questions to her next neighbor, and Mrs. Tidditt, who was grinning broadly.

Elizabeth looked in astonishment at the group.

"Why what is it?" she asked. "What is the matter?"

Several began speaking, but Miss Elvira raised a silencing hand.

"We were having our sing," she said. "I say 'we *were*'. We are not now, because," her eyes turned to and dwelt upon the puzzled face of Captain Sears Kendrick, "we were interrupted."

"Interrupted?" Elizabeth repeated the word.

"Interrupted was what I said. And *such* interruptions! Captain Kendrick, I presume you are not responsible for the--ahem--*manners* of your--ahem--friend, or landlord, or cook or whatever he may be, but whoever *is* responsible for them should be.... But there, listen for yourself."

Warned by the raised Snowden hand, every one, including the captain and Elizabeth, listened. And, from the yard without so loud that the words were plainly understandable although the windows were closed and locked, came the voice of Judah Cahoon, uplifted in song.

"Whisky is the life of man,
Whisky, Johnny!
Whisky from an old tin can,
Whisky for my Johnny!"

"I drink whisky and my wife drinks gin,
Whisky, Johnny!
The way we drink 'em is a sin,
Whisky for my Johnny!"

The singer paused, momentarily, and Elvira spoke.

"Of course," she said, "I make no comment upon the lack of common politeness shown by interrupting our evening sing by such--ah--*noises* as that. But when one considers the morals of the person who chooses such low, disgraceful--"

"I had a girl, her name was Lize,
Whisky, Johnny!
She put whisky in her pies,
Whisky for my Johnny!"

Captain Sears hobbled, as fast as his weak legs would permit, to the door. He flung it open.

"Whisky stole my brains away,
Whisky, Johnny!
Just one more pull and then belay,
Whisky for----"

"Judah! *Judah!*"

"Eh? Aye, aye, Cap'n Sears. What is it?"

"Shut up!"

"Eh? Oh! Aye, aye, Cap'n."

He swung his former skipper to the seat of the truck-wagon. The captain spoke but little during the short trip home. What he did say, however, was to the point.

"Judah," he ordered, "the next time you sing anywhere within speakin'-trumpet distance of that Fair Harbor place, don't you dare sing anything but psalms."

"Eh? But which?"

"Never mind. What in everlastin' blazes do you mean by sittin' up aloft here and bellowin' about--rum and women?"

"Hold on, now, Cap'n Sears! Ho-ld on! That wan't no rum and woman song, that was the old 'Whisky, Johnny' chantey. Why, I've heard that song aboard your own vessels mo-ore times, Cap'n Sears. Why----"

"All right. But don't let me ever hear it sung near the Fair Harbor again. If you must sing, when you're over there sing--oh, sing the doxology."

Judah did not speak for a minute or two. Then he stirred rebelliously.

"What's that?" asked the captain. "What are you mumblin' about?"

"Eh? I wan't mumblin'. I was just sayin' I didn't have much time to learn new-fangled songs, that's all.... Whoa, you--you walrus! Don't you know enough to come up into the wind when you git to your moorin's?"

As his boarder took his lamp from the kitchen table, preparatory to going to his room, Mr. Cahoon spoke again.

"George Kent was over there, wan't he?" he observed.

"Eh? Oh ... yes."

"Um-hm. I cal-lated he would be. This is his night--one of 'em. Comes twice a week, Tuesdays and Fridays, they tell me,

and then heaves in a Sunday every little spell, for good measure. Gettin' to be kind of settled thing between them two, so all hands are callin'.... Hey? Turnin' in already, be you, Cap'n? Well, good night."

Sears Kendrick found it hard to fall asleep that night. He tossed and tumbled and thought and thought and thought. At intervals he cursed himself for a fool and resolved to think no more, along those lines at least, but to forget the foolishness and get the rest he needed. And each time he was snatched back from the brink of that rest by a vision of George Kent, tall, young, good-looking, vigorous, with all the world, its opportunities and rewards, before him, and of himself almost on the verge of middle age, a legless, worthless, hopeless piece of wreckage. He liked Kent, George was a fine young fellow, he had fancied him when they first met. Every one liked him and prophesied his success in life and in the legal profession. Then why in heaven's name shouldn't he call twice a week at the Fair Harbor if he wished to? He should, of course. That was logic, but logic has so little to do with these matters, and, having arrived at the logical conclusion, Captain Sears Kendrick found himself still fiercely resenting that conclusion, envying young Kent his youth and his hopes and his future, and as stubbornly rebellious against destiny as at the beginning.

Nevertheless--and he swore it more than once before that wretched night was over--no one but he should know of that envy and rebellion, least of all the cause of it. From then on he would, he vowed, take especial pains to be nice to George Kent and to help or befriend him in every possible way.

CHAPTER VIII

It was Kent himself who put this vow to the test. He called at the Minot place the very next evening. It was early, only seven o'clock; Judah, having begged permission to serve an early supper because it was "lodge night," had departed for Liberty Hall, where the local branch of the Odd Fellows met; and Sears Kendrick was sitting on the settee in the back yard, beneath the locust tree, smoking. Kent came swinging in at the gate and again the captain felt that twinge of envy and rebellion against fate as he saw the active figure come striding toward him.

But, and doubly so because of that very twinge, his welcome was brimming with cordiality. Kent explained that his call must be a brief one, as he must hurry back to his room at the Macomers' to study. It was part of his agreement with Eliphalet Bassett that his duties as bookkeeper at the latter's store should end at six o'clock each night.

Sears asked how he was getting on with his law study. He replied that he seemed to be getting on pretty well, but missed Judge Knowles' help and advice very much indeed.

"I read with Lawyer Bradley over at Hamiss now," he said. "Go over two evenings a week, Mondays and Thursdays. The other evenings--most of them--I put in by myself, digging away at *Smith on Torts* and *Chitty on Bills*, and stuff of that kind. I suppose that sounds like pretty dull music to you, Cap'n Kendrick."

The captain shook his head. "I don't know about the music part," he observed. "It's a tune I never could learn to play--or sing, either, I'm sure of that. But you miss the judge's help, do you?"

"Miss it like blazes. He could do more in five minutes to make me see a point than Bradley can in an hour. Bradley's a pretty good lawyer, as the average run of small lawyers go, but Judge Knowles is away above the average. Bradley will hem and haw and 'rather think' this and 'it would seem as if' that, but the judge will say a hundred words, and two of 'em swear words, and there is the answer, complete, plain and demonstrated. I do like Judge Knowles. I only hope he likes me half as well."

They discussed the judge, his illness and the pity of it. This led to a brief talk concerning Sears' hurt and his condition. Kent seemed to consider the latter much improved.

"Your sister says so, too," he declared. "I heard her telling Macomber yesterday at dinner that she thought you looked and acted very much more like a well man than when you left our house. And your legs must be better, too, Cap'n. I'm sure you get around easier than you did."

The captain shrugged. "I get around," he said, "but that's about all you can say. Whether I'll ever.... But there, what's the use of talkin' about my split timbers? Tell me some of the Bayport news. Now that it seems to be settled I'm goin' to tie up here for a good while I ought to know somethin' about my fellow citizens, hadn't I? What is goin' on?"

There was not very much going on, so Kent said. Captain Lorenzo Taylor's ship was due in New York almost any week or day now, and then the captain would, of course, come home for a short visit. Mrs. Captain Elkanah Wingate had a

new silk dress, and, as it was the second silk gown within a year, there was much talk at sewing circle and at the store concerning it and Captain Elkanah's money. One of Captain Orrin Eldridge's children was ill with scarlet fever. The young people of the Universalist society were going to give some amateur theatricals at the Town Hall some time in August, and the minister at the Orthodox meeting-house had already preached a sermon upon the sin of theater going.

"There," concluded George Kent, with another laugh. "That's about all the local excitement, Cap'n. It won't keep you awake to-night, I hope."

Sears smiled. "Guess I'll drop off in spite of it," he observed. "But it is kind of interestin', too, some of it. Hope Cap'n Lorenzo makes a good voyage home. He's in the *Belle of the Ocean*, isn't he? Um-hm. Well, she's a good able vessel and Lorenzo's a great hand to carry sail, so, give him good weather, he'll bring her home flyin'. So the Universalists have been behavin' scandalous, have they? Dear, dear! But what can you expect of folks so wicked they don't believe in hell? Humph! I mustn't talk that way. I forgot that you were a Universalist yourself, George."

Kent smiled. "Oh, I'm as wicked as anybody you can think of," he declared. "Why, I'm going to take a part in those amateur theatricals, myself."

"Are you? My, my! You'll be goin' to dancin'-school next, and then you *will* be bound for that place you don't believe in. When is this show of yours comin' off? I'd like to see it, and shall, if Judah and the Foam Flake will undertake to get me to the Town Hall and back."

"I think we'll give it the second week in August. We had a great argument trying to pick a play. For a long time we were undecided between 'Sylvia's Soldier' or 'Down by the Sea' or 'Among the Breakers.' At last we decided on 'Down by the Sea.' It's quite new, been out only four or five years, and it rather fits our company. Did you ever see it, Cap'n?"

"No, I never did. I've been out *on* the sea so much in my life that when I got ashore I generally picked out the shows that hadn't anything to do with it--'Hamlet,' or 'Lydia Thompson's British Blondes,' or somethin' like that," with a wink. Then he added, more soberly, "The old salt water looks mighty good to me now, though. Strange how you don't want a thing you can have and long for it when you can't.... But I'm not supposed to preach a sermon, at least I haven't heard anybody ask me to. What's your part in this--what d'ye call it?--'Out on the Beach,' George?"

"'Down by the Sea.' Oh, I'm 'March Gale,' and when I was a baby I was cast ashore from a wreck."

"Humph! When you were a baby. Started your seafarin' early, I should say. Who else is in it?"

"Oh, Frank Crosby, he is 'Sept Gale,' my brother--only he isn't my brother. And John Carleton--the schoolteacher, you know--he is 'Raymond,' the city man; he's good, too. And Sam Ryder, and Erastus Snow. There was one part--'John Gale,' an old fisherman chap, we couldn't seem to think of any one who could, or would, play it. But at last we did, and who do you think it was? Joel Macomber, your sister's husband."

"What? Joel Macomber--on the stage! Oh, come now, George!"

"It's a fact. And he's good, too. Some one told one of us that Macomber had done some amateur acting when he was young, and, in desperation, we asked him to try this part. And he is good. You would be surprised, Cap'n Kendrick."

"Um-hm, I am now. I certainly am. What sort of a part is it Joel's got? What does this--er--Gale do; anything but blow?"

"Why--why, he doesn't really do much, that's a fact. He is supposed to be a fisherman, as I said, but--well, about all he does in the play is to come on and off and talk a good deal, and scold at Frank and me--his sons, you know--and fuss at his wife and----"

Captain Sears held up his hand.

"That's enough, George," he interrupted. "That'll do. Don't do much of anything, talks a lot, and finds fault with other folks. No wonder Joel Macomber can act that part. He ought to be as natural as life in it. Aren't there any womenfolks in this play, though? I don't see how much could happen without them aboard."

"Oh, yes, of course there are women. Three of them. Mrs. Cora Bassett, Elphalet's brother's wife, she is 'Mrs. Gale,' my mother, only she turns out not to be; and Fannie Wingate, she is the rich city girl; and Elizabeth. That makes the three."

"Yes, yes, so it does. But which Elizabeth are you talkin' about?"

"Why, Elizabeth Berry. My--our Elizabeth, over here at the Fair Harbor."

The quick change from "my" to "our" was so quick as to be almost imperceptible, but the captain noticed it. He looked up and Kent, catching his eye, colored slightly. Sears noticed the color, also, but his tone, when he spoke, was quite casual.

"Oh," he said. "So Elizabeth's in it, too, is she? Well, well! What part does she take?"

"She's 'Kitty Gale,' my sweetheart."

"You don't say. She's good, I'll bet."

"Wonderful!" Kent's enthusiasm was unrestrained. "You wouldn't believe any untrained girl could act as she does. She might have been born for the part, honestly she might."

"Um-hm... Well, maybe she was."

"Eh? I beg your pardon."

"Nothin', nothin'. I'll have to see that play, even if the Foam Flake founders and Judah has to carry me there pig-back. And how are you gettin' on in it yourself? You haven't told me that."

"Oh, I'm doing well enough. Trying hard, at least. But, Cap'n Sears, you should see Elizabeth. She is splendid. But she is a wonderful girl, anyway. Don't you think she is?"

"Yes."

"You couldn't help thinking so. No one could. Why----"

The remainder of the conversation was, for the most part, a chant, sung as a solo by George Kent, and having as its subject, the wonders of Miss Berry. Captain Sears joined occasionally in the chorus, and smiled cordial and complete agreement. His caller was charmed.

"I've had a bully good time, Cap'n," he declared, at parting. "I came intending to stay only a few minutes and I've been here an hour and a half. You are one of the most interesting talkers I ever heard in my life, if you don't mind my saying so."

Sears, whose contributions to the latter half of the conversation had been about one word in twenty, laughed. "I'm afraid you haven't heard many good talkers," he said.

"Oh, yes, I have. But there are precious few of them in this town. It does a fellow good to know a man like you, who has been everywhere and met so many people and done so many things worth while. And, you and I agree so on almost every point. I don't know whether you noticed it or not, but our opinions seemed so exactly alike. It's remarkable, I think. I like you, Cap'n Kendrick; you don't mind my saying so, do you?"

"Oh, not a bit, not a bit. Glad of it, of course."

"Yes. I liked you down there at your sister's, but you were so sick I didn't have the chance to know you as well as I wanted to. But I had seen enough of you to know I should like you a lot when I knew you better. And Elizabeth, she was sure I would."

"Oh, she was, eh?"

"Yes. Oh, yes. She likes you very much. We talk about you almost every time I call--I mean when we are together, you know. Well, good-by. I'm coming for another talk--and soon, too. May I?"

"Hope you do, son. Come aboard any day. The gangplank is always down for you."

Which was all right, except that as Sears watched his caller swinging buoyantly to the gate, the same unreasonable twinge came back to him, bringing with it the keen sense of depression and discouragement, the realization of his approaching middle age and his crippled condition. It did not last long, he would not permit it to linger, but it was acute while it lasted.

He heard a great deal concerning the approaching production of "Down by the Sea" as the weeks passed and the time for that production drew nearer. As he and Elizabeth worked and took counsel together concerning the affairs of the Fair Harbor they spoke of it. She was enjoying the rehearsals hugely and the captain gathered that they furnished the opportunity for change of thought and relaxation which she had greatly needed. They spoke of George Kent, also; Sears saw to that. He brought the young man's name into their conversation at frequent intervals and took pains to praise him highly and to declare repeatedly his liking for him. All part of his own self-imposed penance, of course. And Elizabeth seemed to enjoy these conversations and agreed with him that George was "a nice boy" and likely to succeed in life.

"I'm so glad you like him, Cap'n Kendrick," she said. "He likes you so much and is so sure that you are a wise man."

Sears turned to look at her.

"Sure that I'm what?" he demanded.

"A wise man. He says that, next to Judge Knowles, he had rather have your opinion than any one else in Bayport."

The captain shook his head. "Dear, dear!" he sighed. "And just as I had come to the conclusion that George was so smart. Me a wise man? *Me!* Tut, tut! George, you disappoint me."

But she would not be turned aside in that way.

"There is no reason for disappointment that I can see," she said. "I think he is quite right. You *are* a wise man, Cap'n Kendrick. Of course I know you must be or Judge Knowles would not have selected you to take charge here. But since you and I have been working together I have found it out for myself. In fact I don't see how we ever got along--mother and I--before you came. And we didn't get on very well, that is a fact," she added, with a rueful smile.

"Rubbish! You got on wonderfully. And as for the worth of my opinions--well, you ask Northern Lights what she thinks of 'em. She'll tell you, I'll bet."

"Northern Lights" was Captain Sears's pet name for Mrs. Aurora Chase. Elizabeth asked why Aurora should hold his opinions lightly. The captain chuckled.

"Well," he explained, "she asked me yesterday what I thought of the Orthodox minister's sermons about the Universalist folks play-actin'. I said I hadn't heard 'em first hand, but that I understood they were hot. I thought she sailed off with her nose pretty well aloft, but I couldn't see why. To-day Esther Tidditt told me that she had understood me to say the sermons were 'rot.' That's what comes of bein' hard of hearin'. Ho, ho! But truth will out, won't it?"

The afternoon preceding the evening when "Down by the Sea" was to be publicly presented upon the stage of the town hall was overcast and cloudy. Judah, with one eye upon the barometer swinging in its gimbals in the General Minot front entry, had gloomily prophesied rain. Captain Sears, although inwardly agreeing with the prophecy, outwardly maintained an obstinate optimism.

"I don't care if the glass is down so low that the mercury sticks out of the bottom and hits the deck," he declared. "It isn't goin' to rain to-night, Judah. You mark my words."

"I'm a-markin' 'em, Cap'n Sears. I'm a-markin' of 'em. But what's the use of words alongside of a fallin' glass like that? And, besides, ain't I been watchin' the sky all the afternoon? Look how it's smurrin' up over to the west'ard. Look at them mare's tails streakin' out up aloft.

'Mack'rel skies and mares' tails
Make lofty ships to douse their sails.'

You know that's well's I do, Cap'n Sears."

"Yes, yes, so I do, Judah. But do you know this one?"

'Hi, diddle, diddle,
The cat and the fiddle,
The cow jumped over the moon.'

What have you got to say to that, eh?"

Judah stared at him. His chin quivered.

"Wh--wh--" he stammered. "What have I got to say to that? Why, I ain't got nawthin' to say to it. There ain't no sense to it. That's Mother Goose talk, that's all that is, What's that got to do with the weather?"

"It would have somethin' to do with it if a cow jumped over the moon, wouldn't it?"

"Eh? But---- Oh, creepin' prophets, Cap'n Sears, what's the use of you and me wastin' our breath over such foolishness? You're just bein' funny, that's all." His expression changed, and he smiled broadly. "Why, by Henry," he declared, "I ain't heard you talk that way afore since you shipped aboard this General Minot craft along of me. That's the way you used to poke fun at me aboard the old *Wild Ranger* when we was makin' port after a good v'yage. What's happened to spruce you up so? Doctor ain't told you any special good news about them legs of yours, has he, Cap'n? Limpin' Moses, I wisht that was it."

Sears shook his head. "No, Judah," he replied. "No such luck as that. It's just my natural foolishness, I guess. And I'm goin' to the theater to-night, too, all by myself. Think of it. Do you wonder I feel like a boy in his first pair of long trousers?"

Mr. Cahoon's whisker-framed face expressed doubt and foreboding. "I ain't sure yit that I'm doin' right in lettin' you pilot yourself down to that town hall," he declared. "It ain't that I'm scart of the horse runnin' away, or nothin' like that, you understand, but----"

His lodger burst into a roar of laughter.

"Runnin' away!" he repeated. "Judah, foam flakes drift away pretty often and sometimes they blow away, but I never saw one run away yet. And if this Foam Flake of yours ever started to run I should die of surprise before anything else could happen to me. Don't worry about me. You'll be here to help me aboard the buggy, when I'm ready to leave port, and there'll be plenty of folks at the hall to help me out of it when I get there. So I'll be all right and to spare."

"Um--well, maybe so. But it seems to me like takin' risks just the same. Now, Cap'n Sears, why don't you let me drive you down, same as I always do drive you? What makes you so sot on goin' alone?"

The captain did not answer for a moment. Then he said, "Judah, for a good many long weeks--yes, and months--I've been havin' somebody drive me or steer me or order me. To-night, by the Lord A'mighty, *I'm* goin' to drive and give my own orders."

"But the doctor----"

"The doctor doesn't know. And if you tell him I'll--well, you'll need him, that's all. Every dog has its day, Judah, and this is my night."

"But it's goin' to rain and----"

"It isn't.... And, if it does, haven't you and I seen enough water not to be afraid of it?"

"Salt water--yes; but----"

"There aren't any buts. That'll do, Judah. Go for'ard." So Mr. Cahoon, obeying orders, went for'ard; that is, he went into the kitchen, and Sears Kendrick was left upon the seat beneath the locust tree to smoke and cast rebellious glances at the deepening gloom of the sky. He had not been entirely truthful in his replies to his landlord's questions. Although he scarcely dared admit it, even to himself, his damaged legs were better than they had been. Doctor Sheldon told him that they were and seemed more hopeful after each examination. And he knew that the doctor's hope was not mere pretending, something assumed but not felt. Yes, he knew it. And, for the first time since the accident which wrecked the Old Colony train and his own life, he began to think that, perhaps--some day, perhaps--he might again be a man, a whole, able-bodied man among men. When he submitted this thought to the cold light of reason, it was transparent and faint enough, but it was there, and it was one cause of his high spirits.

And there was another, a cause which was even less worthy of reason--which was perfectly childish and absurd but not the less real on that account. It was connected with his stubborn determination to be his own pilot to the hall that evening. He had, when he first determined to risk the trip in that way, refused to permit Judah to accompany him because he knew, if he did, that the latter would be a sort of safety valve, a life preserver--to mix similes--the real driver who would be on hand to take charge if necessary. Under such circumstances his own responsibility ceased to be a responsibility and his self-reliance *nil*. No, sink or swim, survive or perish, he would make the voyage alone.

So, although there was plenty of room on the buggy seat, he stubbornly refused to permit Judah to sit there. Mr. Cahoon was going to the play, of course--the entire constabulary force of Ostable County could not have prevented his doing so--but he was to walk, not ride behind the Foam Flake. And Captain Sears Kendrick was supposed to be riding alone.

Yet he was not to ride alone, although only one person, and that not Judah Cahoon, knew of that fact. The day before, while he and Miss Berry were busy, as usual, with the finances and managerial duties of the Fair Harbor, she had happened to mention that there were some stage properties, bits of costumes, and the like, which must be gotten early to the hall on the evening of the performance and he had offered to have Judah deliver them for her. Now he told her of his intention of driving the Foam Flake unassisted and that he would deliver them himself.

"Or any other light dunnage you might want taken down there," he added. "Glad to, no trouble at all."

She looked at him rather oddly he thought.

"You are going all alone?" she asked.

"Um-hm. All alone. I'm goin' to have my own way this time in spite of the Old Harry--and the doctor--and Judah."

"And you are sure there will be plenty of room?"

"What? With only me in the buggy? Yes, indeed. Room enough for two sea chests and a pork barrel, as old Cap'n Bangs Paine used to say when I sailed with him. Room and to spare."

"Room enough for--me?"

"For you? Why, do you mean----"

"I mean that if there *is* room I should like to ride down with you very much. I want to get to the hall early and I have these things to carry. Mother and the rest of the Harbor people are going later, of course.... So, if you are sure that I and my bundles won't be nuisances----"

He was sure, emphatically and enthusiastically sure. But his surprise was great and he voiced it involuntarily.

"I supposed, of course," he said, "that your passage was booked long ago. I supposed George had attended to that."

Her answer was brief, but there was an air of finality about it which headed off further questions.

"I am not going with him," she said.

So this was his second cause for good spirits, the fact that Elizabeth Berry was to ride with him to the hall that evening. It was a very slight inconsequential reason surely, but somehow he found it sufficient. She was going with him merely because he and the Foam Flake and the buggy furnished the most convenient method of transportation for her and her packages, but she was going--and she was not going with George Kent. There was a certain wicked pleasure in the last thought. He was ashamed of it, but the pleasure was there in spite of the shame. Kent had so much that he had not, but here was one little grain of advantage to enter upon the Kendrick side of the ledger; Elizabeth Berry was not going to the town hall with Kent, but with him.

He made but one protest and that only because his conscience goaded him into making it.

"I don't know as I ought to let you, Miss Elizabeth," he said. "I'm takin' a chance, I suppose, that perhaps you shouldn't take. This is my first voyage under my own command since I ran on the rocks. I may strike another reef, you can't tell."

She looked at him and smiled.

"I am not afraid," she said.

So, in spite of the gathering clouds and the falling barometer, Captain Sears was cheerful as he smoked beneath the locust tree. After a time he rose and limped down to the gate. Doctor Sheldon's equipage was standing by the Knowles hitching post just beyond across the road. The doctor himself came out of the house and the captain hailed him.

"How is the judge?" he asked. Doctor Sheldon shook his head.

"No better," he replied. "He is weaker every day and last week he had an attack that was so severe I was afraid it was the end. He weathered it, though."

"Why, yes. I saw him on Sunday and he was as full of jokes and spunk as ever, seemed to me. His voice wasn't quite as strong, that's all. He is a great man, Judge Knowles. Bayport will miss him tremendously when he goes. So shall I, for that matter, and I haven't known him very long."

"We'll all miss him."

"There isn't a chance, I suppose? In the long run----"

The doctor's look caused him to stop the sentence in the middle.

"There isn't any question of long runs," said Sheldon, gravely. "The next one of these seizures will end it. He has been a great fighter and he never gives up; that is why he is here. But the fight is practically over. The next attack will be the last."

Sears was deeply concerned. "Dear, dear," he said. "I didn't realize it was quite so bad. And that attack may come--next month, or even next week, I presume likely?"

"Yes."

The captain's good spirits were dashed for the time. His regard and admiration for the old judge had grown steadily during their brief acquaintance. He pictured the rugged, determined face as he had seen it Sunday, and heard again the voice, weak but drily humorous or indomitably pugnacious. It did not seem as if a spirit like that could be so near surrender. Doctor Sheldon must be over apprehensive.

It was but seven o'clock when he drove the Foam Flake up to the side door of the Fair Harbor and his passenger stowed her various bundles about his feet in the bottom of the buggy and then climbed in herself. The drive to the town hall was made in good time, the Foam Flake considered, and--to the captain at any rate--it was a most pleasant excursion. There was the unaccustomed sensation of once more being free from orders or domination.

There was little conversation during the drive. Sears attempted it, but his passenger was not talkative. She seemed to be thinking of something else and her answers were brief and absent-minded. Nevertheless Sears Kendrick enjoyed their drive and was almost sorry when the Foam Flake halted, snorting, or sneezing, violently, by the hall platform. The building was as yet but dimly lighted and Asaph Tidditt, the janitor, was the only person about. Asaph, hearing the Foam Flake's sneeze, came to the door.

"Well, I swan!" he exclaimed. "Is that you, 'Lizbeth? You're good and early, ain't you? Evenin', George. Why, 'tain't George. Who is it? Well, well, well, Cap'n Sears, this *is* a surprise!"

He helped the captain from the buggy and, at Sears' request, led the Foam Flake around the corner to the hitching rail. When he returned Miss Berry had gone upstairs to the dressing-room to leave her packages. Asaph was still surprised.

"Mighty glad to see you out again, Cap'n," he declared. "I heard you was better, but I didn't hardly callate to see you takin' your girl to ride so soon. Hey? He, he, he!"

Sears-laughed long enough to seem polite. Asaph laughed longer.

"And 'tain't *your* girl you're takin' nuther, is it?" he said. "When I looked in that buggy just now I don't know when I've been more sot back. 'Evenin', George,' says I. And 'twan't George Kent at all, 'twas you. Ain't been to work and cut George out, have you, Cap'n Sears? He, he, he! That's another good one, ain't it!"

The captain smiled--more politeness--and inquired if he and Miss Berry were the first ones at the hall.

"Is any one else here?" he asked.

"Yus," said Mr. Tidditt.

"Who?"

"Me. He, he, he! Kind of caught you that time, didn't I, Cap'n? Wasn't expectin' that, was you? Except me, you and 'Lizbeth's the fust ones. Be plenty more in half an hour, though. 'Bout all hands in Bayport's comin' to this time, everybody but the Orthodox and the Methodists and the Come-Outers. They cal'late goin' to a play-actin' time is same as goin' to Tophet. I tell 'em I'd ruther go to the show, 'cause I'd have a little fun out of it, and from what I hear there ain't much fun in t'other place. He, he, he! But say, how'd it happen George Kent ever let 'Lizbeth Berry go anywheres without him? Where *is* George?"

Sears was rather glad when the arrival of Sam Ryder and Carleton, two other members of the cast of "Down by the Sea" attracted the attention of the garrulous Asaph and led the latter, in their company, upstairs. A moment or so later another figure approached from the blackness to the circle of light cast by the big ship's lantern over the hall door.

"Why, hello, George!" hailed Sears.

Young Kent looked up, recognized the speaker and said "Good evening." He did not seem surprised as Mr. Tidditt had been to find the captain there. The latter remarked upon it.

"Why, George," he observed, "I must say you take my bein' here all alone pretty calmly. Ase Tidditt all but capsized when he saw me bring the Foam Flake into dock."

Kent nodded. "I knew you were here," he said. "Elizabeth came down with you, I suppose."

"Why, yes. Did she tell you she was goin' to risk life and limb aboard my vessel?"

"No," briefly.

"Oh. Then how did you know?"

"I stopped at the Harbor. Her mother said she had gone with you.... Where is she; upstairs?"

"Up in the dressin' room, I guess. She had to come so early because there were things to bring and some work for her to do before you and the others got here, she said."

"What? Did she say before *I* got here?"

"Eh? Why, no, didn't mention you in particular. She just said----"

Kent interrupted. "I see," he said, shortly. "All right, never mind."

He was walking toward the other end of the platform. His manner was so very peculiar that Sears could not help noticing it. He looked after him in perplexity.

"Here ... George!" he called.

Kent turned and came back, rather reluctantly it seemed. The older man looked at him keenly.

"George," he asked, "what's the matter with you?"

"Matter? With me?"

"Yes, with you. You're short as Aunt Nabby's pie crust. Have I done anything you don't like? If I have I'll apologize before I know what it is. It wasn't done on purpose, you can be sure of that."

Kent started, colored, and was much perturbed. "I didn't realize I was short, Cap'n Kendrick," he declared. "I beg your pardon. I am mighty sorry. No--no, of course you haven't done anything I don't like. I don't believe you could."

"You never can tell. But so far I haven't tried. Not sick, are you?"

"No ... I'm just--oh, nothing. I'm in a little trouble, that's all. My own fault, maybe, I don't know."

"Probably it is. Most of our troubles are our own fault, in one way or another. Well, if there's anything I can do to help out, just give me a hail."

"Thanks. But I'm afraid there isn't."

He turned and walked down the platform once more. Mrs. Captain Orrin Eldridge, who was to sell tickets, came, and, after greeting the captain cordially, went in to open and light the ticket-office at the foot of the stairs. Two more members of the cast, Erastus Snow and Mrs. Bassett, arrived and went up to prepare. Suddenly Kent, who had been standing at the farther end of the platform, came back.

"Captain Kendrick," he said, "would you mind answering a question?"

"Eh? Why, not a bit, George. But perhaps yours may be one of those questions I can't answer."

"I think you can. Say--er--Cap'n Kendrick----"

"Yes, George."

"You see, I... This sounds awfully foolish, but--but I don't know what I ought to do."

"Um-hm. Well, a good many of us get that way every once in a while."

"Do you?"

"You bet!"

"Humph! Somehow you seem to me like a man who would know exactly what to do at any time."

"Yes? Well, my looks must belie me. Heave ahead, George. The folks are beginning to come."

"Well, I--- Oh, hang it, Cap'n, when you've made a mistake--done something that you didn't think was wrong--that wasn't wrong, really--and--and.... Say, I'm making an awful mess of this. And it's such a fool thing, anyhow."

"Um-hm. So many things are. Chuck it overboard, George; that is, if you really want to ask me about it."

"I do. That is, I want to ask you this: Suppose you had done something that you thought was all right and--and somebody else had thought was wrong--would you--would you go and tell that other person that you *were* wrong? Even if you weren't, you know."

Kendrick was silent. The question was ridiculous enough, but he did not laugh, nor feel like laughing. Nor did he want to answer.

"Oh, I know that it's a child's question," put in Kent, disgustedly. "Never mind answering. I am a child sometimes, feel like one, anyhow. And I've got to fight this out with myself, I suppose, so what's the use?"

He turned on his heel, but the captain laid a hand on his shoulder.

"George," he said, slowly, "of course, the way you put this thing makes it pretty foggy navigatin' for a stranger; but--humph!--well, in cases somethin' like yours, when I've cared anything about the--er--friendship of the other fellow, I've generally found 'twas good business to go and say I was sorry first, and then, if 'twas worth while, argue the point of who was right or wrong later. You never can do much fishin' through the ice unless somebody chops the hole."

The young man was silent. He seemed to be reflecting and to find his reflections not too pleasant. Before they were at an end the first group of townspeople came up the steps. Some of them paused to greet Kendrick and at their heels was another group. The captain was chatting with them when he heard Kent's voice at his ear.

"Excuse me, Cap'n," he whispered. "I'll see you by and by. I'm going to chop the ice."

"Eh?... Oh, all right, George. Good luck."

George hurried up the stairs. A minute or two later Captain Sears slowly limped after him and sought a secluded corner on one of the settees at the rear of the hall. There was still a full half hour before the rising of the curtain, and as yet there was but a handful of people present. He turned his face away from the handful and hoped that he might not be recognized. He did not feel like talking. His good spirits had left him. He was blue and despondent and discouraged. And for no reason--that was the worst of it--no earthly, sensible, worth while reason at all.

Those two children--that is what they were, children--had quarreled and that was why Elizabeth had asked to ride to the hall with him that evening. It was not because she cared for his company; of course he knew that all the time, or would have known it if he permitted himself to reason. She had gone with him because she had quarreled with George. And that young idiot's conscience had troubled him and, thanks to his own--Kendrick's--advice, he had gone to her now to beg pardon and make up. And they would make up. Children, both of them.

And they ought to make up; they should, of course. He wanted them to do so. What sort of a yellow dog in the manger would he be if he did not? He liked them both, and they were young and well--and he was--what that railway accident had made of him.

The audience poured in, the settees filled, the little boys down in front kicked the rounds, and pinched each other and giggled. Mr. Asaph Tidditt importantly strode down the aisle and turned up the wicks of the kerosene foot-lamps. Mrs.

Sophonra Eldridge, Captain Orrin's sister-in-law, seated herself at the piano and played the accompaniments while Mrs. Mary Pashy Foster imparted the information that she could not sing the old songs now. When she had finished, most people were inclined to believe her. The delegation from the Fair Harbor, led by Mrs. Berry and Elvira Snowden, arrived in a body. The Universalist minister and his wife came, and looked remarkably calm for a couple leading a flock of fellow humans to perdition. Captain Elkanah Wingate and Mrs. Wingate came last of all and marched majestically to the seats reserved for them by the obsequious Mr. Tidditt. The hall lights were dimmed. The curtain rose. And George Kent, very handsome and manly as "March Gale," was seen and heard, singing:

"Oh, my name was Captain Kidd
As I sailed, as I sailed."

And these were the opening lines of the play, "Down by the Sea."

That performance was a great success, everybody said so. Mr. Tidditt expressed the general opinion when he declared that all hands done about as fine as the rest but some of 'em done finer. John Carleton, the schoolteacher, shone with particular brilliancy as he delivered himself of such natural, everyday speeches as: "I have dispatched a messenger to town with the glad tidings," or "We will leave this barren spot and hie to the gay scenes of city life." And Frank Crosby, as "September Gale," the noble young fisherman, tossed the English language about as a real gale might toss what he would have called "a cockle shell," as he declared, "With a true heart and a stout arm, who cares for danger?... To be upon the sea when the winds are roaring and the waves are seething in anger; ... to have a light bark obedient to your command, braving the fury of the tempest...." Bayport was fairly well acquainted with fishermen, numbering at least thirty among its inhabitants, but no one of the thirty could talk like that.

Sam Ryder's performance of "Captain Dandelion," the city exquisite, was, so the next issue of the *Item* said, "remarkable"; there is little doubt that the *Item* selected the right word. Joel Macomber was good, when he remembered his lines; Miss Wingate was very elegant as "a city belle"; Mrs. Bassett made a competent fisherman's wife. But everybody declared that Elizabeth Berry and George Kent, as "Kitty Gale" and "March Gale," were the two brightest stars in that night's firmament.

Captain Kendrick, between the acts, could hear whispered comments all about him. "Isn't Elizabeth fine!" "Don't they do well!" "Ain't she a good-lookin' girl, now--eh?" "Yes, and, my soul and body, if that George Kent ain't a match for her then *I* don't know!" "Oh, don't they make a lovely couple!" And, from a seat two rows in front, the penetrating voice of Mrs. Noah Baker made proclamations: "Lovers on the stage and off the stage, too, I guess. Ha, ha!" And there was a general buzz of agreement and many pleased titters.

Sears tried very hard to enjoy the performance, but his thoughts would wander. And, when the final curtain fell and the applause subsided, he rose to hobble to the door, glad that the evening was over.

He was one of the last to reach the landing and, at the top of the stairs, Judah met him. Mr. Cahoon's manner was a combination of dismay and triumph.

"Oh, there you be, Cap'n Sears," he exclaimed. "Well, I told you! You can't say I never, that's one comfort."

"Told me what, Judah?"

"That 'twas goin' to rain. I told you the glass was fallin'. It's a pourin'-down rainstorm now, that's what 'tis."

Judah, his faith rooted in the prophecy of the falling barometer, had come to the hall with oilskins upon his arm. Now he was arrayed in them and weather-proof.

"I'll fetch the Foam Flake around to the platform, Cap'n," he said. "You'll want to wait for 'Lizbeth, I presume likely, so take your time navigatin' them stairs. No, no, I'll walk. I won't get wet. *I* knew what was comin'. Aye, aye, sir. I'll fetch the horse. Cal'late the critter has gnawed off and swallowed two fathoms of fence by this time."

The Foam Flake and the buggy were made fast by the platform when Sears reached that point. It was raining hard. The greater part of the audience had already started on their homeward journey, but a few still lingered, some lamenting the absence of umbrellas and rubbers, others awaiting the arrival of messengers who had been sent home to procure those protections. The captain, of course, was awaiting Elizabeth, and she having to change costume and get rid of make-up, he knew his wait was likely to be rather lengthy. He did not mind that so much, but he did not desire to talk or be talked to, so he walked to the dark end of the platform--the same end, by the way, where George Kent had stood when pondering his problem before asking advice--and stood there, staring into the splashy blackness.

The last group left the lighted portals of the hall and started homeward, exclamations and little screams denoting spots where progress had been delayed by puddles or mud holes. Mrs. Eldridge, in the ticket office, packed up her takings, pennies and "shin-plasters," in a pasteboard box and departed for home. Mr. Tidditt accompanying her as guard and umbrella holder.

"I'll be back to lock up, Cap'n Sears," called Asaph, reassuringly. "Stay right where you be. You won't be in my way at

all."

For some minutes longer Sears stood there alone on the platform, facing the dismal darkness and his own dismal thoughts. They were dismal, and no less so because his common-sense kept prodding him with the certainty that there was no more reason for discouragement now than there had been two hours before. The obvious offset to this was the equal certainty that there had been no more reason for optimism two hours before than at present. So he stared into the darkness, listened to the splashing waterspouts, and, for the millionth time at least, eternally condemned the Old Colony railroad and his luck.

A springy, buoyant step came down the stairs. A voice called from the doorway:

"Cap'n Kendrick! Cap'n, are you there?"

Sears turned.

"Right here, George," he said.

Kent hastened toward him. His hand was outstretched and his face was beaming.

"It worked," he exclaimed, eagerly. "It worked in great shape. Cap'n, you're a brick."

His friend did not, momentarily, catch his meaning.

"Glad you think so, George," he said; "but why are you so sure of it just now?"

"Why, because if it hadn't been for you I should have, more than likely, not tried to chop the ice at all."

"Chop the---- Oh, yes, yes; I remember. So you and Elizabeth have made up, eh?"

"Yes, I.... How on earth did you know she was the one? I didn't tell you, did I?"

"No. It's just another proof of my tremendous wisdom. Well, I'm glad, George."

"I knew you would be. Mind you, I'm not sure yet I was wrong, but I---- Good Lord, look at the rain! I had no idea!... Well, at any rate, Elizabeth will be all right. She's going with you in the buggy."

There was a slight, a very slight note of regret, almost of envy, in the young fellow's tone. The captain noticed it.

"No, she isn't, George," he said, quietly.

"What! She isn't?"

"No, she's goin' with you. You take the horse and buggy and drive her up to the Harbor. Then you can send Judah back with it after me, if you will."

"But, Cap'n, I wouldn't think of it. Why----"

"No need to think. Do it. Look here, George, you know perfectly well you haven't finished that ice-choppin' business. There are lots of things you want to tell her yet, I know. Come now, aren't there?"

Kent hesitated. "Why--why, yes, I suppose there are," he admitted. "But it seems mean to take advantage of you, you know. To leave you standing here and waiting while she and I----"

"That's all right. I'm better fitted for waiting than I am for anything else nowadays. Don't argue any more. She'll be here in a minute."

"Well ... well. You're sure you don't mind, really?"

"Not a bit. And she'd rather ride with you, of course."

"Oh, I wouldn't say that. Of course she did tell me she came with you because I--because we had that--that little row--and---- But she likes you, Cap'n. Honest, she does, a lot. By George, nobody could help liking you, you know."

Sears' smile was gray, but his companion did not notice. He was too full of his own happiness.

"I'll run up and tell her," he said. "It's mighty good of you, Cap'n Kendrick. Sure you don't care? You *are* a brick."

He hastened up the stairs. Sears was left once more with the black wetness to look at. It looked blacker than ever.

Elizabeth, accompanied by George, came down soon afterward. She was still protesting.

"Really, I don't think this is right at all, Cap'n Kendrick," she declared. "Why should you wait here? If you insist upon George's going in the buggy, why don't you come too? I'm sure there will be room enough. Won't there, George?"

Kent said, "Yes, of course," but there might have been more enthusiasm in his tone. Sears spoke next.

"I can't go now," he lied, calmly. "I want to see Ase Tidditt and he's gone to see Cap'n Orrin's wife home. Won't be back for twenty minutes or so. No, no, you and George heave right ahead and go, and then send Judah and the Foam Flake

back for me."

So, after a few more protests on Elizabeth's part, it was settled in that way. She and her packages and bags were tucked in the buggy and George unhitched the placid Foam Flake. On his way he stopped to whisper in the captain's ear.

"Cap'n Kendrick," he whispered, "I shan't forget this. And, say, if ever I get into real trouble I'll know who to come to."

The "plash-plash" of the Foam Flake's hoofs and the squeak and grind of buggy wheels died away along the invisible main road. Captain Sears stared at the ropes of rain laced diagonally across the lighted window of the town hall.

After a time, a surprisingly short time, he heard the hoofs returning. It seemed almost incredible that George could have driven to the Harbor, then to the Minot place, and started Judah on the return trip so soon.

It was not Judah. It was Mike, Judge Knowles' man, and he was driving Doctor Sheldon's horse attached to the doctor's chaise.

"Cap'n Kendrick," he hailed, as the equipage splashed up to the platform, "is that you there?"

"Yes, Mike. What's the matter?"

"I was just after goin' to the Minot place after ye and I met Cahoon and he tould me you was down here. Git in, git in; the doctor says you must come."

"Come? Come where?"

"Home. To the judge's house. The ould man is dyin' and he wants to see you afore he goes. Ye'll have to hurry. The doctor says it's a matter of any time now."

CHAPTER IX

Sears Kendrick never forgot that drive from the town hall. The pouring rain, the lurch and roll and bounce of the old chaise, the alternate thud and splash of the horse's hoofs, the black darkness--and the errand upon which he was going. Mike told him a little concerning the seizure. Judge Knowles had been, so Emmeline Tidditt and the doctor thought, appreciably easier during the day.

"He was like himself, the ould man was," said Mike. "I went in to see him this mornin'--he sent for me, you understand--and he give me the divil and all for not washin' the front room windows. 'Dom ye,' says he, 'I've only got a little while to look out of thim windows; don't you suppose I want thim so I *can* look out of thim?' And the windows clean as clean all the time, mind ye. Sure, I didn't care: 'Twas just his way of bein' dacint to me. He give me a five dollar bill before I left, God rest him. And now----"

Mike was tremendously upset. The captain learned that the attack had developed about six, and the judge had grown steadily worse since. The upper windows of the Knowles house were bright with lights as they drove in at the yard gate. Mrs. Tidditt met them at the door. Her thin, hard face was tear-streaked and haggard.

"Oh, I'm so glad you've come, Cap'n Kendrick," she cried. "He's been askin' for you."

In the hall at the foot of the stairs Doctor Sheldon was waiting. They shook hands and Sears looked a question.

"Not a chance," whispered the doctor. "Barring miracles, he will go before morning. He shouldn't see any one, but he insisted on seeing you. I'll give you five minutes, no more. Don't excite him."

The judge looked up from the pillow as Sears tiptoed into the room. His face was flushed with fever, but otherwise he looked very much as when the captain last visited him. It did not seem possible that this could really be the end.

"Hello, Kendrick," whispered Judge Knowles. "Sit down. Sorry I can't shake hands with you."

The voice was weak, of course, but not much weaker than when he had last heard it. No, it did not seem possible. Captain Sears murmured something about his sorrow at finding the judge ill again.

"That's all right, that's all right," was the testy rejoinder. "You didn't expect to find me any other way, did you? Kendrick, I wasn't so far off when I talked about that graveyard trip, eh?... Umph--yes. How much time did Sheldon say you might have with me?... Don't fool around and waste any of it. How many minutes--come?"

"Five."

"Humph! He might have made it ten, blast him! Well, then listen. When I'm gone you're going to be the head of that Fair Harbor place. You're going to keep on being the head, I mean. I've fixed it so you'll get your salary."

"But, Judge----"

"Hush! Let me do the talking. Good Lord, man," with an attempt at a chuckle, "you wouldn't grudge me any of the little talk I have left, would you? You are to keep on being the head of the Fair Harbor--you *must* for a year or so. And Elizabeth Berry is to be the manager and head, under you--if she wants to be. Understand?"

"Why, yes. But, Judge, how----"

"I've fixed it, I tell you. Wait a little while and you'll know how. But that isn't what I want to say to you. Lobelia is dead."

"What?"

"Don't keep asking me what. Listen. Lobelia Seymour--hanged if I'll call her Lobelia Phillips!--is dead. She died over a month ago. I got a letter this afternoon mailed in Florence by that husband of hers. There it is, on that table, by the tumbler.... Yes, that's it. Don't stop to read it now. Put it in your pocket. You will have time to read it. Time counts with me. Now listen, Kendrick."

He paused and asked for water. The captain put the glass to his lips. He swallowed once or twice and then impatiently jerked his head aside.

"There are two things you've got to promise me, Kendrick," he whispered, earnestly. "One is that, so long as you can fight, that condemned Egbert Phillips shan't have a cent of the Fair Harbor property, endowment fund, land or anything else. Will you fight the scamp for me, Kendrick?"

"Of course. The best I know how."

"You know more than most men in this town. I shouldn't have picked you for your job if you didn't. That's one thing--spike Egbert's guns. Here's the other: Look out for Elizabeth Berry."

The captain was not expecting this. He leaned back so suddenly that his chair squeaked. The sick man did not notice, or, if he did, paid no attention.

"She's Isaac Berry's daughter," he went on, "and Ike Berry was my best friend. More than that, she's a good girl, a fine girl. Her mother is more or less of a fool, but that isn't the girl's fault. Keep an eye on her, will you, Kendrick?"

"Why--why, I'll do what I can, of course."

"Like her, don't you?"

"Yes. Very much."

"You couldn't help it. She is pretty thick with that young Kent, I believe. He's a bright boy."

"Yes."

"All right.... But there's time enough for that; they're both young.... Watch her, Kendrick. See that she doesn't make too big mistakes. She--she's going to have a little money of her own pretty soon--just a little. Don't let that--that Phillips or--or anybody else get hold of it. I.... Oh, here you are! Confound you, Sheldon, you're a nuisance!"

The doctor opened the door and entered. He nodded significantly to Kendrick. The latter understood. So, too, did Judge Knowles.

"Time's up, eh?" he panted. "Well, all right, I suppose. Good luck to you, Kendrick. And good night."

He smiled cheerfully. One might have thought he expected to see his caller the next morning. The captain simply could not believe this was to be the last time.

"Good night, Judge," he said. "I'll drop in to-morrow, early."

The judge did not answer. His last word had to do with other things.

"Don't you forget, Kendrick," he whispered. "I've banked on you."

The feeling of the absolute impossibility of the situation still remained with Sears as Mike drove him to his own door and Judah helped him down from the chaise. It was not possible that a brain like that, a bit of machinery capable of thinking so clearly and expressing itself so vigorously, could be so near its final breakdown. A personality like Judge Knowles' could not end so abruptly. He would not have it so. The doctor must be mistaken. He was over pessimistic.

He sat in the rocking chair until nearly half-past one thinking of the judge's news, that Lobelia Phillips was dead, and of the charge to him. Fight Egbert--there was an element of humor in that; Knowles certainly did hate Phillips. But for him,

Kendrick, to assume a sort of guardianship over the fortunes of Elizabeth Berry! The fun in that was too sardonic to be pleasant. He thought of many things before he retired, but the way ahead looked foggy enough. And behind the fog was--what? Why, little sunshine for him, in all human probability. Before blowing out his lamp he peered out of the window at the Knowles house. The lights there were still burning.

The next morning when he came out for breakfast, Judah met him with a solemn face.

"Bad news for Bayport this mornin', Cap'n Sears," said Judah. "Judge Knowles has gone. Slipped his cable about four o'clock, so Mike told me. There's a good man gone, by Henry! Don't seem hardly as if it could be, does it?"

That was exactly what Bayport said when it heard the ill tidings. It did not seem as if it could be. The judge had been so long a dominant figure in town affairs, his strong will had so long helped to mould and lead opinion and his shrewd common sense had so often guided the community, and individuals, through safe channels and out of troubled waters, that it was hard to comprehend the fact that he would lead and guide no more. He had many enemies, no man with his determined character could avoid that, but they were altogether of a type whose enmity was, to decent people, preferable to their friendship. During his life it had seemed as if he were a lonely man, but his funeral was the largest held in Bayport since the body of Colonel Seth Foster, killed at Gettysburg, was brought home from the front for burial.

It was a gloomy, drizzly day when the long line of buggies and carryalls and folk on foot followed the hearse to the cemetery amid the pines. Captain Sears, looking back at the procession, thought of the judge's many prophecies and grim jokes concerning this very journey, and he wondered--well, he wondered as most of us wonder on such occasions. Also he realized that, although their acquaintanceship had been brief, he was going to miss Judge Knowles tremendously.

"I wish I had been lucky enough to know him sooner," he told Judah that evening.

Judah pulled his nose reflectively. "It kind of surprised me," he observed, "to hear what the minister said about him. 'Twas the Orthodox minister, and he's pretty strict, too, but you heard him say that the judge was one of the best men in Ostable County. Yet he never went to meetin' what you'd call reg'lar and he did cuss consider'ble. He did now, didn't he, Cap'n Sears?"

Sears nodded. He was thinking and paying little attention to the Cahoon moralizing.

"Um-hm," went on Judah. "He sartin did. He never said 'sugar' when he meant 'damn.' But I don't know, I call'late I'd ruther been sworn at by Judge Knowles than had a blessin' said over me by some others in these latitudes. The judge's cussin' would have been honest, anyhow. And he never put one of them swear words in the wrong place. They was always just where they belonged; even when he swore at me I always agreed with him."

Feeling, somehow, that the death of the man who had chosen and employed him for the position increased his responsibility in that position, Captain Sears worked harder than ever to earn his salary as general manager of the Fair Harbor. He had already made some improvements in systematizing and thereby saving money for the institution. The groceries, flour, tea, sugar, and the rest, had heretofore been purchased at Bassett's store in the village. He still continued to buy certain articles of Eliphalet, principally from motives of policy and to retain the latter's good will, but the bulk of supplies he contracted for in Boston at the houses from which he had so often bought stores for his ships. He could not go to the city and negotiate by word of mouth, more was the pity, and so was obliged to make his trades by mail, but he got bids from several firms and the results were quite worth while. Besides groceries he bought a hogshead of corned beef, barrels of crackers, a barrel of salt pork, and, from one of the local fishermen, a half dozen kegs of salt mackerel. The saving altogether was a very appreciable amount.

The Fair Harbor property included, besides the land upon which the house was situated, several acres of wood lot timbered with pine and oak. Mrs. Berry--or her daughter--had been accustomed to hire a man to cut and haul such wood as was needed, from time to time, for the stoves and fireplaces. Also, when repairs had to be done, they hired a carpenter to make them. Sears, when he got around to it, devoted some consideration to the wood and repair question and, after much haggling, affected a sort of three-cornered swap. Benijah Black, the carpenter, was a brother-in-law of Burgess Paine, who owned the local coal, wood, lumber and grain shop by the railway station. The captain arranged that Black should do whatever carpenter work might be needed at the Harbor and take his pay in wood at the wood lot, selling the wood--or a part of it--to Paine, for whom he was in debt for coal and lumber; and, also, for whom he, Black, was building a new storage shed. It was a complicated process, but it resulted in the Fair Harbor's getting its own firewood cut, hauled and split for next to nothing, its repair costs cut in half, its coal bills lessened, while Black and Paine seemed to be perfectly satisfied. Altogether it was a good deal of a managerial triumph, as even the manager himself was obliged to admit.

Elizabeth was loud in her praises.

"I don't see how you ever did it, Cap'n Kendrick," she declared. "And Benijah and Mr. Paine are just as contented as we are. It is a miracle."

Sears grinned. "I don't know quite how I did it, myself," he said. "'Twas the most complicated piece of steerin' I ever did, and if we come out without shipwreck it *will* be a miracle! I'm goin' to tackle that hay question next. There's hay enough on that lower meadow of ours to pay for corn for the hens for quite a spell. I'll see if I can't make a dicker there somehow. Then if I can fix up a deal with the hens to trade corn for eggs, we'll come out pretty well, won't we?"

This sort of thing interested him and made him a trifle more contented with his work. His talents as a diplomat, such as they were, were needed continually. The interior of the Fair Harbor was a sort of incubator for petty squabbles, jealousies, prejudices and complaints, some funny, many ridiculous, and almost all annoying. The most petty he refused to be troubled with, bidding the complainants go to Mrs. Berry. His refusals were good-natured but determined.

"Well, I tell you, Miss Peasley," he said, when that lady had come to him with a long, involved wail concerning the manner in which Mrs. Constance Cahoon, who occupied the seat next her at table, insisted on keeping the window open all through meals, "so's I sit there with a draft blowin' right down my neck the whole time." "I tell you, Miss Peasley," said the captain, "if I were you I would shut the window."

"But I do shut it," declared Desire. "And every time I jump up and shut it, up she bounces and opens it again."

"Humph! I see.... Well, exercise helps digestion, so they say. You can jump as long as she can bounce, can't you?"

Miss Peasley was disgusted. "Well," she snapped, "I don't call that much help. I supposed if I went to the *manager* he'd put his foot down."

"He's goin' to--and then take it up and put it down again. I've got to hobble out to see to mowin' the meadow. You tell Mrs. Berry all about it."

As a part of his diplomacy he made it a point to spend half an hour each morning in consultation with Cordelia Berry. The matron of the Fair Harbor was at first rather suspicious and ready to resent any intrusion upon her rights and prerogatives. But at each conference the captain listened so politely to her rambling reports, seemed to receive her suggestions so eagerly and to ask her advice upon so many points, that her suspicions were lulled and she came to accept the new superintendent's presence as a relief and a benefit.

"He is so very gentlemanly, Elizabeth," she told her daughter. "And so willing to learn. At first, as you know, I couldn't see why the poor dear judge appointed him, but now I do. He realized that I needed an assistant. In many ways he reminds me of your father."

"But, mother," exclaimed her daughter, in surprise, "Cap'n Kendrick isn't nearly as old as father was."

"Oh it isn't the age that reminded me. It's the manner. He has the same quick, authoritative way of making decisions and saying things. And it is so very gratifying to see how he defers to my judgment and experience."

Captain Sears did defer, that is he seldom opposed. But, when each conference was over, he went his own sweet way, using his own judgment and doing what seemed to him best. With Elizabeth, however, he was quite different. When she offered advice--which was seldom--he listened and almost invariably acted upon it. He was daily growing to have a higher opinion of her wisdom and capabilities. Whether or not it was the wisdom and capabilities alone which influenced that opinion he did not attempt to analyze. He enjoyed being with her and working with her, that he knew. That the constant companionship might be, for him, a risky and perhaps dangerous experience, he did not as yet realize. When he was with her, and busy with Fair Harbor affairs, he could forget the slowness with which his crippled legs were mending, and the increasing longing--sometimes approaching desperation--for the quarter deck of his own ship and the sea wind in his face.

He worked hard for the Harbor and did his best to justify his appointment as manager, but, work as he might, he knew perfectly well that such labors would scarcely earn his salary. But, on the other hand, he knew that the man who appointed him had not expected them to do so. He had been put in charge of the Fair Harbor for one reason alone and that was to be in command of the ship when the redoubtable Egbert came alongside. Judge Knowles had as much as told him that very thing, and more than once. Egbert Phillips had been, evidently, the judge's pet aversion and, in his later days illness and fretfulness had magnified and intensified that aversion. When Sears attempted to find good and sufficient reasons for belief that the husband of Lobelia Seymour was any such bugbear he was baffled. He asked Judah more questions and he questioned citizens of Bayport who had known the former singing teacher before and after his marriage. Some, like Judah, declared him "slick" or "smooth." Others, and those the majority, seemed to like him. He was polite and educated and a "perfect gentleman," this was the sum of feminine opinion. Captain Sears was inclined to picture him as what he would have called a "sissy," and not much more dangerous than that. The judge's hatred, he came to believe, was an obsession, a sick man's fancy.

He had, of course, read the Phillips letter, that which Judge Knowles bade him take away and read that night of his death. He hurriedly read it on that occasion before going to bed; he had reread it several times since.

It was a well-written letter, there was no doubt of that, a polite letter, almost excessively so, perhaps. In fact, if Sears had

been obliged to find a fault with it it would have been that it was a little too polite, a little too polished and flowery. It was not the sort of letter that he, himself, would have written under stress of grief, but he realized that it was not the sort of letter he could have written at all. Taken as a whole it was hard to pick flaws which might not be the result of prejudice, and taken sentence by sentence it stood the test almost as well.

"Our life together has been so happy," wrote Phillips, "so ideal, that the knowledge of its end leaves me stunned, speechless, wordless."

That was exaggeration, of course. He was not wordless, for the letter contained almost a superfluity of words; but people often said things they did not mean literally.

"My dear wife and I spoke of you so often, Judge, her affection for you was so great--an affection which I share, as you know----"

Judge Knowles had not returned the writer's affection, quite the contrary. But it was possible that Phillips did not know this and that he was fond of the judge. Possible, even if not quite probable.

"She and I never had a difference of opinion, never a thought which was not shared. This, in my hour of sorrow--" Phillips had written "my stricken hour" first, and then altered it to "hour of sorrow"--"is my greatest, almost my only consolation."

Yet, as Judge Knowles had expressly stated, Lobelia herself had told him that her husband did not know of the endowment at the Fair Harbor and she had at least hinted that her married life was not all happiness.

But, yet again, the judge was ill and weak, he had never liked Phillips, had always distrusted and suspected him, and might he not have fancied unhappiness when there was none?

The letter said nothing concerning its writer's plans. It told of Mrs. Phillips' death, her burial at Florence, and of the widower's grief. The only hint, or possible hint, concerning a visit to Bayport was contained in one line, "When I see you I can tell you more."

The captain puzzled over the letter a good deal. He showed it to Elizabeth. He found that Judge Knowles had not discussed Egbert with her at all. To her the ex-singing teacher was little more than a name; she remembered him, but nothing in particular concerning him. She thought the letter a very beautiful one--very sad, of course, but beautiful. Plainly she did not have the feeling which Sears had, but which he was inclined to think might be fathered by prejudice that it was a trifle too beautiful, that its beauty was that of a painting by a master, each stroke carefully touched in at exactly the right place for effect.

There was no demand for money in it, no hint at straitened circumstances; so why should there be any striving for effect? He gave it up. If the much talked of Egbert was what Judge Knowles had declared him to be, then neither the judge nor any one else had exaggerated his smoothness.

Emmeline Tidditt, for so many years the Knowles housekeeper, made one remark which contained possible food for thought.

"So he buried her over there amongst them foreigners, did he?" observed Emmeline. "That seems kind of funny. When she and him was visitin' here the last time she told me herself--and he was standin' right alongside and heard her--that when she died she wanted to be fetched back here to Bayport and buried in the Orthodox cemetery alongside her father and mother and all her folks. Said, dead or alive, it wasn't really home for her anywheres else. She must have changed her mind since, though, I call'late."

Bayport talked a good deal about Lobelia Phillips and what would become of the Fair Harbor now that its founder and patroness was dead. It was surmised, of course, that Mrs. Phillips had provided for her pet institution in her will, but that will had not yet been offered for probate. Neither had the will of Judge Knowles, for that matter. Lawyer Bradley, over at Orham, the attorney with whom George Kent was reading law, was known to be the judge's executor. And Judge Knowles and Mr. Bradley were co-executors for Lobelia Phillips, having been duly named by Lobelia on her last visit to Bayport. So, presumably, both wills were in Bradley's possession. But why had they not been probated?

Bradley himself made the explanation.

"The judge had a nephew in California," he said. "He was the nearest relative--although that isn't very near. Of course he couldn't get on for the funeral, but he is coming pretty soon. I thought I would wait until he came before I opened the will. As for Mrs. Phillips' will, I expect that her husband must be on his way here now. I haven't heard from him, but I take it for granted he is coming. I shall wait a while for him, too. There is no pressing hurry in either case."

So Bayport talked about the wills and the expected arrival of the heirs, but as time passed and neither nephew nor husband arrived, began to lose interest and to talk of other things. Sears Kendrick, remembering his last conversation with Judge Knowles, was curious to learn exactly what the latter meant by his hints concerning "fixing things" for the

Fair Harbor and Elizabeth having "money of her own," but he was busy and did not allow his curiosity to interfere with his schemes and improvements. He and Miss Berry saw each other every day, worked together and planned together, and the captain's fits of despondency and discouragement grew less and less frequent. He had an odd feeling at times, a feeling as if, instead of growing older daily, he was growing younger. He mentioned it to Elizabeth on one occasion and she did not laugh, but seemed to understand.

"It is true," she said. "I have noticed it. You *are* getting younger, Cap'n Kendrick."

"Am I? That's good. Be better yet if I didn't have such a tremendous long way to go."

"Nonsense! You aren't old. When I first met you I thought--it sounds dreadful when I say it--I thought you were fifty, at least. Now I don't believe you are more than--well, thirty-five."

"Oh, yes, I am. I am--humph!--let's see, I am--er--thirty-eight my next birthday. And I suppose that sounds pretty ancient to you."

"No, indeed it doesn't. Why, thirty-eight isn't old at all!"

The interesting discussion of ages was interrupted just then, but Sears found pleasure in the thought that she, too, had noticed that he looked and acted younger. It was being at work again, he believed, which was responsible for the rejuvenation; this and the now unmistakable fact that, although the improvement was still provokingly slow, his legs were better, really better. He could, as he said, navigate much more easily now. Once, at supper time, he walked from his room to the table without a cane. It was a laborious journey, and he was glad when it was over, but he made it. Judah came in just in time to see the end.

"Jumpin', creepin', hoppin' hookblocks, Cap'n Sears!" cried Judah. "Is that you, doin' that?"

"What's left of me, Judah. I feel just this minute as if there wasn't much left."

"Well, creepin' prophets! I couldn't believe it. Thinks I, 'There's fog in my deadlights and I can't see through 'em right.' Well, by Henry! And a little spell ago you was tellin' me you'd never be able to cruise again except under jury rig. Humph! You'll be up to the town hall dancin' 'Hull's Victory' and 'Smash the Windows' fust thing we know."

After supper the captain, using the cane but whistling a sprightly air, strolled out to the front gate, where, leaning over the fence, he looked up and down the curving, tree-shaded road, dozing in the late summer twilight. And up that road came George Kent, also whistling, to swing in at the Fair Harbor gate and stride to the side door.

Before that object lesson of real youth Sears' fictitious imitation seemed cheap and shoddy. He leaned heavily upon his cane as he hobbled back to the kitchen.

The next day something happened. Sears had been busy all the forenoon superintending the carting in and stowing of the Fair Harbor share of oak and pine from the wood-lot. Thirteen cords of it, sawed and split in lengths to suit the Harbor stoves and fireplaces, were to be piled in the sheds adjoining the old Seymour barn at the rear of the premises. Judah had been engaged to do the piling. The captain had hesitated about employing him for several reasons, one being that he was drawing wages--small but regular--as caretaker at the General Minot place; another, that there might be some criticism--or opportunity for criticism--because of the relationship, landlord and lodger, which existed between them. Judah himself scorned the thought.

"Mean to tell me I can't work for you just because you're boardin' along of me, Cap'n Sears?" he protested. "I've cooked for you a good many years and I worked for you then, didn't I?"

"Ye--es, but you had signed up to work for me then. That's what they paid you for."

"Well, it's what *you* pay me for now, ain't it? And Ogden Minot he pays me to be stevedore aboard his house yonder. And the Fair Harbor's callatin' to pay me for pilin' this wood, ain't it? You ain't payin' for that, nor Ogden nuther. Well, then!... Oh, don't let's waste time arguin' about it now, Cap'n Sears. Let's do the way Abe Pepper done when the feller asked him to take a little somethin'. Abe had promised his wife he'd sign the pledge and he was on his way to temp'rance meetin' where he was goin' to meet her and sign it. And on the way he ran acrost this feller--Cornelius Bassett 'twas--and Cornelius says, 'Come have a drink with me, Abe,' he says. Well, time Abe got around to meet his wife the temp'rance meetin' hall was all dark and Abe was all--er--lighted up, as you might say. 'Why didn't you tell that Bassett man you was in a hurry and couldn't stop?' his wife wanted to know. 'Didn't have time to tell him nothin',' explains Abe. 'I knew I was late for meetin' as 'twas.' 'Then why didn't you come right on *to* meetin'?' she wanted to know. 'If I'd done that I'd lost the drink,' says he."

The captain laughed, but looked doubtful.

"I don't quite see where that yarn fits in this case, Judah," he observed.

"Don't ye? Well, I don't know's it does. But anyhow, don't let's waste time arguin'. Let me pile the wood fust and then

we can argue afterwards."

So he was piling busily, carrying the wood in huge armfuls from the heaps where the carts had left it into the barn, and singing as he worked. But, bearing in mind his skipper's orders concerning the kind of song he was to sing, his chantey this time dealt neither with the eternal feminine nor the flowing bowl. Suggested perhaps by the nature of his task, he bellowed of "Fire Down Below."

"Fire in the galley,
Fire in the house,
Fire in the beef-kid
Burnin' up the scouce.
Fire, *fire*, FIRE down below!
Fetch a bucket of water!
Fire! down BELOW!"

Captain Sears, after watching and listening for a few minutes, turned to limp up the hill, past the summer-house and the garden plots, to the side entrance of the Fair Harbor. The mystery of these garden patches, their exact equality of size and shape, had been explained to him by Elizabeth. The previous summer the Fair Harbor guests, or a few of them, led, as usual, by Miss Snowden and Mrs. Brackett, had suddenly been seized with a feverish desire to practice horticulture. They had demanded flower beds of their own. So, after much debate and disagreement on their part Elizabeth and her mother had had the slope beneath the Eyrie laid out in plots exactly alike, one for each guest, and the question of ownership had been settled by drawing lots. Each plot owner might plant and cultivate her own garden in her own way. These ways differed widely, hence the varied color schemes and diversifications of design noted by Sears on his first visit. The most elaborate--not to say "whirliggy"--design was the product of Miss Snowden's labor. The captain would have guessed it. The plot which contained no flowers at all, but was thickly planted with beets, onions and other vegetables, belonged to Esther Tidditt. He would have guessed that, too.

He had stopped for an instant to inspect the plots, when he heard a footstep. Looking up, he saw a man descending the slope along the path by the Eyrie.

The man was a stranger, that was plain at first glance. The captain did not know every one in Bayport, but he had at least a recognizing acquaintance with most of the males, and this particular male was not one of them. And Sears would have bet heavily that neither was he one of the very few whom he did not know. He was not a Bayport citizen, he did not look Bayport.

He was very tall and noticeably slim. He wore a silk hat what Bayport still called a "beaver" in memory of the day's when such headpieces were really covered with beaver fur. There was nothing unusual in this fact; most of Bayport's prosperous citizens wore beavers on Sundays or for dress up. But there was this of the unusual about this particular hat: it had an air about it, a something which would have distinguished it amid fifty Bayport hats. And yet just what that something was Sears Kendrick could not have told he could not have defined it, but he knew it was there.

There was the same unusual something about the stranger's apparel in general, and yet there was nothing loud about it or queer. He carried a cane, but so did Captain Elkanah Wingate, for that matter, although only on Sundays. Captain Elkanah, however, carried his as if it were a club, or a scepter, or a--well, a marlinspike, perhaps. The stranger's cane was a part of his arm, and when he twirled it the twirls were graceful gestures, not vulgar flourishes.

Sears's reflections concerning the newcomer were by no means as analytical as this, of course. His first impressions were those of one coming upon a beautiful work of art, a general wonder and admiration, not detailed at all. Judah, standing behind him with an armful of wood, must have had similar feelings, for he whispered, hoarsely, "Creepin' Moses, Cap'n Sears, is that the Prince of Wales, or who?"

The man, standing in the path above the gardens, stopped to look about him. And at that moment, from the vine-covered Eyrie emerged Miss Elvira Snowden. She had evidently been there for some time, reading--she had a book in her hand--and as she came out she and the stranger were brought face to face.

Sears and Judah saw them look at each other. The man raised his hat and said something which they could not hear. Then Miss Snowden cried "Oh!" She seemed intensely surprised and, for her, a good deal flustered. There was more low-toned conversation. Then Elvira and the stranger turned and walked back up the path toward the house. He escorted her in a manner and with a manner which made that walk a sort of royal progress.

"Who was that?" asked Sears, as much of himself as of Judah.

But Mr. Cahoon had, by this time, settled the question to his own satisfaction.

"It's one of them slick critters peddlin' lightnin' rods," he declared, with conviction. "When you sight somebody that looks like a cross between a minister and one of them stuffed dummies they have outside of the stores in Dock Square

to show off clothes on, then you can 'most generally bet he's peddlin' lightnin' rods. Either that or paintin' signs on fences about 'Mustang Liniment' or 'Vegetine' or somethin'. Why, a feller like that hove alongside me over in our yard one time--'twas afore you come, Cap'n Sears--and I give you my word, the way he was togged up I thought----"

The captain did not wait to hear the Cahoon thought. He walked away. In a few minutes he had forgotten the stranger, having other and more important matters on his mind. There was a question concerning the Fair Harbor cooking range which was perplexing him just at this time. It looked as if they might have to buy a new one, and Sears, as superintendent of finances, hated to spend the money that month.

He limped up the slope and along the path to the side door. And when he entered that door he became aware that something unusual was going on. The atmosphere of the Fair Harbor for Mariners' Women was, so to speak, electrified, it was vibrant with excitement and mystery.

There was no one in the dining room, and no one in the sitting room. Yet in each of these apartments were numerous evidences that people had been there very recently and left in a great hurry. A cloth partially laid and left hanging. Drawers of the buffet left open. A broom lying directly in the middle of the floor where it had been dropped. An upset work-basket, disgorging spools, needle packets, and an avalanche of stockings awaiting darning. A lamp with the chimney standing beside it on the table. These were some of the signs denoting sudden and important interruption of a busy forenoon.

Captain Sears, wondering much, turned from the sitting room into the hall leading to the parlor. Then he became aware that, ahead of him, was the center and core of excitement. From the parlor came a murmur of voices, exclamations, giggles--the sounds as of a party, a meeting of the sewing-circle, or a reception. He could not imagine what it was all about.

He reached the parlor door and stood there for an instant looking in. Every inmate of the Harbor was in that room, including Elizabeth and her mother and even Caroline Snow, who, because it was Monday, was there to help with the washing. And every one--or almost every one--was talking, and the majority were crowded about one spot, a spot where stood a man, a man whom Sears recognized as the stranger he had seen in the garden.

And then Mrs. Berry, who happened to be facing the door, saw him. She broke through the ring of women and hurried over. Her face was aglow, her eyes were shining, there were bright spots in her cheeks, and, altogether, she looked younger and handsomer than the captain had ever seen her, more as he would have imagined she must have looked in the days when Cap'n Ike came South a-courting.

"Oh, Captain Kendrick," she cried, "I am so *very* glad you have come. We have just had such a surprise! Such a very unexpected surprise, but a very delightful one. Come! You must meet him."

She took his hand and led him toward the stranger. The latter, seeing them approach, politely pushed through the group surrounding him and stepped forward. Sears noticed for the first time that the sleeve of his coat was encircled by a broad band of black. His tie was black also, so were his cuff buttons. He was in mourning. An amazing idea flashed to the captain's brain.

"Captain Kendrick," gushed Mrs. Berry, "I have the honor to present you to Mr. Phillips, husband of our beloved founder."

Mr. Phillips smiled--his teeth were very fine, his smile engaging. He extended a hand.

"I am delighted to meet Captain Kendrick," he said.

The captain's stammered answer was conventional, and was not a literal expression of his thought. The latter, put into words, would have been:

"Egbert! I might have known it."

But there was no real reason why he should have known it, for this Egbert was not at all like the Egbert he had been expecting to see.

CHAPTER X

Sears Kendrick left the Fair Harbor, perhaps fifteen minutes later, with that thought still uppermost in his mind. This was

not at all the Egbert Phillips he had expected. From Judge Knowles' conversation, from Judah Cahoon's stories, from fragmentary descriptions he had picked up here and there about Bayport, he had fashioned an Egbert who had come to be in his mind a very real individual. This Egbert of his imagining was an oily, rather flashily dressed adventurer, a glib talker, handsome in a stage hero sort of way, with exaggerated politeness and a toothsome smile. There should be about this individual a general atmosphere of brilliantine, clothes and jewelry. On the whole he might have been expected to look a bit like the manager the captain had seen standing beside the ticket wagon at the circus, twirling his mustache with one hand and his cane with the other. Not quite as showy, not quite as picturesque, but a marked resemblance nevertheless.

And the flesh and blood Egbert Phillips was not that kind at all. One was not conscious of his clothes, except that they were all that they should be as to fit--and style. He wore no jewelry whatever save his black cuff buttons and studs. His black tie was not of Bayport's fashion, certainly. It was ample, flowing and picturesque, rather in the foreign way. No other male in Bayport could have worn that tie and not looked foolish, yet Mr. Phillips did not look foolish, far from it. He did not wear a beard, another unusual bit of individuality, but his long, drooping mustache was extraordinarily becoming and--yes, aristocratic was the word. His smile was pleasant, his handshake was cordial, but not overdone, and his voice low and pleasant. Above all he had a manner, a manner which caused Sears, who had sailed pretty well over the world and had met all sorts of people in all sorts of places, to feel awkward and countrified. Yet one could tell that Mr. Phillips would not have one feel that way for the world; it was his desire to put every one at his or her ease.

He greeted the captain with charming affability. He had heard of him, of course. He understood they were neighbors, as one might say. He looked forward to the pleasure of their better acquaintance. He had gotten but little further than this when Mrs. Berry, Miss Snowden and the rest again swooped down upon him and Sears was left forgotten on the outside of the circle. He went home soon afterward and sat down in the Minot kitchen to think it over.

Egbert had come.... Well? Now what?

He spent the greater part of the afternoon superintending the stowage of the wood and did not go back to the Harbor at all. But he was perfectly certain that he was not missed. The Fair Harbor for Mariners' Women fairly perspired excitement. Caroline Snow, her washing hung upon the lines in the back yard, found time to scurry down the hill and tell Judah the news. The captain had limped up to his room for a forgotten pipe, and when he returned Judah was loaded with it. He fired his first broadside before his lodger entered the barn.

"Say, Cap'n Sears," hailed Mr. Cahoon, breathlessly, "do you know who that feller was me and you seen along of Elviry this forenoon? The tall one with the beaver and--and the gloves and the cane? The one I called the Prince of Wales or else a lightnin'-rod peddler? Do you know who he is?"

Sears nodded. "Yes," he said, shortly.

Judah stared, open-mouthed.

"You *do*?" he gasped.

"Yes."

"You mean to tell me you know he's that--ah--er--what's-his-name--Eg Phillips come back?"

"Yes, Judah."

"My hoppin' Henry! Why didn't you say so?"

"I didn't know it then, Judah. I found it out afterward, when I went up to the house."

"Yes--but--but you knew it when you and me was eatin' dinner, didn't you? Why didn't you say somethin' about it then?"

"Oh I don't know. It isn't important enough to interfere with our meals, is it?"

Judah slowly shook his head. "It's a dum good thing you wan't around time of the flood, Cap'n Sears," he declared. "'Twould have been the thirty-eighth day afore you'd have call'ated 'twas sprinklin' hard enough to notice. Afore that you'd have called it a thick fog, I presume likely. If you don't think this Phillips man's makin' port is important enough to talk about you take a cruise down to the store to-night. You'll hear more cacklin' than you'd hear in a henhouse in a week--and all account of just one Egg, too," he added, with a chuckle.

"Caroline told you he had come, I suppose? Well, what does she think of him?"

Judah snorted. "She?" he repeated. "She thinks he's the Angel Gabriel dressed up."

He would have liked to discuss the new arrival the remainder of the afternoon, but the captain was not in the mood to listen. Neither was he more receptive or discussive at supper time. Judah wanted to talk of nothing else and to speculate concerning the amount of wealth which Mr. Phillips might have inherited, upon the probable date of the

reading of Lobelia's will, upon whether or not the fortunate legatee might take up his residence in Bayport.

"Say Cap'n" he observed, turning an inflamed countenance from the steam of dishwashing, "don't you callate maybe he may be wantin' to--er--sort of change things aboard the Fair Harbor? He'll be Admiral, as you might say, now, won't he?"

"Will he?"

"Well--won't he?"

"Don't know, Judah. I haven't thrown up my commission yet, you know."

"No, course you ain't, course you ain't. I don't mean he'd think of disrating you, Cap'n Sears. Nobody'd be fool-head enough for that.... But, honest, I would like to look at him and hear him talk. Caroline Snow, she says he's the finest, highest-toned man ever *she* see."

"Yes? Well, that's sayin' somethin'."

"Yus, but 'tain't sayin' too much. She lives down to Woodchuck Neck and the highest thing down there is a barrel of cod-livers. They're good and high when the sun gets to 'em."

When the dishes were done he announced that he guessed likely he might as well go down to Eliphalet's and listen to the cackling. The captain did not object, and so he put on his cap and departed. But he was back again in less than a minute.

"He's comin', Cap'n," he cried, excitedly. "Creepin' Moses! He's comin' here."

Sears remained calm. "He is, eh?" he observed. "Well, is he creepin' now?"

"Hey? Creepin'? What are you talkin' about?"

"Why, Moses. You said he was comin', didn't you?"

"I said that Egbert man was comin'. He was just onlatchin' the gate when I see him.... Hey? That's him knockin' now. Shall I--shall I let him in, Cap'n Sears?"

"I would if I were you, Judah. If you don't I shall have to."

So Judah did. Mr. Phillips entered the kitchen, removing his silk hat at the threshold. Mr. Cahoon followed, too overcome with excitement and curiosity to remember to take off his own cap. Sears Kendrick would have risen from the armchair in which he was seated, but the visitor extended a gloved hand.

"Don't. Don't rise, I beg of you," he said, earnestly. "Pray keep your seat, Captain Kendall. I have just learned of your most unfortunate accident. Really, I must insist that you remain just as you are. You will distress me greatly if you move on my account. Thank you, thank you. I suppose I should apologize for running in in this informal way, but I feel almost as if I had known you for a long time. Our mutual friends, the Berrys, have told me so much concerning you since my arrival that I did not stand upon ceremony at all."

"That's right," declared the captain, heartily. "I'm glad you didn't. Sit down, Mr. Phillips. Put your hat on the table there."

Judah stepped forward.

"Give it to me; I'll take care of it," he said, taking the shining beaver from the visitor's hand. "I'll hang it up yonder in the back entry, then 'twon't get knocked onto the floor... No, no, don't set in that chair, that's got a spliced leg; it's liable to land you on your beam ends if you ain't careful. Try this one."

He kicked the infirm chair out of the way and pushed forward a substitute. "There," he added, cheerfully, "that's solid's the rock of Gibraltar. Nothin' like bein' sure of your anchorage. Set down, set down."

He beamed upon the caller. The latter did not beam exactly. His expression was a queer one. Sears came to the rescue.

"Mr. Phillips," he said, "this is Mr. Cahoon."

Judah extended a mighty hand.

"Pleased to make your acquaintance, Mr. Phillips," he declared. "I've heard tell of you considerable."

Egbert looked at the hand. His expression was still queer.

"Oh--ah--how d'ye do?" he murmured.

"Mr. Cahoon and I are old friends," explained Sears. "I am boardin' here with him."

"Yus," put in Judah. "And afore that I shipped cook aboard Cap'n Sears's vessels for a good many v'yages. The cap'n

and I get along fust rate. He's all right, Cap'n Sears is, *I* tell ye!"

Mr. Phillips murmured something to the effect that he was sure of it. He did not seem very sure of Judah. Mr. Cahoon did not notice the uncertainty, he pushed his hand nearer to the visitor's.

"I'm real glad to meet you," he said.

Egbert gingerly took the proffered hand, moved it up and down once and then dropped it, after which he looked at his glove. Judah looked at it, too.

"Kind of chilly outdoor to-night, is it?" he asked. "Didn't seem so to me."

Again his lodger came to the rescue.

"Well, Mr. Phillips," he said, "you gave us all a little surprise, didn't you? Of course we expected you in a general sort of way, but we didn't know when you would make port."

Egbert bowed. "I scarcely knew myself," he said. "My plans were somewhat vague and--ah--rather hurriedly made, naturally. Of course my great sorrow, my bereavement----"

He paused, sighed and then brushed the subject away with a wave of his glove.

"You won't mind, I'm sure," he said, "if I don't dwell upon that just now. It is too recent, the shock is too great, I really cannot.... But I am so sorry to hear of your disability. A railway wreck, I understand. Outrageous carelessness, no doubt. Really, Captain Kendrick, one cannot find excuses for the reckless mismanagement of your American railways.... Why, what is it? Don't you agree with me?"

The captain had looked up momentarily. Now he was looking down again.

"Don't you agree with me?" repeated Egbert. "Surely you, of all people, should not excuse their recklessness."

Sears shook his head. "Oh, I wasn't tryin' to," he replied. "I was only wonderin' why you spoke of 'em as 'your' railroads. They aren't mine, you know. That is, any more than they are Judah's--or yours--or any other American's. No such luck."

Mr. Phillips coughed, smiled, coughed again, and then explained that he had used the word 'your' without thinking.

"I have been so long an--ah--shall I say exile, Captain Kendall," he observed, "that I have, I presume, fallen somewhat into the European habit of thinking and--ah--speaking. Habit is a peculiar thing, is it not?"

Mr. Cahoon, intensely interested in the conversation, evidently felt it his duty to contribute toward it.

"You're right there, Mr. Phillips," he announced, with emphasis. "Don't talk to me about habits! When a man's been to sea as long's I have he runs afoul of pretty nigh every kind of habit there is, seems so. Why, I knew a feller one time--down to Surinam 'twas--I was cook and steward aboard the old *Highflyer*--and this feller--he wan't a white man, nor he wan't all nigger nuther, kind of in between, one of them--er--er--octoreens, that's what he was--well, this feller he had the dumdest habit. Every day of his life, about the middle of the dog watch he'd up and----"

"Judah."

"Aye, aye, Cap'n Sears?"

"You'll be late down at the store, won't you?"

"Hey? Oh, I don't care how late I be. I don't know's I'm so dreadful partic'lar about goin' down there to-night, anyhow. Don't know but I'd just as live stay here."

"I'd go."

"Hey? Oh, I----"

"I'd go, if I were you. You know there's likely to be a good deal goin' on."

"Think so, do you?" Judah was evidently on the fence. "Course, I---- Well, maybe I had better, come to think of it. Good night, Mr. Phillips. I'll tell you about that octoreen feller next time I see you. So long, Cap'n Sears. I'll report about," with a wink, "the cacklin' later. Creepin'! it's most eight now, ain't it?"

He hurried out. Egbert looked rather relieved. He smiled tolerantly.

"Evidently an eccentric, your--er--man," he observed.

"He has his ways, like the majority of us, I guess," declared the captain, crisply. "Underneath he is as square and big-hearted as they make. And he's a good friend of mine."

"Oh, yes; yes, I'm sure of it. Captain Kendall----"

"Kendrick, not Kendall."

Mr. Phillips begged pardon for the mistake. It was inexcusable, he admitted. He had heard the captain's name mentioned so frequently since his arrival in Bayport, especially by Mrs. Berry and her daughter, "so favorably, even enthusiastically mentioned," that he certainly should have remembered it. "I am not quite myself, I fear," he added. "My recent bereavement and the added shock of the death of my dear old friend the judge have had their effect. My nerves are--well, you understand, I am sure."

He made a lengthy call. He talked a great deal, and his conversation was always interesting. He spoke much of his dear wife, of life abroad, of Genoa and Leghorn, ports which the captain had visited, and of the changes in Bayport since his last sojourn in the village. But he said almost nothing concerning his plans for the future, and of the Fair Harbor very little. In fact, Sears had the feeling that he was waiting for him to talk concerning that institution. This the captain would not do and, at last, Mr. Phillips himself touched lightly upon the fringes of the subject.

"Do you find your duties in connection with the--ah--retreat next door arduous, Captain Kendrick?" he inquired.

"Eh?... Oh, no, I don't know as I'd call 'em that, exactly."

"I imagine not, I imagine not. You are--you are, I gather, a sort of--oh---- What should I call you, captain; in your official capacity, you know?"

He laughed pleasantly. Sears smiled.

"Give it up," he replied. "I told Elizabeth--Miss Berry, I mean--when I first took the berth that I scarcely knew what it was."

"Ha, ha! Yes, I can imagine. Miss Berry--charming girl, isn't she, captain--intimated to me that your position was somewhat--ah--general. You exercise a sort of supervision over the finances and management, in a way, do you not?"

"In a way, yes."

"Yes. Of course, my dear sir, you understand that I am not unduly curious. I don't mean to be. This--ah--Fair Harbor was, as you know, very dear to the heart of Mrs. Phillips and, now that she has been taken from me, I feel, of course, a sense of trust, of sacred responsibility. We had understood, she and I, that our dear friend--Judge Knowles--was in supreme charge--nominally, I mean; of course Mrs. Berry was in actual charge--and, therefore, I confess to a natural feeling of--shall I say surprise, on learning that the judge had appointed another person, an understudy, as it were?"

"Well, you couldn't be any more surprised than I was when the judge asked me to take the job. And Elizabeth and her mother know that I hesitated considerable before I did take it. Judge Knowles was in his last sickness, he couldn't attend to things himself."

Mr. Phillips raised a protesting hand. "Please don't misunderstand me," he said. "Don't, I beg of you, think for a moment that I am objecting to the judge's action, or even criticizing it. It was precisely the thing he should have done, what Mrs. Phillips and I would have wished him to do. And as for his choice of--ah--appointee----"

Captain Sears interrupted. "As to that," he said, "you can criticize as much as you please. You can't object any more than I did when he made me the offer."

The protesting hand was again raised. "Criticism or objection was the very farthest from my mind, I assure you," Egbert declared. "I was about to say that Judge Knowles showed his usual--ah--acumen when he selected a man as well known and highly esteemed as yourself, sir. The mention of the name of Captain Kendall----"

"Kendrick."

"Kendrick, of course. I apologize once more. But, if you will permit me to say so, a man as well and favorably known to us all as you are, sir, is certainly the ideal occupant of the--ah--place."

"Thanks. You knew of me, then? I don't think you and I have ever met before, have we?"

"No; no, I believe I have never before had the pleasure."

"Thanks. I was pretty sure I hadn't. I've been away from Bayport a good deal. I wasn't here when you and your wife came back--about five years ago, wasn't it? And, of course, I didn't know you when you used to live here. Let's see; you used to teach singin'-school, didn't you?"

This question was asked in the most casual fashion. Mr. Phillips did not answer at once. He coughed, changed his position, and then smiled graciously.

"Yes," he said. "Yes, I--I did something of the sort, for a time. Music has always been a--one might call it a--ah--hobby of mine. But, regarding your duties as--well, whatever those duties are, Captain Kendrick: You say they are not arduous. And your--ah--compensation? That, I understand, is not large? Pardon my referring to it, but as Mrs. Phillips

was the owner and benefactress of the Fair Harbor, and as I am--shall I say heir--to her interests, why, perhaps my excuse for asking for information is--ah--a reasonable one."

He paused, and with another smile and wave of the hand, awaited his host's reply. Sears looked at him.

"I guess you know what my wages are, Mr. Phillips," he observed. "Don't you?"

"Why--why--ah--ah--"

"Didn't Cordelia tell you? She knows. So does Elizabeth."

"Why--why, Mrs. Berry did mention a figure, I believe. I seem to recall--ah--ah--something."

"If you remember fifteen hundred a year, you will have it right. That is the amount I'm paid for bein' in general command over there. As you say, it isn't very large, but perhaps it's large enough for what I do."

"Oh--ah, *don't* misunderstand me, Captain Kendrick, please don't. I was not questioning the amount of your salary."

"Wasn't you? My mistake. I thought you was."

"No; indeed no. My only feeling in regard to it was its--ah--trifling size. It--pardon me, but it seemed such a small sum for you to accept, a man of your attainments."

"My attainments, as you call 'em, haven't got me very far I'm a poor man and, just now at any rate, I'm a cripple, a wreck on a lee shore. Fifteen hundred a year isn't so small to me."

Mr Phillips apologized. He was sorry he had referred to the subject. But the captain, he was sure, understood his motive for asking, and, now that so much had been said, might he say just a word more.

"Our dear Cordelia--Mrs. Berry--" he went on, "intimated that your--ah--compensation was paid by the judge, himself."

"Yes it was. Judge Knowles paid it with his own money. It doesn't come out of the Fair Harbor funds."

"Yes, yes, of course, of course. The judge's interest in my beloved wife's--ah--whims--perhaps that is too frivolous a word--was extraordinarily fine. But now the judge has passed on."

"Yes. More's the pity."

"I heartily agree with you, it is a great pity. An irreparable loss.... But he has gone."

"Yes."

Just here the dialogue came to a peculiar halt. Mr. Phillips seemed to be waiting for his companion to say something and the captain to be waiting for Phillips himself to say it first. As a consequence neither said it. When the conversation was resumed it was once more of a general nature. It was not until just beyond the end of the call that the Fair Harbor was again mentioned. And, as at first, it was the caller who led up to it.

"Captain Kendrick," he observed, "you are, like myself, a man of the world, a man of wide experience."

This was given forth as a positive statement, not a question, yet he seemed to expect a reply. Sears obliged.

"Oh, I don't know," he demurred.

"Pardon me, but I do. I am accustomed to judge persons and characters, and I think I may justly pride myself on making few mistakes. From what I had heard I expected to find you a man of the world, a man of experience and judgment. Judge Knowles' selection of you as the--ah--temporary head of the Fair Harbor would have indicated that, of course, but, if you will permit me to say so, this interview has confirmed it."

Again he paused, as if expecting a reply. And again the captain humored him.

"Much obliged," he said.

The Phillips hand waved the thanks away. There was another perceptible wait. Then said Egbert, "Captain Kendrick, as one man of the world to another, what do you think of the--ah--institution next door?"

Sears looked at him. "What do I think of it?" he repeated.

"Yes, exactly. It was, as you know, the darling of my dear wife's heart. When she loaned her--shall we say her ancestral home, and--ah--money to the purpose she firmly believed the Fair Harbor for Mariners' Women to be an inspiration for good. She believed its founding to be the beginning of a great work. Is it doing that work, do you think? In your opinion, sir, is it a success?"

Captain Sears slowly stroked his close-cropped beard. What was the man driving at?

"Why--I don't know as I know exactly what you mean by success," he hesitated. "It's takin' care of its--er--boarders and it's makin' a home for 'em. That is what your wife wanted it to do, didn't she?"

"Oh, yes, yes, quite so. But that is not precisely what I mean. Put it this way, sir: In your opinion, as a man of affairs----"

"Here, here, just a minute. I'm not a man of affairs. I'm a broken-down sea cap'n on shore, that's all."

Again the upraised hand. "I know what you are, Captain Kendrick," said Egbert. "That, if you will permit me to say so, is why I am asking your opinion. The success of a--ah--proposition depends, as I see it, upon the amount of success achieved in proportion to the amount of energy, capital--ah--whatnot invested. Now, considering the sum needed to support the Fair Harbor--paid, as doubtless you know, Captain Kendrick, from the interest of an amount loaned and set aside by my dear wife some years ago--considering that sum, I say, added to the amount sunk, or invested, in the house, land, furnishings, et cetera, is it your opinion that the institution's success is a sufficient return? Or, might not the same sums, put into other--ah--charities, reap larger rewards? Rewards in the shape of good to our fellow men and women, Captain Kendrick? What do you think?"

Sears crossed his knees.

"I don't know," he said.

"Of course, of course. One does not know. But it is a question to be considered, is it not?"

"Why--why, yes, maybe. Do I understand that you are thinkin' of givin' up the Fair Harbor? Doin' away with it?"

"Oh, no, no, no!" Mr. Phillips pushed the surmise deeper into the background with each negative. "I am not considering anything of that sort, Captain Kendrick."

"Well--humph! My mistake again. I thought you just said you were considerin' it."

"Only as a question, Captain, only as a question. While my wife lived, of course, the Fair Harbor--*her* Fair Harbor--was a thing fixed, immovable. Now that she has been taken from me, it devolves upon me, the care of her trusts, her benefactions."

"Yes. So you said, Mr. Phillips."

"I believe I did say so. Yes. And therefore, as I see it, a part of that trust is to make sure that every penny of her--ah--charity is doing the greatest good to the greatest number."

"And you think the Fair Harbor isn't gettin' its money's worth?"

"Oh, no, no, no. I don't say that. I don't say that at all. I am sure it must be. I am merely considering, that is all, merely considering.... Well, Captain Kendrick, I must go. We shall see each other often, I trust. I have--ah--a suite at the Central House and if you will do me the honor of calling I shall greatly appreciate it. Pray drop in at any time, sir. Don't, I beg of you, stand upon ceremony."

Sears promised that he would not. He was finding it hard to keep from smiling. A "suite" at the Central House, Bayport's one hostelry, tickled him. He knew the rooms at that hit or miss tavern.

"Good-by, Captain Kendrick," said Mr. Phillips. "Upon one thing I feel sure you may congratulate yourself, that is that your troubles and petty annoyances as--ah--manager of the Fair Harbor are practically over."

"Oh," observed the captain.

"Yes. I think I shall be able to relieve you of *that* care very shortly. And the sooner the better, I presume you are saying. Yes? Ha, ha!"

"Thanks. Goin' to appoint somebody else, eh?"

"Oh, no, no! My *dear* sir! Why, I--I really--I thought you understood. I mean to say simply that, while I am here in person, and as long as I am here, I shall endeavor to look after the matters myself and consequently relieve you, that is all. Judge Knowles appointed you and paid you--a very wise and characteristic thing for him to do; but he, poor man, is dead. One could scarcely expect you to go on performing your duties gratuitously. That is why I congratulate you upon the lifting of the burden from your shoulders."

"Oh, yes. Um-hm. I see. Thank you, Mr. Phillips."

"I should thank you, sir, for all you have already done. I do sincerely.... Oh, by the way, Captain Kendrick, perhaps it would be as well that nothing be said concerning this little business talk of ours. One knows how trifles are distorted, mole hills made mountains, and all that, in communities like--well, like dear old Bayport. We love our Bayporters, bless them, but they will talk. Ha, ha! So, captain, if you will consider our little chat confidential----"

"I will."

"Thank you, sir, thank you. And we shall see each other frequently. I am counting upon it. *Au revoir*, Captain Kendrick. Don't rise, I beg of you."

He was gone, the door closed behind him. Sears filled his pipe, lighted it, and leaned back in his chair to review and appraise his impressions.

The appraisal was not altogether satisfactory. It was easy to say that he did not like Egbert Phillips, for it was the truth--he did not like him. But to affirm truthfully that that dislike was founded upon anything more substantial than prejudice due to Judge Knowles' detestation was not so easy. The question which continually intruded was this: Suppose he had met Mr. Phillips for the first time, never having heard of him before--would he have disliked and distrusted him under those circumstances? He could not be quite sure.

For, leaving aside Egbert's airy condescension and his--to the captain's New England mind--overdone politeness, there was not so much fault to be found with his behavior or words during the interview just ended. He had asked questions concerning the Fair Harbor, had hinted at the possibility of its discontinuance, had more than hinted at the dropping of Kendrick as its manager. Well--always bearing in mind the fact that he was ignorant of his wife's action which gave the Seymour house and land to the Fair Harbor and gave, not loaned, the money for its maintenance--bearing in mind the fact that Egbert Phillips believed himself the absolute owner of all, with undisputed authority to do as he pleased with it--then.... Well, then Captain Sears was obliged to admit that he, himself, might have questioned and hinted very much as his visitor had done. And as for the condescension and the "manner"--these were, after all, not much more than eccentricities, and developed, very likely, during his life abroad.

Lobelia Phillips' will would be opened and read soon, probably at once. Whew! Sears whistled as he thought of the staggering disillusionment which was coming to the widower. How would he take it? Was Judge Knowles right in his belief that the rest of the Seymour inheritance had been wasted and lost? If so, the elegant personage who had just bowed himself out of the Minot kitchen would be in a bad way indeed. Sears was sorry for him.

And yet he did not like the man. No, he did not.... And he did distrust him.

Judah came back from his sojourn at the store brimful of talk and chuckles. As he had prophesied, all Bayport had heard of the arrival of the great man and all Bayport was discussing him. He had the finest rooms at the Central House. He had three trunks--count them--three! Not to mention bags and a leather hat box. He had given the driver of the depot wagon a dollar over and above his regular charge. He remembered Eliphalet Bassett the first time he saw him, and called him by name.

There was a lot more of this, but Sears paid little attention to it. Judah summed it all up pretty well in his final declaration, given as his lodger was leaving the kitchen for the "spare stateroom."

"By Henry!" declared Judah, who seemed rather disgusted, "I never heard such a powwowin' over one man in my life. Up to 'Liphalet's 'twan't nothin' but 'Egbert Phillips,' 'Egbert Phillips,' till you'd think 'twas a passel of poll-parrots all mockin' each other. Simeon Ryder had been down to deacon's meetin' in the Orthodox vestry and, nigh's I can find out, 'twas just the same down there. 'Cordin' to Sim's tell they talked about the Lord's affairs for ten minutes and about this Egg man's for forty."

"But why?" queried the captain. "He isn't the only fellow that has been away from Bayport and come back again."

Mr. Cahoon shook his head. "I know it," he admitted, "but none of the rest ever had quite so much fuss made over 'em. I callate, maybe, it's on account of the way he's been led up to, as you might say. I went one time to a kind of show place in New York, Barnum's Museum 'twas. There was a great sign outdoor sayin', 'Come on aboard and see the White Whale,' or somethin' similar. Well, I'd seen about every kind of a whale *but* a white one, so I callated maybe I'd might as well spend a quarter and see that. There was a great big kind of tank place full of water and a whole passel of folks hangin' around the edge of it with their mouths open, gawpin' at nothin'--nothin' but the water, that's all there was to see. And a man up on a kind of platform he was preachin' a sort of sermon, wavin' his arms and hollerin' about how rare and scurce white whales was, and how the museum folks had to scour all creation afore they got this one, and about how the round heads of Europe----"

"Crowned heads, wasn't it, Judah?"

"Hey? I don't know, maybe so. Cabbage heads it ought to have been, 'cordin' to my notion. Well, anyhow, 'twas some kind of Europe heads, and they had all pretty nigh broke the necks belongin' to 'em gettin' to see this whale, and how lucky we was because we could see it for the small sum of twenty-five cents, and so on, and so on--until all hands of us was just kind of on tiptoe, as you might say. And then, all to once, the water in the tank kind of riz up, you know, and somethin' white--might have been the broadside of a barn for all we had time to see of it--showed for a jiffy, there was a 'Woosh,' and the white thing went under again.' And that was all. The man said we was now able to tell our children that we'd seen a white whale and that the critter would be up to breathe again in about an hour, or week after next, or some such time.... Anyhow, what I'm tryin' to get at is that 'twan't the whale itself that counted so much as 'twas the way that preachin' man led up to him. This Egbert he's been preached about and guessed about and looked for'ard to so long that all Bayport's been on tiptoe, like us folks around that museum tank.... Well, this Phillips whale has made a

big 'Woosh' in town so fur. Can he keep it up? That's what I'm wonderin'."

The sensation kept up for the next day and the next at least, and there were no signs of its abating. Over at the Fair Harbor Captain Sears found himself playing a very small second fiddle. Miss Snowden, Mrs. Brackett and their following, instead of putting themselves out to smile upon the captain and to chat with him, ignored him almost altogether, or, if they did speak, spoke only of Mr. Phillips. He was the most entertaining man, *so* genteel, his conversation was remarkable, he had traveled everywhere.

Mrs. Berry, of course, was in ecstasies concerning him. He was her ideal of a gentleman, she said, *so* aristocratic. "So like the men I associated with in the old days," she said. "Of course," she added, "he is an old friend. Dear 'Belia and he were my dearest friends, you know, Captain Kendrick."

The captain was curious to learn Elizabeth's opinion of him. He found that opinion distinctly favorable.

"He is different," she said. "Different, I mean, from any one I ever met. And at first I thought him conceited. But he isn't really, he is just--well, different. I think I shall like him."

Sears smiled. "If you don't you will be rather lonesome here in the Harbor, I judge," he observed.

She looked at him quickly. "You don't like him, do you, Cap'n Kendrick?" she said. "Why?"

"Why--why, I don't say I don't like him, Elizabeth."

"No, you don't say it, but you look it. I didn't think you took sudden dislikes, Cap'n. It doesn't seem like you, somehow."

He could not explain, and he felt that he had disappointed her.

On the third day the news came that Mr. Phillips had left town, gone suddenly, so Judah said.

"He took the afternoon train and bought a ticket for Boston, so they tell me," declared the latter. "He's left his dunnage at the Central House, so he's comin' back, I call'late; but nobody knows where he's gone, nor why he went. Went over to Orham this mornin'--hired a horse-'n'-team down to the livery stable and went--come back about one o'clock, wouldn't speak to nobody, went up to his room, never et no dinner, and then set sail for Boston on the up train. Cur'us, ain't it? Where do you call'late likely he's gone, Cap'n Sears?"

"Give it up, Judah. And," speaking quickly in order to head off the question he saw the Cahoon lips already forming, "I can't guess why he's gone, either."

But, although he did not say so, he could have guessed why Mr. Phillips had gone to Orham. Bradley, the Orham lawyer, had written the day before to say that the will of Lobelia Phillips would be opened and read at his office on Thursday morning. And this was Thursday. Bradley had suggested Sears's coming over to be present at the reading of the will. "As you are so deeply interested in the Fair Harbor," he wrote, "I should think you might--or ought to--be on hand. I don't believe Phillips will object."

But the captain had not accepted the invitation. Knowing, as he did, the disappointment which was in store for Egbert, he had no wish to see the blow fall. So he remained at home, but that afternoon Bradley himself drove into the Minot yard.

"I just stopped for a minute, Cap'n, he said. I had some other business in town here; that brought me over, but I wanted to tell you that we opened that will this morning."

Sears looked a question. "Well?" he queried.

Bradley nodded. "It was just about as we thought, and as the judge said," he declared. "The papers were there, of course, telling of the gift of the fifty thousand to the Harbor, of the gift of the land and house, everything. There was one other legacy, a small one, and then she left all the rest, 'stocks, bonds, securities, personal effects and cash' to her beloved husband, Egbert Phillips. That's all there was to it, Kendrick. Short but sweet, eh?"

Sears nodded. "Sweet enough," he agreed. "And how did the beloved husband take it?"

"Well ... well, he was pretty nasty. In fact he was about as nasty as anybody could be. He went white as a sheet and then red and then white again. I didn't know, for a minute or two, what was going to happen, didn't know but what I should have a fight on my hands. However, I didn't. I don't think he's the fighting kind, not that kind of a fight. He just took it out in being nasty. Said of course he should contest the gift, hinted at undue influence, spoke of thieves and swindlers--not naming 'em, though--and then, when I suggested that he had better think it over before he said too much, pulled up short and walked out of the office. Yes, he was pretty nasty. But, honestly, Cap'n Kendrick, when I think it over, I don't know that he was any nastier than I, or any other fellow, might have been under the circumstances. It was a smash between the eyes for him, that's what it was. Met him, have you?"

"Yes."

"What do you think of him?"

"I don't know--yet."

"Neither do I. He's a polite chap, isn't he?"

"No doubt about that. Say, Bradley, do you think he's got much left of the 'stocks, bonds,' and all the rest that the will talked about?"

"I give it up. Of course we shall talk about that by and by, I suppose, but we haven't yet. You know what Judge Knowles declared; he was perfectly sure that there wouldn't be anything left--that this fellow and Lobelia had thrown away every loose penny of old Seymour's money. And, of course, he prophesied that this Egbert man would be back here as soon as his wife died to sell the Fair Harbor, ship and cargo, and get the money for them. The biggest satisfaction the old judge got out of life along toward the last of it was in knowing that he and Lobelia had fixed things so that that couldn't be done. He certainly hated Phillips, the judge did."

"Um-hm. But he might have been prejudiced."

"Yes. Sometimes I wonder if he wasn't."

"Tell me, Bradley: Did you know this Phillips man when he was skipper of the singin' school here in Bayport? Before he married Lobelia?"

"No. Nor I didn't meet him when he and his wife were on here the last time. I was up in the State House serving out my two terms as county representative."

"I see.... Oh! You spoke of Lobelia's leavin' another legacy. Who was that to? If it isn't a secret."

"It is, so far. But it won't be very long. She left five thousand, in cash and in Judge Knowles's care, for Cordelia Berry over here at the Harbor. She and Lobelia were close friends, you know. Cordelia is to have it free and clear, but I am to invest it for her. She doesn't know her good luck yet. I am going over now to tell her about it.... Oh, by the way, Cap'n: Judge Knowles's nephew, the man from California, is expecting to reach Bayport next Sunday. He can't stay out a little while, and so I shall have to hurry up that will and the business connected with it. Can you come over to my office Monday about ten?"

"Why, I suppose likely I could, but what do you want me for?"

"I don't, except in the general way of always wanting to see you, Cap'n. But Judge Knowles wanted you especially."

"He did! Wanted *me*?"

"Yes. Seems so. He left a memorandum of those he wanted on hand when his will was read. You are one, and Elizabeth Berry is another. Will you come?"

"Why--why, yes, I suppose so. But what in the world----"

"I don't know. But I imagine we'll all know Monday. I'll look for you then, Cap'n."

CHAPTER XI

The reading of the Knowles will, so Bradley had said, was to take place at the lawyer's office in Orham on Monday. It was Friday when Bradley called at the Minot place, and on Saturday morning Sears and Elizabeth discussed the matter.

"Mr. Bradley said your name was on the list of those the judge asked to be on hand when the will was read," said the captain. "He asked me not to speak about the will to outsiders, and of course I haven't, but you're not an outsider. You're goin' over, I suppose?"

She hesitated slightly. "Why, yes," she said. "I think I shall."

"Yes. Yes, I thought you would."

"I shall go because the judge seems to have wished me to be there, but why I can't imagine. Can you, Cap'n Kendrick?"

Remembering his last conversation with Judge Knowles, Sears thought he might at least guess a possible reason, but he did not say so.

"We're both interested in the Fair Harbor," he observed. "And we know how concerned the judge was with that."

She nodded. "Yes," she admitted. "Still I don't see why mother was not asked if that was it. You are going over, of course?"

"Why--yes, I shall. Bradley seemed to want me to."

That was all, at the time. The next day, however, Elizabeth again mentioned the subject. It was in the afternoon, church and dinner were over, and Sears was strolling along the path below the Fair Harbor garden plots. He could walk with less difficulty and with almost no pain now, but he could not walk far. The Eyrie was, for a wonder, unoccupied, so he limped up to it and sat down upon the bench inside to rest. This was the favorite haunt of the more romantic Fair Harbor inmates, Miss Snowden and Mrs. Chase especially, but they were not there just then, although a book, *Barriers Burned Away*, by E. P. Roe, lay upon the bench, a cardboard marker with the initials "E. S." in cross-stitch, between the leaves. When the captain heard a step approaching the summer-house, he judged that Elvira was returning to reclaim her "Barriers." But it was not Elvira who entered the Eyrie, it was Elizabeth Berry.

She was surprised to see him. "Why, Cap'n Sears!" she exclaimed. "I didn't expect to find you here. I was afraid--that is, I did rather think I might find Elvira, but not you. I didn't know you had the Eyrie habit."

He smiled. "I haven't," he said. "That is, it isn't chronic yet. I didn't know you had it, either."

"Oh I haven't. But I was rather tired, and I wanted to be alone, and so----"

"And so you took a chance. Well, you came at just the right time. I was just about gettin' under way."

He rose, but she detained him. "Don't go," she begged. "When I said I wanted to be alone I didn't mean it exactly. I meant I wanted to be away from--some people. You are not one of them."

He was pleased, and showed it. "You're sure of that?" he asked.

"Of course. You know I am. Do sit down and talk. Talk about anything except--well, except Bayport gossip and Fair Harbor squabbles and bills and--oh, that sort of thing. Talk about something away from Bayport, miles and miles away. I feel just now as if I should like to be--to be on board a ship sailing ... sailing."

She smiled wistfully as she said it. The captain was seized with an intense conviction that he should like to be with her on that same ship, to sail on and on indefinitely. The kind of ship or its destination would not matter in the least, the only essentials were that she and he were to be on board, and ... Humph! His brain must be softening. Who did he think he was: a young man again?--a George Kent? He came out of the clouds.

"Yes," he observed, dryly, "I know. I get that same feelin' every once in a while. I should rather like to walk a deck again, myself."

She understood instantly. That was one of the fascinations of this girl, she always seemed to understand. A flash of pity came into her eyes. Impulsively she laid a hand on his coat sleeve.

"I beg your pardon," she said. "I'm so sorry. I realize how hard it must be for you, Cap'n Kendrick. A man who has been where you have been and seen what you have seen.... Yes, and done what you have done."

He shrugged. "I haven't done much," he said.

"Oh, yes, you have. I have heard so many stories about you and your ships and the way you have handled them. There was one story I remember, a story about how your sailors mutinied and how you got them to go to work again. I heard that years ago, when I was a girl at school. I have never forgotten; it sounded so wonderful and romantic and--and far off."

He nodded. "It was far off," he said. "Away over in the South Seas. And it was a good while ago, too, for I was in command of my first vessel, and that's the time of all times when a man doesn't want mutiny or any other setback. And I never had any trouble with my crews, before or since, except then. But the water in our butts had gone rancid and we put in at this island to refill. It was a pretty place, lazy and sunshiny, like most of those South Sea corals, and the fo'mast hands got ashore amongst the natives, drinkin' palm wine and traders' gin, and they didn't want to put to sea as soon as the mates and I did."

"But you made them?"

"Well, I--er--sort of coaxed 'em into it."

"Tell me about it, please."

"Oh, there isn't anything to----"

"Please."

So Sears began to spin the yarn. And from that she led him into another and then another. They drifted through the South Seas to the East Indies, and from there to Bombay, and then to Hong Kong, and to Mauritius, from the beaches of which came the marvelous sea shells that Sarah Macomber had in the box in her parlor closet. They voyaged through the Arabian Sea, with the parched desert shores shimmering in the white hot sun. They turned north, saw the sperm whales and the great squid and the floating bergs.... And at last they drifted back to Bayport and the captain looked at his watch.

"Heavens and earth!" he exclaimed. "It's almost four o'clock. I believe I've talked steady for pretty nearly an hour. I'm ashamed. Are you awake, Elizabeth? I hope, for your sake, you've been takin' a nap."

She did not answer at once. Then she breathed deeply. "I don't know what I have been doing--really doing," she said. "I suppose I have been sitting right here in this old summer-house. But I *feel* as if I had been around the world. I wanted to sail and sail... I said so, didn't I? Well, I have. Thank you, Cap'n Kendrick."

He rose from the bench.

"A man gets garrulous in his old age," he observed. "But I didn't think I was as old as that--just yet. The talkin' disease must be catchin', and I've lived with Judah Cahoon quite a while now."

She laughed. "If I had as much to talk about--worth while talking about--as you have," she declared, "I should never want to stop. Well, I must be getting back to the Fair Harbor--and the squabbles."

"Too bad. Can I help you with 'em?"

"No, I'm afraid not. They're not big enough for you."

They turned to the door. She spoke again.

"You are going to drive to Orham to-morrow afternoon?" she asked.

"Eh? Oh, yes. The Foam Flake and I will make the voyage--if we have luck."

"And you are going--alone?"

"Yes. Judah thinks I shouldn't. Probably he thinks the Foam Flake may fall dead, or get to walkin' in his sleep and step off the bank or somethin'. But I'm goin' to risk it. I guess likely I can keep him in the channel."

She waited a moment. Then she smiled and shook her head.

"Cap'n," she said, "you make it awfully hard for me. And this is the second time. Really, I feel so--so brazen."

"Brazen?"

"Yes. Why don't you invite me to ride to Orham with you? Why must I *always* have to invite myself?"

He turned to look at her. She colored a little, but she returned his look.

"You--you mean it?" he demanded.

"Of course I mean it. I must get there somehow, because I promised Mr. Bradley. And unless you don't want me, in which case I shall have to hire from the livery stable, I----"

But he interrupted her. "Want you!" he repeated. "*Want* you!"

His tone was sufficiently emphatic, perhaps more emphatic than he would have made it if he had not been taken by surprise. She must have found it satisfactory, for she did not ask further assurances.

"Thank you," she said. "And when are you planning to start?"

"Why--why, right after dinner to-morrow. If that's all right for you. But I'm sorry you had to invite yourself. I--I thought--well, I thought maybe George had--had planned----"

To his further surprise she seemed a trifle annoyed.

"George works at the store," she said. "Besides, I--well, really, Cap'n Kendrick, there is no compelling reason why George Kent should take me everywhere I want to go."

Now Sears had imagined there was--and rumor and surmise in Bayport had long supported his imagining--but he did not tell her that. What he did say was inane enough.

"Oh--er--yes, of course," he stammered.

"No, there isn't. He and I are friends, good friends, and have been for a long time, but that doesn't---- Well, Cap'n, I shall look for you and the Foam Flake--oh, that *is* a wonderful name--about one to-morrow. And I'll promise not to keep you waiting."

"If the Foam Flake doesn't die in the meantime I'll be on hand. He'll be asleep probably, but Judah declares he walks in his sleep, so that--- Oh, heavens and earth!"

This exclamation, although but a mutter, was fervent indeed. The captain and Elizabeth had turned to the vine-shaded doorway of the Eyrie, and there, in that doorway, was Miss Snowden and, peering around her thin shoulder, the moon face of Mrs. Chase. Sears looked annoyed, Miss Berry looked more so, and Elvira looked--well, she looked all sorts of things. As for Aurora, her expression was, as always, unfathomable. Judah Cahoon once compared her countenance to a pink china dish-cover, and it is hard to read the emotions behind a dish-cover.

Miss Snowden spoke first.

"Oh!" she observed; and much may be expressed in that monosyllable.

Elizabeth spoke next. "Your book is there on the seat, Elvira," she said, carelessly. "At least I suppose it is yours. It has your bookmark in it."

Elvira simpered. "Yes," she affirmed, "it is mine. But I'm not in a hurry, not a single bit of hurry. I *do* hope we haven't *disturbed* you."

"Not a bit, not a bit," said Sears, crisply. "Miss Elizabeth and I were havin' a business talk, but we had finished. The coast is clear for you now. Good afternoon."

"You're *sure*, Cap'n Kendrick? Aurora and I wouldn't interrupt a *business* talk for the *world*. And in such a romantic place, too."

As Sears and Elizabeth walked up the path from the summer-house the voice of Mrs. Chase was audible--as usual very audible indeed.

"Elviry," begged Aurora, eagerly, "Elviry, what did he say to you? He looked awful kind of put out when he said it."

The captain was "put out," so was Elizabeth apparently. The latter said, "Oh, dear!" and laughed, but there was less humor than irritation in the laugh. Sears's remark was brief but pointed.

"I like four-legged cats first-rate," he declared.

The next day at one o'clock he and his passenger, with the placid Foam Flake as motor power, left the Fair Harbor together. And, as they drove out of the yard, both were conscious that behind the shades of the dining-room windows were at least six eager faces, and whispering tongues were commenting, exclaiming and surmising.

The captain, for his part, forgot the faces and tongues very quickly. It was a pleasant afternoon, the early fall days on the Cape are so often glorious; the rain of a few days before had laid the dust, at least the upper layer of it, and the woods were beginning to show the first sprinklings of crimson and purple and yellow. The old horse walked or jogged or rambled on along the narrow winding ways, the ancient buggy rocked and rattled and swung in the deep ruts. They met almost no one for the eight miles between Bayport and Orham--there were no roaring, shrieking processions of automobiles in those days--and when Abial Gould, of North Hamiss, encountered them at the narrowest section of highway, he steered his placid ox team into the huckleberry bushes and waited for them to pass, waving a whip-handle greeting from his perch on top of his load of fragrant pitch pine. The little ponds and lakes shone deeply blue as they glimpsed them in the hollows or over the tree tops and, occasionally, a startled partridge boomed from the thicket, or a flock of quail scurried along the roadside.

They talked of all sorts of things, mostly of ships and seas and countries far away, subjects to which Elizabeth led the conversation and then abandoned it to her companion. They spoke little of the Fair Harbor or its picayune problems, and of the errand upon which they were going--the judge's will, its reading and its possible surprises--none at all.

"Don't," pleaded Elizabeth, when Sears once mentioned the will; "don't, please. Judge Knowles was such a good friend of mine that I can't bear to think he has gone and that some one else is to speak his thoughts and carry out his plans. Tell me another sea story, Cap'n Kendrick. There aren't any Elvira Snowdens off Cape Horn, I'm sure."

So Sears spun his yarns and enjoyed the spinning because she seemed to so enjoy listening to them. And he did not once mention his crippled limbs, or his despondency concerning the future; in fact, he pretty well forgot them for the time. And he did not mention George Kent, a person whom he had meant to mention and praise highly, for his unreasonable conscience had pestered him since the talk in the summer-house and, as usual, he had determined to do penance. But he forgot Kent for the time, forgot him altogether.

Bradley's law offices occupied a one-story building on Orham's main road near the center of the village. There were several rigs standing at the row of hitching posts by the steps as they drove up. Sears climbed from the buggy--he did it much easier than had been possible a month before--and moored the Foam Flake beside them. Then they entered the building.

Bradley's office boy told them that his employer and the others were in the private room beyond. The captain inquired who the others were.

"Well" said the boy, "there's that Mr. Barnes--he's the one from California, you know, Judge Knowles' nephew. And Mike--Mr. Callahan, I mean--him that took care of the judge's horse and team and things; and that Tidditt woman that kept his house. And there's Mr. Dishup, the Orthodox minister from over to Bayport, and another man, I don't know his name. Walk right in, Cap'n Kendrick. Mr. Bradley told me to tell you and Miss Berry to walk right in when you came."

So they walked right in. Bradley greeted them and introduced them to Knowles Barnes, the long-looked-for nephew from California. Barnes was a keen-eyed, healthy-looking business man and the captain liked him at once. The person whom the office boy did not know turned out to be Captain Noah Baker, a retired master mariner, who was Grand Master of the Bayport lodge of Masons.

"And now that you and Miss Berry are here, Cap'n Kendrick," said Bradley, "we will go ahead. This, ladies and gentlemen, is the will of our late good friend, Judge Knowles. He asked you all to be here when it was opened and read. Mr. Barnes is obliged to go West again in a week or so, so the sooner we get to business the better. Ahem!"

Then followed the reading of the will. One by one the various legacies and bequests were read. Some of them Sears Kendrick had expected and foreseen. Others came as surprises. He was rather astonished to find that the judge had been, according to Cape Cod standards of that day, such a rich man. The estate, so the lawyer said, would, according to Knowles' own figures, total in the neighborhood of one hundred and fifty thousand dollars.

Judge Knowles bequeathed:

To the Endowment Fund of the Fair Harbor for Mariners' Women	\$50,000
To the Bayport Congregational Church	5,000
To the Building Fund of the Bayport Lodge of Masons	5,000
To Emmeline Tidditt (his housekeeper)	5,000
To Michael Callahan (his hired man)	5,000
To Elizabeth Berry--in trust until she should be thirty years of age	20,000
Other small bequests, about	7,000

The balance, the residue of the estate, amounting to a sum approximating fifty-five thousand, to Henry Knowles Barnes, of San Francisco, California.

There were several pages of carefully worded directions and instructions. The fifty thousand for the Fair Harbor was already invested in good securities and, from the interest of these, Sears Kendrick's salary of fifteen hundred a year was to be paid as long as he wished to retain his present position as general manager. If the time should come when he wished to relinquish that position he was given authority to appoint his successor at the same salary. Or should Cordelia Berry, at any time, decide to give up her position as matron, Kendrick and Bradley, acting together, might, if they saw fit, appoint a suitable person to act as manager *and* matron at a suitable salary. In this event, of course, Kendrick would no longer continue to draw his fifteen hundred a year.

The reading was not without interruptions. Mr. Callahan's was the most dramatic. When announcement was made of his five thousand dollar windfall his Celtic fervor got the better of him and he broke loose with a tangled mass of tearful ejaculations and prayers, a curious mixture of glories to the saints and demands for blessings upon the soul of his benefactor. Mrs. Tidditt was as greatly moved as he, but she had her emotions under firmer control. The Reverend Mr. Dishup was happy and grateful on behalf of his parish, so too was Captain Baker as representative of the Masonic Lodge. But each of these had been in a measure prepared, they had been led to expect some gift or remembrance. It was Elizabeth Berry who had, apparently, expected nothing--nothing for herself, that is. When the lawyer announced the generous bequest to the Fair Harbor she caught her breath and turned to look at Sears with an almost incredulous joy in her eyes. But when he read of the twenty thousand which was hers--the income beginning at once and the principal when she was thirty--she was so tremendously taken aback that, for an instant, the captain thought she was going to faint. "Oh!" she exclaimed, and that was all, but the color left her face entirely.

Sears rose, so did the minister, but she waved them back. "Don't," she begged. "I--I am all right.... No, please don't speak to me for--for a little while."

So they did not speak, but the captain, watching her, saw that the color came back very slowly to her cheeks and that her eyes, when she opened them, were wet. Her hands, clasped in her lap, were trembling. Sears, although rejoicing for her, felt a pang of hot resentment at the manner of the announcement. It should not have been so public. She should not have had to face such a surprise before those staring spectators. Why had not the judge--or Bradley, if he knew--have prepared her in some measure?

But when it was over and he hastened to congratulate her, she was more composed. She received his congratulations, and those of the others, if not quite calmly at least with dignity and simplicity. To Mr. Dishup and Bradley and Captain Baker she said little except thanks. To Barnes, whose congratulations were sincere and hearty, and, to all appearances at least, quite ungrudging, she expressed herself as too astonished to be very coherent.

"I--I can scarcely believe it yet," she faltered. "I can't understand--I can't think why he did it.... And you are all so very kind. You won't mind if I don't say any more now, will you?"

But to Sears when he came, once more, to add another word and to shake her hand, she expressed a little of the uncertainty which she felt.

"Oh," she whispered; "oh, Cap'n Kendrick, do you think it is right? Do you think he really meant to do it? You are sure he did?"

His tone should have carried conviction. "You bet he meant it!" he declared, fervently. "He never meant anything any more truly; I know it."

"Do you? Do you really?... Did--did you know? Did he tell you he was going to?"

"Not exactly, but he hinted. He----"

"Wait. Wait, please. Don't tell me any more now. By and by, on the way home, perhaps. I--I want to know all about it. I want to be sure. And," with a tremulous smile, "I doubt if I could really understand just yet."

The group in the lawyer's office did not break up for another hour. There were many matters for discussion, matters upon which Bradley and Barnes wished the advice of the others. Mike and Mrs. Tidditt were sent home early, and departed, volubly, though tearfully rejoicing. The minister and Captain Noah stayed on to answer questions concerning the church and the lodge, the former's pressing needs and the new building which the latter had hoped for and which was now a certainty. Sears and Elizabeth remained longest. Bradley whispered to the captain that he wished them to do so.

When they were alone with him, and with Barnes of course, he took from his pocket two sealed letters.

"The judge gave me these along with the will," he said. "That was about three weeks before he died. I don't know what is in them and he gave me to understand that I wasn't supposed to know. They are for you two and no one else, so he said. You are to read yours when you are alone, Cap'n Kendrick, and Elizabeth is to read hers when she is by herself. And he particularly asked me to tell you both not to make your decision too quickly. Think it over, he said."

He handed Sears an envelope addressed in Judge Knowles' hand-writing, and to Elizabeth another bearing her name.

"There!" he exclaimed, with a sigh of relief. "That is done. Ever since the old judge left us I have been feeling as if he were standing at my elbow and nudging me not to forget. He had a will of his own, Judge Knowles had, and I don't mean the will we have just read, either. But, take him by and large, as you sailors say, Cap'n, I honestly believe he was the biggest and squarest man this county has seen for years. Some of us are going to be surer of that fact every day that passes."

It was after four when Elizabeth and Sears climbed aboard the buggy and the captain, tugging heavily on what he termed the port rein, coaxed the unwilling Foam Flake into the channel--or the road. Heavy clouds had risen in the west since their arrival in Orham, the sky was covered with them, and it was already beginning to grow dark. When they turned from the main road into the wood road leading across the Cape there were lighted lamps in the kitchens of the scattered houses on the outskirts of the town.

"Is it going to rain, do you think?" asked Elizabeth, peering at the troubled brown masses above the tree tops.

Sears shook his head. "Hardly think so," he replied. "Looks more like wind to me. Pretty heavy squall, I shouldn't wonder, and maybe rain to-morrow. Come, come; get under way, Old Hundred," addressing the meandering Foam Flake. "If you don't travel faster than this in fair weather and a smooth sea, what will you do when we have to reef? Well," with a chuckle, "even if it comes on a livin' gale the old horse won't blow off the course. Judah feeds him too well. Nothin' short of a typhoon could heel *him* down."

The prophesied gale held off, but the darkness shut in rapidly. In the long stretches of thick woods through which they were passing it was soon hard to see clearly. Not that that made any difference. Sears knew the Orham road pretty well and the placid Foam Flake seemed to know it absolutely. His ancient hoofs plodded up and down in the worn "horse path" between the grass-grown and sometimes bush-grown ridges which separated it from the deep ruts on either side. Sometimes those ruts were so deep that the tops of the blueberry bushes and weeds on those ridges scratched the bottom of the buggy.

Beside his orders to the horse the captain had said very little since their departure. He had been thinking, though, thinking hard. It was just beginning to dawn upon him, the question as to what this good fortune which had befallen

the girl beside him might mean, what effect it might have upon her, upon her future--and upon her relations with him, Sears Kendrick.

Hitherto those relations had been those of comrades, fellow workers, partners, so to speak, in an enterprise the success of which involved continuous planning and fighting against obstacles. A difficult but fascinating game of itself, but one which also meant a means of livelihood for them both. Elizabeth had drawn no salary, it is true, but without her help her mother could not have held her position as matron, not for a month could she have done so. It was Elizabeth who was the real matron, who really earned the wages Cordelia received and upon which they both lived. And Elizabeth had told the captain that she should remain at the Fair Harbor and work with and for her mother as long as the latter needed her.

And now Sears was realizing that the necessity for either of them to remain there no longer existed. Cordelia, thanks to Mrs. Phillips' bequest, had five thousand dollars of her own. Elizabeth had, for the six or seven years before her thirtieth birthday, an income of at least twelve hundred yearly. Cordelia's legacy would add several hundred to that. If they wished it was quite possible for them to retire from the Fair Harbor and live somewhere in a modest fashion upon that income. Many couples--couples esteemed by Bayporters as being in comfortable circumstances--were living upon incomes quite as small. Sears was suddenly brought face to face with this possibility, and was forced to admit it even a probability.

And he--he had no income worth mentioning. He could not go to sea again for a long time; he did not add "if ever," because even conservative Doctor Sheldon now admitted that his complete recovery was but a matter of time, but it would be a year--perhaps years. And for that year, or those years, he must live--and he had practically nothing to live upon except his Fair Harbor salary. And then again, as an additional obligation, there was his promise to Judge Knowles to stick it out. But to stick it out alone--without her!

For Elizabeth was under no obligation. She might not stay--probably would not. She was a young woman of fortune now. She could do what she liked, in reason. She might--why, she might even decide to marry. There was Kent---

At the thought Sears choked and swallowed hard. A tingling, freezing shiver ran down his spine. She would marry George Kent and he would be left to--to face--to face---- She would marry--*she*----

The shiver lasted but a moment. He shut his teeth, blinked and came back to the buggy seat and reality--and shame. Overwhelming, humiliating shame. He glanced fearfully at her, afraid that she might have seen his face and read upon it the secret which he himself had learned for the first time. No, she did not read it, she was not looking at him, she too seemed to be thinking. There was a chance for him yet. He must be a man, a decent man, not a fool and a selfish beast. She did not know--and she should not. Then, or at any future time.

He spoke now and hurriedly. "Well," he began, "I suppose----"

But she had looked up and now she spoke. Apparently she had not heard him, for she said:

"Tell me about it, Cap'n Kendrick, please. I want to hear all about it. You said you knew? You say Judge Knowles hinted that he was going to do this--for me? Tell me all about it, please. Please."

So he told her, all that he could remember of the judge's words concerning his regard for her, of his high opinion of her abilities, of his friendship for her father, and of his intention to see that she was "provided for."

"I didn't know just what he meant, of course," he said, in conclusion, "but I guessed, some of it. I do want you to know, Elizabeth," he added, stammering a little in his earnestness, "how glad I am for you, how *very* glad."

"Yes," she said, "I do know."

"Well, I--I haven't said much, but I *am*. I don't think I ever was more glad, or could be. You believe that, don't you?"

She looked at him in surprise. "Why, of course I believe it," she said. "Why do you ask that?"

"Oh, I--I don't know. I hadn't said much about it."

"But it wasn't necessary. I knew you were glad. I know you by this time, Cap'n Kendrick, through and through."

The same guilty shiver ran down his spine and he glanced sharply at her to see if there was any hidden meaning behind her words. But there was not. She was looking down again, and when she again spoke it was to repeat the question she had asked at the lawyer's office.

"I wonder if I ought to take it?" she murmured. "Do you think it is right for me to accept--so much?"

"Right!" he repeated. "Right? Of course its right. And because it is enough to amount to somethin' makes it all the more right. Judge Knowles knew what he was doin', trust his long head for that. A little would only have made things easier where you were.... Now," he forced himself to say it, "now you can be independent."

"Independent?"

"Why, yes. Do what you like--in reason. Steer your own course. Live as you want to ... and where ... and *how* you want to."

They were simple sentences these, but he found them hard to say. She turned again to look at him.

"Why do you speak like that?" she asked. "How should I want to live? What do you mean?"

"I mean--er--you can think of your own happiness and--plans, and--all that. You won't be anchored to the Fair Harbor, unless you want to be. You.... Eh? Hi! Standby! Whoa! *Whoa!*"

The last commands were roars at the horse, for, at that moment, the squall struck.

It came out of the blackness to the left and ahead like some enormous living creature springing over the pine tops and pouncing upon them. There was a rumble, a roar and then a shrieking rush. The sand of the road leaped up like the smoke from an explosion, showers of leaves and twigs pattered sharply upon the buggy top or were thrown smartly into their faces. From all about came the squeaks and groans of branches rubbing against each other, with an occasional sharp crack as a limb gave way under the pressure.

Captain Kendrick and his passenger had been so occupied with their thoughts and conversation that both had forgotten the heavy clouds they had noticed when they left Bradley's office, rolling up from the west. Then, too, the increasing darkness had hidden the sky. So the swoop of the squall took them completely by surprise.

And not only them but that genuine antique the Foam Flake. This phlegmatic animal had been enjoying himself for the last half hour. No one had shouted orders at him, he had not been slapped with the ends of the reins, no whip had been cracked in his vicinity. He had been permitted to amble and to walk and had availed himself of the permission. For the most recent mile he had been, practically, a somnambulist. Now out of his dreams, whatever they may have been, came this howling terror. He jumped and snorted. Then the wind, tearing a prickly dead branch from a scrub oak by the roadside, cast it full into his dignified countenance. For the first time in ten years at least, the Foam Flake ran away.

He did not run far, of course; he was not in training for distance events. But his sprint, although short, was lively and erratic. He jumped to one side, the side opposite to that from which the branch had come, jerking the buggy out of the ruts and setting it to rocking like a dory amid breakers. He jumped again, and this brought his ancient broadside into contact with the bushes by the edge of the road. They were ragged, and prickly, and in violent commotion. So he jumped the other way.

Sears, yelling Whoas and compliments, stood erect upon his newly-mended legs and leaned his weight backward upon the reins. If the skipper of a Hudson River canal boat had suddenly found his craft deserting the waterway and starting to climb Bear Mountain, he might have experienced something of Sears' feelings at that moment. Canal boats should not climb; it isn't done; and horses of the Foam Flake age, build and reputation should not run away.

"Whoa! Whoa! What in thunder--?" roared the captain. "Port! Port, you lubber!"

He jerked violently on the left rein. That rein was, like the horse and the buggy, of more than middle age. Leather of that age must be persuaded, not jerked. The rein broke just beyond Sears' hand, flew over the dashboard and dragged in the road. The driver's weight came solidly upon the right hand rein. The Foam Flake dashed across the highway again, head-first into the woods this time.

Then followed a few long--very long minutes of scratching and rocking and pounding. Sears heard himself shouting something about the Broken rein he must get that rein.

"It's all right! It's all right, Elizabeth!" he shouted. "I'm goin' to lean out over his back, if I can and--O--oh!"

The last was a groan, involuntarily wrung from him by the pain in his knees. He had put an unaccustomed strain upon them and they were remonstrating. He shut his teeth, swallowed another groan, and leaned out over the dash, his hand clutching for the harness of the rocketing, bumping Foam Flake.

Then he realized that some one else was leaning over that dashboard, was in fact almost out of the buggy and swinging by the harness and the shaft.

"Elizabeth!" he shouted, in wild alarm. "Elizabeth, what are you doin'? Stop!"

But she was back, panting a little, but safe.

"I have the rein," she panted. "Give me the other, Cap'n Kendrick. I can handle him, I know. Give me the rein. Sit down! Oh, please! You will hurt yourself again!"

But he was in no mood to sit down. He snatched the end of the broken rein from her hand, taking it and the command again simultaneously.

"Get back, back on the seat," he ordered. "Now then," addressing the horse, "we'll see who's what! Whoa! Whoa! Steady! Come into that channel, you old idiot! Come *on!*"

The Foam Flake was pretty nearly ready to come by this time. And Kendrick's not too gentle coaxing helped. The buggy settled into the ruts with a series of bumps. The horse's gallop became a trot, then a walk; then he stopped and stood still.

The captain subsided on the seat beside his passenger. He relaxed his tension upon the reins and the situation.

"Whew!" he exclaimed. "That was sweet while it lasted. All right, are you?"

She answered, still rather breathlessly, "Yes, I am all right," she declared. "But you? Aren't you hurt?"

"Me? Not a bit."

"You're sure? I was so afraid. Your--your legs, you know."

"My legs are all serene." They weren't, by any means, and were at that moment proclaiming the fact, but he did not mean she should know. "They're first-rate.... Well, I'm much obliged."

"Obliged for what?"

"For that rein. But you shouldn't have climbed out that way. You might have broken your neck. 'Twas an awful risk."

"You were going to take the same risk. And *I* am not in the doctor's care."

"Well, you shouldn't have done it, just the same. And it was a spunky thing to do.... But what a numbskull I was not to be on the lookout for that squall. Humph!" with a grin, "I believe I told you even a typhoon couldn't move this horse. I was wrong, wasn't I?"

The squall had passed on, but a steady gale was behind it. And there was a marked hint of dampness in the air. Sears sniffed.

"And I'm afraid, too," he said, "that I was wrong about that rain comin' to-morrow. I think it's comin' this evenin' and pretty soon, at that."

It came within fifteen minutes, in showery gusts at first. The captain urged the Foam Flake onward as fast as possible, but that quadruped had already over-expended his stock of energy and shouts and slaps meant nothing to him. For a short time Sears chatted and laughed, but then he relapsed into silence. Elizabeth, watching him fearfully, caught, as the buggy bounced over a loose stone, a smothered exclamation, first cousin to a groan.

"I knew it!" she cried. "You *are* hurt, Cap'n Kendrick."

"No, no, I'm not," hastily. "It's--it's those confounded spliced spars of mine. They're a little weak yet, I presume likely."

"Of course they are. Oh, I'm *so* sorry. Won't you let me drive?"

"I should say not. I'm not quite ready for the scrap heap yet. And if I couldn't steer this Noah's ark I should be.... Hello! here's another craft at sea."

Another vehicle was ahead of them in the road, coming toward them. Sears pulled out to permit it to pass. But the driver of the other buggy hailed as the horses' heads came abreast.

"Elizabeth," he shouted, "is that you?"

Miss Berry's surprise showed in her voice.

"Why, George!" she cried. "Where in the world are you going?"

The horses stopped. Kent leaned forward.

"Going?" he repeated. "Why, I was going after you, of course. Are you wet through?"

He seemed somewhat irritated, so the captain thought.

"No, indeed," replied Elizabeth. "I am all right. But why did you come after me? Didn't they tell you I was with Cap'n Kendrick?"

"*They* told me--yes. But why didn't *you* tell me you were going to Orham? I would have driven you over; you know I would."

"You were at work at the store."

"Well, I could have taken the afternoon off.... But there! no use talking about it out here in this rain. Come on.... Oh, wait until I turn around. Drive ahead a little, will you?"

This was the first time he had spoken to Sears, and even then his tone was not too gracious. The captain drove on a few steps, as requested, and, a moment later, Kent's equipage, now headed in their direction, was alongside once more.

"Whoa!" he shouted, and both horses stopped. "Come on, Elizabeth," urged the young man, briskly. "Wait, I'll help

you."

He sprang out of his buggy and approached theirs. "Come on," he said, again. "Quick! It is going to rain harder." Elizabeth did not move. "But I'm not going with you, George," she said quietly.

He stared at her.

"Not going with me?" he repeated. "Why, of course you are. I've come on purpose for you."

"I'm sorry. You shouldn't have done it. You knew I would be all right with Cap'n Kendrick."

"I didn't even know you were going with him. You didn't say you were going at all. If you had I----"

"You would have taken another afternoon's holiday. And you know what Mr. Bassett said about the last one."

"I don't care a--I don't care what he says. I shan't be working very long for him, I hope.... But there, Elizabeth! Come on, come on! I can get you home for supper while that old horse of Cahoon's is thinking about it."

But still she did not move. Sears thought that, perhaps, he should take a hand.

"Go right ahead, Elizabeth," he said. "George is right about the horses."

"Of course I am. Come, Elizabeth."

"No, I shall stay with Cap'n Kendrick. He has been kind enough to take me so far and we are almost home. You can follow, George, and we'll get there together."

"Well, I like that!" exclaimed Kent. But he did not speak as if he liked it. "After I have taken the trouble----"

"Hush! Don't be silly. The cap'n has taken a great deal of trouble, too.... No," as Sears began to protest, "you can't get rid of me, Cap'n Kendrick."

"But, Elizabeth----"

"No. Do you suppose I am going to leave you--in pain--and.... Drive on, please. George can follow us."

"But I'm all right, good land knows! The Foam Flake won't try to fly again. And really, I----"

"Drive on, please."

So he drove on; there seemed to be nothing else to do. It did not help his feelings to hear, as George Kent was left standing in the road, a disgusted and profane ejaculation from that young gentleman.

The remainder of the journey was quickly made. There was little conversation. The rain, the wind, and the sounds of the horses' hoofs and the rattle of the buggies--for Kent's was close behind all the way--furnished most of the noise.

Judah was waiting when they came into the yard of the Minot place. He and Elizabeth helped Sears from the buggy. The captain, in spite of his protestations, could scarcely stand. Kent, because Elizabeth asked him to, assisted in getting him into the kitchen and the biggest rocking chair.

"Now go ... go," urged Sears. "I'm just a little lame, that's all, and I'll be all right by to-morrow. Go, Elizabeth please. Your supper is waitin' as it is. Now go."

She went, but rather reluctantly. "I shall run over after supper to see how you are," she declared. "Thank you very much for taking me to Orham, Cap'n."

"Thank you for--for a whole lot of things. And don't you dream of comin' over again to-night. There's no sense in it, is there, George?"

If Kent heard he did not answer. His "good night" was brief. Sears did not like it, nor the expression on his face. This was a new side of the young fellow's character, a side the captain had not seen before. And yet--well, he was young, very young. Sears was troubled about the affair. Had he been to blame? He had not meant to be. Ah-hum! the world was full of misunderstandings and foolishness. And was there, in all that world, any being more foolish than himself?

Just here, Judah, having returned from stabling the Foam Flake, rushed into the kitchen to demand answers to a thousand questions. For the next hour there was no opportunity for moralizing or melancholy.

CHAPTER XII

Elizabeth did not visit the Minot place that evening, as she had said she meant to do. It may be that Sears was a trifle disappointed, but even he would have been obliged to confess that that particular evening was not the time for him to receive callers. He ate his supper--a very small portion of the meal which Judah had provided for him--and, soon afterward, retired to the spare stateroom and bed. Undressing was a martyrdom, and he had hard work to keep back the groans which the pain in his legs tempted him to utter. There was no doubt that he had twisted those shaky limbs of his more than he realized. He had wrenched them severely, how severely he scarcely dared think. But they forced him to think all that night, and the next morning Judah insisted on going for the doctor.

Doctor Sheldon examined the "spliced timbers," fumed and scolded a good deal, but at last grudgingly admitted that no irreparable harm had been done.

"You're luckier than you deserve, Cap'n," he declared. "It's a wonder you aren't ruined altogether. Now you stay right in that bed until I tell you to get up. And that won't be to-day, or to-morrow either. Perhaps the day after that--well, we'll see. But those legs of yours need absolute rest. Judah, you see that they get it, will you? If he tries to get up you knock him back again. Those are orders. Understand?"

"Aye, aye, sir," replied Judah, promptly. "I'll have a handspike handy. He won't turn out, I'll see to it."

Sears' protestations that he couldn't waste time in bed, that he had too many important things to attend to, went for nothing. According to Sheldon and Judah his legs were the only things of real importance just then and they needed absolute rest. Down inside him the captain realized that this was true, and so grumblingly resigned himself to the two days of imprisonment. With the most recent issues of the *Cape Cod Item* and one or two books from the shelves in the sitting room closet, books of the vintage of the '40's and '50's, but fortunately of a strong sea flavor, he endeavored to console himself, while Judah attended to the household duties or went down town on errands.

Elizabeth called that first forenoon, but did not see him. The doctor had warned Judah to head off visitors. "They may not do any harm, but they certainly won't do any good, and I want him to have absolute rest," said Sheldon. So Judah guarded the outer portal, and, when he went out, hung up a warning placard. "OUT. NO ADMITENTS. DOORS LOKED. KEY UNDER MAT." The information concerning the key was for the doctor's benefit.

But Elizabeth sent her good wishes and sympathy. So did her mother. So, too, did Esther Tidditt, and Miss Snowden, and Miss Peasley, and in fact all the Fair Harbor inmates. For the first day Mr. Cahoon was kept busy transmitting messages to the spare stateroom.

But about this time Bayport began to rock with a new series of sensations and, except by the very few, Captain Kendrick was forgotten. The news of Judge Knowles' various legacies became known and spread through the village like fire in a patch of dead weeds. The Fair Harbor sat up nearly all of one night discussing and commenting upon the good fortune which had befallen the Berrys. And by no means all of the time was used in congratulations.

"Humph!" sniffed Susanna Brackett, her lips squeezed so tightly together that her mustache stood on end. "Humph!"

Miss Snowden nodded. "Of course," she said, "I'm not a person to hint, or anything of that sort. But--*but* if somebody'll tell me *why* the judge left all that money to her I should like to hear 'em."

Mrs. Brackett opened her lips sufficiently to observe that so should she. "Of course," she added, "the five thousand that Lobelia left Cordelia might have been expected, they was real friendly always. But why did Judge Knowles leave it all to Elizabeth and not one cent to her mother? *That I can't* understand."

Miss Peasley smiled. "We used to wonder why Elizabeth kept runnin' to the judge's all the time," she said. "He was sick and feeble and we thought 'twas queer her pesterin' him so. *Now*--well, it pays to hang around sick folks, don't it? They're easier to coax, maybe, than the well kind.... Course I ain't sayin' there was any coaxin' done."

Little Mrs. Tidditt's feathers had begun to rise. "Oh, no!" she snapped. "You ain't *sayin'* anything, any of you. Judge Knowles was business head of this--this old cats' home afore he app'inted Cap'n Kendrick to the job, and you know that. Elizabeth *had* to go to him about all sorts of money matters, and you know that, too. As for her tryin' to coax him to leave her money, that's just rubbish. He always liked her, thought the world of her ever since she was a little girl, and he left her the twenty thousand because of that and for no other reason. That's why *I* think he left it to her; but, if some of the rest of you would be better satisfied, I'll tell her what you say--or *ain't* sayin', Desire--and let her answer it herself."

This not being at all what Miss Peasley and the others wished, no more was said about undue influence at the time. But much was said at times when the pugnacious Esther was not present, and there was marked speculation concerning what Miss Berry would do with her money, what Mr. Phillips would do when he returned to Bayport, whether or not Cordelia Berry would continue to be matron at the Harbor, and what Sears Kendrick's plans for the future might be.

"Of course," said Mrs. Brackett, "the judge fixed it so he would get his fifteen hundred so long as he stays manager. But will he stay long? There's Mr. Phillips to be considered now, I should think. *He'll* have somethin' to say about the--er--retreat his wife founded, won't he?"

Mrs. Constance Cahoon made a remark.

"George Kent'll come in for a nice windfall some of these days, it looks like," she observed, significantly. "What makes you look so funny, Elviry?"

Miss Snowden smiled. "Will he?" she inquired.

"Well, won't he? When he marries Elizabeth----"

"Yes. Yes, *when* he does."

"Well, he's goin' to, ain't he? Why, he's been keepin' comp'ny with her for two years. Everybody callates they're engaged."

"Yes. But *they* don't say they are.... Oh, what is it Aurora?"

Mrs. Chase, who had been listening with her hand at her ears, had caught a little of the conversation.

"If you mean her and George Kent is engaged, Constance," she declared, "they ain't. I asked Elizabeth if they was, myself, asked her much as a month ago, and she said no. Pretty nigh took my head off, too."

Elvira's smile broadened. She nodded, slowly and with mysterious significance. "I'm not so sure about that engagement," she observed. "Some things I've seen lately have set me to thinking. To thinking a good deal.... Um ... yes. It looks to me as if somebody--*somebody*, I mention no names--may have had a hint of what was coming and began to lay plans according.... No, I shan't say any more--now. And I give in that it seems too perfectly ridiculous to believe. But things like that sometimes do happen, and ... Well, we'll wait and see."

Happy in the knowledge that she had aroused curiosity as well as envy of her superior knowledge, she subsided. Mrs. Tidditt concluded that portion of the discussion.

"Well," she remarked, crisply, "I don't see why we need to sit here talkin' about engagements or folks' gettin' married. Nobody has shown any symptoms of wantin' to marry any of *this* crowd, so far as I can make out."

While the town was at the very height of its agitation concerning the Knowles will, there came another earthquake. Egbert Phillips returned. He alighted from the train at the Bayport depot on the second morning of Sears's imprisonment in the spare stateroom and before night the information that he imparted--confidentially, of course--and the hints he gave concerning his plans for the future, made the Berry legacies and all the other legacies take second place as gossip kindlers.

Judah came rushing into the house later that afternoon, his arms full of bundles--purchases at Eliphalet's store--and his mouth full of words. He dropped everything, eggs, salt fish, tea and shoe laces, on the kitchen table and tore pell-mell into his lodger's bedroom. Captain Kendrick, propped up with pillows, was of course stretched out in bed. There was what appeared to be a letter in his hand, a letter apparently just received, for a recently opened envelope lay on the comforter beside him, and upon his face was an expression of bewilderment, surprise and marked concern. Judah was too intent upon his news to notice anything else and Sears hastily gathered up letter and envelope and thrust them beneath the pillow. Then Judah broke loose.

Egbert had come back, had come back to Bayport to live, for good. He had come on the morning train. Lots of folks saw him; some of them had talked with him. "And what do you callate, Cap'n Sears? You'll never guess in *this* world! By the crawlin' prophets, he swears he ain't rich, the way all hands figured out he was. No, sir, he ain't! 'Cordin' to his tell he ain't got no money at all, scarcely. All them stocks and--and bonds and--and securitums and such like have gone on the rocks. They was unfort'nate infestments, he says. He says he's in straightened out circumstances, whatever they be, but he's come back here to spend his declinin' days--that's what Joe Macomber says he called 'em, his declinin' days--in Bayport, 'cause he loves the old place, 'count of Lobelia, his wife, lovin' it so, and he can maybe scratch along here on what income he's got, and--and----"

And so on, for sentence after sentence. Sears heard some of it, but not all. The letter he had just read--the letter from Judge Knowles which Bradley had handed him before he left Orham--was of itself too startling and disturbing to be dismissed from his thoughts; but he heard some, enough to make him realize that there might be, in all probability was, trouble ahead. Just why Phillips had returned to Bayport, to take up his abode there permanently, was hard to understand, but there certainly must be some reason beside his "love" for the place and its people. Neither place nor people should, so it seemed to the captain, appeal strongly to a citizen of the world, of the fashionable world, like Mr. Egbert Phillips. It is true that he might perhaps live cheaper there than in most communities, but still.... No, Sears was sure that the former singing teacher had returned to the Cape in pursuance of a plan. What that plan might be he could

not guess, unless the widower contemplated contesting his wife's gift to the Fair Harbor. That would be a losing fight, was certain to be, for Judge Knowles had seen to that. But if not that--what?

He gave very little thought to the matter at the time, for Judge Knowles' letter and its astounding proposition were monopolizing his mental machinery. That letter would have, as he might have expressed it, knocked him on his beam ends even if the Foam Flake's unexpected outbreak had not knocked him there already. The letter was rather long, but it was to the point, nevertheless. Judge Knowles begged him--him, Sears Kendrick--to accept the appointment of trustee in charge of Elizabeth Berry's twenty thousand dollar inheritance. The latter was hers in trust until she was thirty.

"I have seen enough of you to believe in you, Kendrick," so the judge had written. "Besides, you know the Berrys, mother and daughter, by this time, better than any one else--even Bradley--and you know my opinion of Cordelia's headpiece. I don't want her soft-headedness or foolishness to get any of Elizabeth's money away from her. Elizabeth is a dutiful daughter and an unselfish girl and she may feel--or be led to feel--that her mother ought to have this money or a large part of it. I don't want this to happen. Of course I expect Elizabeth to share her income with her mother, but I don't want the principal disturbed. After she is thirty she can, of course, do what she likes with it, but that time isn't now by some years. And then there is that Egbert. Look out for him. I say again, look out for him. If *he* ever got a penny of this money I should turn over in my grave. Perhaps you think I am an old fool and am treating him with more seriousness than he deserves. You won't think so when you know him as well as I do, mark my words. And I think you are the one man around here that has had worldly experience enough, backed by brains and common-sense, to see through him and handle him. I don't mean that there aren't other smart men in town, but most of the smartest are in active service and at sea a good share of the time. You will be right here for a few years at least. And you are honest, and you like Elizabeth Berry, and will look out for her interests.... Of course I can't compel you to take this trusteeship, but I hope you will, as a favor to her and to me. I have written her a letter similar to this, but I have left her a free choice in the matter. If she does not want you for her trustee then that ends it. Being the kind of girl she is, I think she will be mighty glad to have you...."

And this was the proposition which was causing the captain so much anxiety and perplexity. It interfered with the sleep which Doctor Sheldon seemed to feel necessary to his patient's complete recovery from the setback. It prevented his keeping those damaged legs of his absolutely quiet. Time and time again Judah, at work in what he always referred to as the "galley," heard his lodger tossing about in the spare stateroom and occasionally muttering to himself.

For Sears, facing the problem of accepting or declining the trust, was quite aware that the dilemma upon which the judge had perched him had two very sharp horns. If he declined--always of course supposing that Elizabeth Berry asked him to accept--if he declined he would be acting contrary to her wishes and Judge Knowles'. If he did decline, then Bradley would be the trustee. Knowles, in a part of the letter not quoted, had said that he imagined that would have to be the alternative. And Bradley--a good man, an honest and capable man--was not a resident of Bayport and could not, as he could, keep an eye upon the Berrys nor upon those who might try to influence them. And Bradley did not know Bayport as he, Kendrick, did.

But on the other hand, suppose Elizabeth begged him to take the trusteeship and he did take it? To begin with, he dreaded the added responsibility and distrusted his ability to handle investments. His record as a business man ashore was brief enough and not of a kind to inspire self-confidence. And what would people say concerning it and him? He and Elizabeth were in daily contact. Their association in the management of the Fair Harbor was close already. If he should be given charge of her fortune--for it was a fortune, in Bayport eyes--would not his every action be liable to misconstruction? Would not malicious gossip begin to whisper all sorts of things? To misconstrue motives and ...? Perhaps they were already whispering. He had seen Elvira Snowden but once since she and Mrs. Chase surprised him and Elizabeth in the Eyrie, but on that one occasion Elvira had, so it seemed to him, looked queer--and knowing. It was foolish, of course; it was ridiculous, and wicked. He and Elizabeth were friendly, had come to be very good friends indeed, but---

And here his train of thought stopped dead, while the same guilty shiver he had before felt ran up and down his spine.... Good Lord above! *what* was he thinking of? What could be the matter with him? Why, even if things were as they had been he would be crazy to.... And now she was a rich woman, rich compared to him, at least.

No! And over and over again, No! He would decline the trusteeship. And he would make it his business to get well and to sea again as soon as possible. As soon as she came to him to mention the judge's letter and its insane request he would settle that proposal once and for all.

But she did not come. On the third day the doctor refused to permit him to leave the bed.

"You stay where you are for another two days," commanded Sheldon. "It will do you good, and while I'm boss you shan't take chances. Cahoon and I have got you where we want you now and we'll keep you there till we pipe you on deck. Eh, Judah?"

Judah grinned. "Aye, aye," was his rejoinder. "Got the handspike ready to my fist, Doctor. He'll stay put if I have to lash

him to the bunk with a chain cable. It's all for your good, Cap'n Sears. That's what my ma used to tell me when she dosed me up every spring with brimstone and molasses."

So, reluctantly realizing that it was for his good, Sears "stayed put." He had a few callers, although Judah saw to it that their calls were brief. Elizabeth was not one of these. She came at least once a day to inquire about him, but she did not ask to see him. The captain, trying not to be disappointed, endeavored to console himself with the idea that she was following Judge Knowles' advice, as repeated by Bradley, and meant to take plenty of time before making up her mind concerning the trusteeship.

One of his visitors was George Kent. On the fourth day, on his way to the Maccombers for dinner, the young fellow called at the Minot place. Judah was out, but Sears heard his visitor's voice and step through the open doors of the dining room and kitchen and shouted to him to come in. His manner when he entered was, so it seemed to the captain, a trifle constrained, but his inquiries concerning the latter's health were cordial enough. As for Sears, he, of course, made it a point to be especially cordial.

They talked of many things, but not of their recent encounter on the Orham road. Sears did not like to be the first to mention it and it appeared as if Kent wished to avoid it altogether. But at last, after a short interval of silence, a break in the conversation, he did refer to it.

"Cap'n Kendrick," he said, reddening and looking rather nervous and uncomfortable, "I--I suppose you thought I was--was pretty disagreeable the other evening. I mean when we met in the rain and Elizabeth was with you."

"Eh? Disagreeable?"

"Yes. I wasn't very pleasant, I know. I'm sorry. That--that was one of the things I came to say. I lost my temper, I guess."

"Well, if you did I don't know as I blame you, George. A night like that is enough to lose any one's temper. I lost mine. The Foam Flake ran away with it. But he's repentin' in sackcloth and ashes, I guess. Judah says the old horse is lamer than I am."

He laughed heartily. Kent's laugh was short. His uneasiness seemed to increase.

"Yes," he said, returning to the subject which was evidently uppermost in his mind. "Yes, I did--er--lose my temper, perhaps. But--but it seems almost as if I had a--er--well, some excuse. You see--well, you see, Cap'n Kendrick, I didn't like it very much, the idea of Elizabeth's going over to Orham with--with you, you know."

Sears looked at him in surprise. "Why, she went with me because it was the simplest way to get there," he explained. "I was goin' anyhow, and Bradley had asked her to be there, too. So, it was natural enough that we should go together."

"Well--well, I don't see why she didn't tell me she was going."

"Perhaps she didn't think to tell you."

"Nonsense!... I mean.... Well, anyhow, if she had told me I should have looked out for her, of course. I could have hired a rig and driven her over."

"But she knew you were at work down at the store. She said that, didn't she? Seems to me I remember hearin' her say that she didn't want you to--to feel that you must take the afternoon off on her account."

The young man stirred impatiently. "That's foolishness," he declared. "She seems to think Bassett has a mortgage on my life. He hasn't, not by a long shot. I don't mean to keep his books much longer; I've got other things to attend to. My law is getting on pretty well."

"Glad to hear it, George."

"Yes. I shall read with Bradley for a while longer, of course, but after that--well, I don't know. I was talking with--with a man who has had a good deal of experience with lawyers--real city lawyers, not the one-horse sort--and he says the thing for an ambitious young fellow to do is to get into one of those city offices. Then you have a chance."

"Oh--I see. But isn't it kind of hard to get in, unless you have some acquaintance or influence?"

"I don't know as it is. And I guess this man will help me if I want him to."

"So? That's good. Did he say he would?"

"No-o, not exactly, but I think he will. And he's got the acquaintances, all right enough. He knows almost everybody that's worth while."

"That's the kind to tie to. Who is he? Somebody up in Boston?"

George shifted again. "I'd rather not mention his name just now," he said. "Our talks have been rather--er--confidential and I don't know that I should have said anything about them. But I've got plans, you see. Then there is my aunt's

estate. I am the administrator of that."

"Oh? I didn't know. Your aunt, eh?"

"Yes, my Aunt Charlotte, mother's sister. She was single and lived up in Meriden, Connecticut. She died about a month ago and left everything to my half-sister and me--my married sister in Springfield, you know. I have charge of--of the estate, settling it and all that."

Sears smiled inwardly at the self-satisfaction with which the word "estate" was uttered. But outwardly he was serious enough.

"Good for you, George!" he exclaimed. "Congratulations. I hope you've come in for a big thing."

His visitor colored slightly. "Well--well, of course," he admitted, "the estate isn't very large, but----"

"But it's an estate. I'm glad for you, son."

"Yes--er--yes.... But really, Cap'n, I didn't mean to talk about that. I--I just wanted to say that--that I was sorry if I--er--wasn't as polite as I might have been the other night, and--well, I thought--it seemed as if I--I ought to say--to say----"

Whatever it was it seemed to be hard to say. The captain tried to help.

"Yes, of course, George," he prompted. "Heave ahead and say it."

"Well--well, it's just this, Cap'n Kendrick: Elizabeth and you are--are together a good deal, in the Fair Harbor affairs, you know, and--and--she doesn't think, of course--and you *are* a lot older than she is--but all the same----"

Sears interrupted.

"Here! Hold on, George!" he put in, sharply. "What's all this?"

Kent's embarrassment increased. "Why--why, nothing," he stammered. "Nothing, of course. But you see, Cap'n, people are silly--they don't stop to count ages and things like that. They see you with her so much.... And when they see you taking her to ride--alone----"

"Here! That'll do!" All the cordiality had left the captain's voice. "George," he said, after a moment, "I guess you'd better not say any more. I don't think I had better hear it. Miss Elizabeth is a friend of mine. She is, as you say, years younger than I am. I *am* with her a good deal, have to be because of our Fair Harbor work together. I took her to Orham with me just as I'd take her mother, or you, or any other friend who had to go and wanted a lift. But--*but* if you or any one else is hintin' that.... There, there! George, don't be foolish. Maybe you'd better run along now. The doctor says I mustn't get excited."

His visitor looked remarkably foolish, but the stubbornness had not altogether left his face or tone as he said: "Well, that's all right, Cap'n. I knew you would understand. *I* didn't mean anything, but--but, you see, in Elizabeth's case I feel a--a sort of responsibility. You--you understand."

Even irritated and angry as he was, Sears could not help smiling at the last sentence.

"George," he observed, "you've been fairly open and aboveboard in your remarks to me. Suppose I ask you a question. Just what *is* your responsibility in the case? I have heard said, and more than once, that you and Elizabeth Berry are engaged to be married. Is it so?"

The young man grew redder yet, hesitated, and turned to the door.

"I--I'm not at liberty to say," he declared.

"Wait! Hold on! There is this responsibility business. If you're not engaged--well, honestly, George, I don't quite see where your responsibility comes in."

Kent hesitated a moment longer. Then he seemed to make up his mind.

"Well, then, we are--er--er--practically," he said.

"Practically?... Oh! Well, I--I certainly do congratulate you."

George had his hand on the latch, but turned back.

"Don't--please don't tell any one of it," he said earnestly. "It--it mustn't be known yet.... You see, though, why I--I feel as if you--as if we all ought to be very careful of--of appearances--and--and such things."

"Yes.... Yes, of course. Well, all right, George. Good-by. Call again."

Judah, who had been over at the Fair Harbor doing some general chores around the place, came in a little later. His lodger called to him.

"Judah," he commanded, "come in here. I want to talk to you." When Mr. Cahoon obeyed the order, he was told to sit down a moment.

"I want to ask you some questions," said the captain. "What is the latest news of Egbert Phillips? Where is he nowadays? And what is he doin'?"

Judah was quite ready to give the information, even eager, but he hesitated momentarily.

"Sure you want me to talk about him, Cap'n?" he asked. "Last time I said anything about him--day afore yesterday 'twas--you told me to shut up. Said you had somethin' more important to think about."

"Did I, Judah? Well, 'twas true then, I guess."

"Um-hm. And you ordered me not to mention his name again till you h'isted signals, or somethin' like that."

"Yes, seems to me I did. Well, the signals are up. What is he doin'?"

"Doin'? He ain't doin' nothin'--much. He's roomin' up to the Central House yet, but from what I hear tell he ain't goin' to stay there. He's call'latin', so the folks down to the store say, to find some nice home place where he can board. He don't call it boardin'. Thoph Black says he said what he wanted was a snug little den where him and his few remainin' household gods could be together. Thoph said he couldn't make out what household gods was, and I'm plaguey sure I can't. Sounds heathenish to me. And I told Thoph, says I, 'That ain't no way to hunt a boardin' house, goin' round hollerin' for a den. If I was takin' in boarders and a feller hove alongside and says, "Can I hire one of them dens of yours?" he'd get somethin' that he wan't lookin' for.' Huh! Den! Sounds like a circus menagerie, don't it? Not but what I've seen boardin'-house rooms that was like dens. Why, one time, over in Liverpool 'twas, me and a feller named----"

"Yes, yes, all right, Judah. I've heard about it. But what else is he doin'? Where does he go? Is he makin' friends? Is he talkin' much about his plans? What do folks say about him?"

Judah answered the last question first.

"They like him," he declared. "All hands are so kind of sorry for him, you see. Course we all call'ated he was rich, but he ain't. And them bonds and such that him and his wife had all went to nawthin' and he come back here after she died, figgerin', I presume likely, same as anybody would, that he owned the Fair Harbor property and that the fifty thousand was just a sort of--er--loan, as you might say. He told Joe Macomber--or George Kent, I forget which 'twas--he's with George consider'ble; I guess likely 'twas him--that, of course, he wouldn't have disturbed the property or the fifty thousand for the world, not for a long spell anyhow, but ownin' it give him a feelin' of security, like an anchor to wind'ard, you understand, and----"

"So folks like him, do they?"

"You bet you they do. He don't complain a mite, that's one reason they like him. Says at first, of course, he was kind of took all aback with his canvas flappin', but now he's thought it over and realizes 'twas his dear wife's notion and her wishes is law and gospel to him, so he's resigned."

"And he doesn't blame anybody, then?"

Mr. Cahoon hesitated. "Why--er--no, not really, fur's I hear. Anyhow, if there was any influence used same as it shouldn't be, he says, he forgives them that used it. And, so far as that goes, he don't repute no evil motives to nobody, livin' or dead."

"Repute? Oh, impute, you mean."

"I guess so, some kind of 'pute'. He uses them old-fashioned kind of words all the time. That's why he's so pop'lar amongst the Shakespeare Readin' Society and the rest. *They've* took him up, I tell ye! Minister Dishup and his wife they've had him to dinner, and Cap'n Elkanah and his wife have had him to supper and yesterday noon he was up here to the Harbor for dinner."

"Oh, was he?"

"Yus. He made 'em a little speech, too. All hands came into the parlor after dinner and he kind of--of preached to 'em. Told about his travelin' in foreign lands and a lot about Lobelia and how she loved the Harbor and everybody in it, and how him and her used to plan for it, and the like of that. Desire Peasley told me that 'twas the most movin' talk ever *she* listened to. Said about everybody was cryin' some. 'Twas a leaky session, I judged. Oh, they love him over to the Harbor, I tell you!"

The captain was silent for a moment. Then he asked, "Did I understand you to say he and young Kent were friendly?"

"Yes, indeed. He seems to have took quite a fancy to George. Drops in to see him at the store and last night he went home along with him to your sister's--to Sary's. Had supper and spent the evenin', I believe."

Judah was dismissed then and the talk ended, but Sears had now something else to think about. There was little doubt in his mind who the "man of experience" was, the person who had advised Kent concerning the getting of a position with a law firm in the city. He wondered what other advice might have been given. Was it Mr. Phillips who had suggested to Kent the impropriety of Elizabeth's being seen so much in his--Kendrick's--company? If so, why had he done it? What was Egbert's little plan?

Of course it was possible that there was no plan of any kind. Sears had taken a dislike to Phillips when they met and that fact, and Judge Knowles' hatred of the man, might, he realized, have set him to hunting mares' nests. Well, he would not hunt any more at present. He would await developments. But he would not lie in that bed and wait for them. He had been there long enough. In spite of Judah's protests and with the latter's help, commandeered and insisted upon, he got up, dressed, and spent the rest of that afternoon and evening in the rocking chair in the kitchen.

And that evening Elizabeth came to see him. He was almost sure why she had come, and as soon as she entered, sent Judah down town after smoking tobacco. Judah declared there was "up'ards of ha'f a plug aboard the ship somewheres" and wanted to stay and hunt for it, but the captain, who had the plug in his pocket, insisted on his going. So he went and Sears and Elizabeth were alone. He was ready for the interview. If she asked him to accept the trusteeship of her twenty thousand dollars he meant to refuse, absolutely.

And she did ask him that very thing. After inquiries concerning his injured limbs and repeated cautions concerning his never taking such risks again, "even with the old Foam Flakes," she came directly to the subject. She spoke of Judge Knowles' letter to her, the letter which Bradley had handed her at the time when he gave Sears his. She had read it over and over again, she said.

"You know what he wrote me, Cap'n Kendrick," she went on. "I can't show you the letter, it is too personal, too--too... Oh, I can't show it to any one--now, not even to mother. But you must know what he asked--or suggested, because he says he has written you a letter asking you to take charge of my money for me, to be my trustee. I suppose you must think it queer that I have let all these days go by without coming to speak with you about it. I hope----"

He interrupted. "Now, Elizabeth, before we go any further," he said, earnestly, "don't you suppose any such thing. The judge wrote me he had asked us both not to decide in a hurry, but to take plenty of time to think it over. I have thought it over, in fact, I haven't thought of much else since I opened that letter, and I have made up my mind----"

"Wait. Please wait a minute. I haven't been taking time to think over that at all. I have been thinking about the whole matter; whether I should accept the money--so very, very, very much money----"

"What! Not accept it? Of course you'll take it. He wanted you to take it. It was what he wanted as much as anybody could want anything. Why, don't you dare----"

"Hush! hush! You mustn't be so excited. And you mustn't move from that chair. If you do I shall go home this minute. I am going to accept the money."

"Good! Of course you are."

"Yes, I am. Because I do believe that he wanted me to have it so much. I know people will say--perhaps they are already saying all sorts of wicked, mean things. I don't--I won't let myself think what some of them may be saying about my influencing the judge, or things like that. But I don't care--that is, I care ever so much more for what *he* said and what he wished. And he wanted you to take care of the money for me. You will, won't you, Cap'n Kendrick?"

Now it was Sears' turn. He had gone over a scene like this, the scene which he had foreseen, many times. He was kind, but he was firm. He told her that he should not accept the trusteeship. He could not. It was too great a responsibility for a man with as little--and that little unfortunate--business experience as he had had.

"It needs a banker or a lawyer for that job, Elizabeth," he declared. "What does a sailor know about handlin' money? You go to Bradley; Bradley's the man."

But she did not want Bradley. The judge only mentioned Bradley as second choice.

"He wanted you, Cap'n Kendrick. He had every confidence in you. You should see what he says about your ability and common-sense and--and honesty in the letter. Please."

"No, Elizabeth. As far as honesty goes I guess he's right. I am honest, at least I hope I should be. But for the rest--he's partial there. He seemed to take a fancy to me, and goodness knows I liked him. But you mustn't feel you've got to do this thing. He wrote me it was only a suggestion. You are absolutely free--he wrote me so--to go to Bradley or----"

"No." She rose to her feet. "I shan't go to Bradley or anybody but you. I am like him, Cap'n Kendrick; I trust you. I have come to know you and to believe in you. I like you. Why, you don't know how glad I was to find that he wanted you to do this for me. Glad! I--I felt----"

"Why, Elizabeth!"

He had not meant to speak. The words were forced from him involuntarily. Her tone, her eyes, the eager earnestness in her voice.... He did not say any more, nor did he look at her. Instead he looked at the patchwork comforter which had fallen from his knees to the floor, and fervently hoped that he had not already said too much. He stooped and picked up the comforter.

"And you will do it for me, won't you?" she pleaded.

"I can't. It wouldn't be right."

"Then I shall not take the money at all. *He* gave it to me, *he* asked me--the very last thing he asked was that you should do it. He put the trust in your hands. And you won't do it--for him--or for me?"

"Well, but--but--- Oh, good Lord! how can I?"

"Why can't you?"

The real reason he could not tell her. According to Kent--whether inspired by Phillips or not made little difference--people were already whispering and hinting. How much more would they hint and whisper if they knew that he had taken charge of her money? The thought had not occurred to her, of course; the very idea was too ridiculous for her to imagine; but that made but one more reason why he must think for her.

"No," he said, again. "No, I can't."

"But why? You haven't told me why."

He tried to tell her why, but his words were merely repetitions of what he had said before. He was not a good business man, he did not know how to handle money, even his own money. The judge had been very ill when he wrote those letters, if he had been well and himself he never would have thought of him as trustee. She listened for a time, her impatience growing. Then she rose.

"Very well," she said. "Then I shall not accept the twenty thousand. To me one wish of Judge Knowles' is as sacred as the other. He wanted you to take that trust just as much as he wanted me to have the money. If you won't respect one wish I shall not respect the other."

He could not believe she meant it, but she certainly looked and spoke as if she did. He faltered and hesitated, and she pressed her advantage. And at last he yielded.

"All right," he said desperately. "All right--or all wrong, whichever it turns out to be. I'll take the trustee job--try it for a time anyhow. But, I tell you, Elizabeth, I'm afraid we're both makin' a big mistake."

She was not in the least afraid, and said so.

"You have made me very happy, Cap'n Kendrick," she declared. "I can't thank you enough."

He shook his head, but before he could reply there came a sharp knock on the outer door, the back door of the house.

"Who on earth is that?" exclaimed Sears. Then he shouted, "Come in."

The person who came in was George Kent.

"Why, George!" said Elizabeth. Then she added. "What is it? What is the matter?"

The young man looked as if something was the matter. His expression was not at all pleasant.

"Evenin', George," said the captain. "Glad to see you. Sit down."

Kent ignored both the invitation and the speaker.

"Look here," he demanded, addressing Miss Berry: "do you know what time it is? It is ten o'clock."

His tone was so rude--so boyishly rude--that Sears looked up quickly and Elizabeth drew back.

"It's nearly ten o'clock," repeated Kent. "And you are over here."

"George!" exclaimed Sears, sharply.

"You are over here--with him--again."

It was Elizabeth who spoke now. She said but one word.

"Well?" she asked.

There was an icy chill about that "Well?" which a more cautious person than George Kent might have noticed and taken as a warning. But the young man was far from cautious at that moment.

"*Well?*" he repeated hotly. "I don't think it's well at all. I come see you and--I find you over here. And I find that every one else knows you are here. And they think it queer, too; I could see that they did.... Of course, I don't say----"

"I think you have said enough. I came here to talk with Cap'n Kendrick on a business matter. I told mother where I was going when I left the house. The others heard me, I suppose; I certainly did not try to conceal it. Why should I?"

"Why should you? Why, you should because--because---- Well, if you don't know why you shouldn't be here, he does."

"He? Cap'n Kendrick?"

"Yes. I--I told him why, myself. Only this noon I told him. I was here and I told him people were beginning to talk about you and he being together so much and--and his taking you to ride, and all that sort of thing. I told him he ought to be more careful of appearances. I said of course you didn't think, but he ought to. I explained that----"

"Stop!" Her face was crimson and she was breathing quickly. "Do you mean to say that--that people are talking--are saying things about--about.... What people?"

"Oh--oh, different ones. Of course they don't say anything much--er--not yet. But if we aren't careful they will. You see--"

"Wait. Are they--are they saying that--that---- Oh, it is *too* wicked and foolish to speak! Are they saying that Cap'n Kendrick and I----"

Sears spoke. "Hush, hush, Elizabeth!" he begged. "They aren't sayin' anything, of course. George is--is just a little excited over nothin', that's all. He has heard Elvira or some other cat over there at the Harbor, probably. They're jealous because you have had this money left you."

"It is nothing to do with the money," Kent asserted. "Didn't I tell you this noon that you--that we had to be careful of appearances? Didn't I say----"

Again Elizabeth broke in.

"You have said all I want to hear--in this room, now," she declared. "There are a good many things for us both to say--and listen to, but not here.... Good night, Cap'n Kendrick. I am sorry I kept you up so late, and I hope all this--I hope you won't let this wicked nonsense trouble you. It isn't worth worrying about. Good night."

"But, Elizabeth," urged Sears, anxiously, "don't you think----"

"Good night. George, you had better come with me. I have some things to say to you."

She went out. Kent hesitated, paused for a moment, and then followed her. When Judah returned with the tobacco and a fresh cargo of rumors concerning Egbert Phillips he found his lodger not the least interested in either smoke or gossip.

CHAPTER XIII

So Judah was obliged to postpone the telling of his most important news item. But the following morning when, looking heavy-eyed and haggard, as if he had slept but little, Captain Kendrick limped into the kitchen for breakfast, Mr. Cahoon served that item with the salt mackerel and fried potatoes. It was surprising, too--at least Sears found it so. Egbert Phillips, so Judah declared, had given up his rooms at the Central House and had gone, household goods and all, to board and lodge at Joel Macomber's. He was occupying, so Judah said, the very room that Sears himself had occupied when he was taken to his sister's home after the railway accident.

The captain could scarcely believe it. He had not seen Sarah Macomber since the day following the Foam Flake's amazing cut-up on the Orham road, when she had come, in much worriment and anxiety, to learn how badly he was hurt. Her call had been brief, and, as he had succeeded in convincing her that the extra twist to his legs would have no serious effect, she had not called since. But Sarah-Mary, the eldest girl, had brought a basket containing a cranberry pie, a half-peck, more or less, of molasses cookies, and two tumblers of beach-plum jelly, and Sarah-Mary had said nothing to her Uncle Sears about the magnificent Mr. Phillips coming to live with them.

"I guess not, Judah," said the captain. "Probably you've got it snarled some way. He may have gone there to supper with George Kent and the rest of the yam sprouted from that."

But Judah shook his head. "No snarl about it, Cap'n Sears," he declared. "Come straight this did, straight as a spare

topmast. Joe Macomber told me so himself. Proud of it, too, Joe was; all kind of swelled up with it, like a pized shark."

"But why on earth should he pick out Sarah's? Why didn't he go to Naomi Newcomb's; she keeps a regular boardin'-house? Sarah can't take any more boarders. Her house is overloaded as it is. That was why I didn't stay there. No, I don't believe it, Judah. Joel was just comin' up to blow, that's all. He's a regular puffin'-pig for blowin'."

But Sarah called that very forenoon and confirmed the news. She had agreed to take Mr. Phillips into her home. Not only that, but he was already there.

"I know you must think it's sort of funny, Sears," she said, looking rather embarrassed and avoiding her brother's eye. "If anybody had told me a week ago that I should ever take another boarder I should have felt like askin' 'em if they thought I was crazy. I suppose you think I am, don't you?"

"Not exactly, Sarah--not yet."

"But you think I most likely will be before I'm through? Well, maybe, but I'm goin' to risk it. You see, I--well, we need the money, for one thing."

Sears stirred in his chair.

"I could have let you have a little money every once in a while, Sarah," he said. "It's a shame that it would have to be so little. If those legs ever do get shipshape and I get to sea again----"

She stopped him. "I haven't got so yet awhile that I have to take anybody's money for nothin'," she said sharply. "There, there, Sears! I know you'd give me every cent you had if I'd let you. I'll tell you why I took Mr. Phillips. He came to supper with George the other night and stayed all the evenin'. He's one of the most interestin' men I ever met in my life. Not any more interestin' than you are, of course," she added, loyally, "but in--in a different way."

"Um ... yes. I shouldn't wonder."

"Yes, he is. And he liked my supper, and said so. Ate some of everything and praised it, and was just as--as common and everyday and sociable, not a mite proud or--like that."

"Why in the devil should he be?"

"Why--why, I don't know why he shouldn't. Lots of folks who know as much as he does and have been everywhere and known the kind of people he knows--they would be stuck up--yes, and are. Look at Cap'n Elkhanah Wingate and his wife."

"I don't want to look at 'em. How do you know how much this Phillips knows?"

"How do I *know*? Why, Sears, you ought to hear him talk. I never heard such talk. The children just--just hung on his words, as they say. And he was so nice to them. And Joel and George Kent they think he's the greatest man they ever saw. Oh, all hands in Bayport like him."

"Humph! When he was here before, teachin' singin' school, he wasn't such a Grand Panjandrum. At least, I never heard that he was."

"Sears, you don't like him, do you? I'm real surprised. Yes, and--and sorry. Why don't you like him?"

Her brother laughed. "I didn't say I didn't like him, Sarah," he replied. "Besides, what difference would one like more or less make? I don't know him very well."

"But he likes you. Why, he said he didn't know when he had met a man who gave him such an impression of--of strength and character as you did. He said that right at our supper table. I tell you I was proud when he said it about my brother."

So Sears had not the heart to utter more skepticism. He encouraged Sarah to tell more of her arrangements with the great man. He was, it appeared, to have not only the bedroom which Sears had occupied, but also the room adjoining.

"One will be his bedroom," explained Mrs. Macomber, "and the other his sittin' room, sort of. His little suite, he calls 'em. He is movin' the rest of his things in to-day."

Seers looked at her. "Two rooms!" he exclaimed. "He's to have *two* rooms in your house! For heaven sakes, Sarah, where do the rest of you live; in the cellar? Goin' to let the children sleep in the cistern?"

She explained. It was a complicated process, but she had worked it out. Lemuel and Edgar had always had a room together, but now Bemis was to have a cot there also. "And Joey, of course, is only a baby, his bed is in our room, Joel's and mine. And Sarah-Mary and Aldora, they are same as they have been."

"Yes, yes, but that doesn't explain the extra room, his sitting room. Where does that come from?"

She hesitated a moment. "Well--well, you see," she said, "there wasn't any other bedroom except the one George hires,

and he is goin' to stay for a while longer anyway. At first it didn't seem as if I could let Mr. Phillips have the sittin' room he wanted. But at last Joel and I thought it out. We don't use the front parlor hardly any, and there is the regular sittin' room left for us anyway, so----"

"Sarah Kendrick Macomber, do you mean to tell me you've let this fellow have your *front parlor*?"

"Why--why, yes. We don't hardly ever use it, Sears. I don't believe we've used that parlor--really opened the blinds and used it, I mean--since Father Macomber's funeral, and that was--let me see--over six years ago."

Her brother slowly shook his head. "The judge was right," he declared. "He certainly was right. Smoothness isn't any name for it."

"Sears, what are you talkin' about? I can't understand you. I thought you would be glad to think such a splendid man as he is was goin' to live with us. To say nothin' of my makin' all this extra money. Of course, if you don't want me to do it, I won't. I wouldn't oppose you, Sears, for anything in this world. But I--I must say----"

He laid his hand on hers. "There, Sarah," he broke in. "Don't pay too much attention to me. I'm crochetty these days, have a good deal on my mind. If you think takin' this Phillips man aboard is a good thing for you, I'm glad. How much does he pay you a week?"

She told him. It was more than fair rate for those days.

"Humph!" he observed. "Well, Sarah, good luck to you. I hope you get it."

"Get it! Why, of course I'll get it, Sears. Its all arranged. And I want you and Mr. Phillips to know each other real well. I'm goin' to tell him he must call again to see you."

"Eh?... Oh, all right, Sarah. You can tell him, if you want to."

After she had gone he thought the matter over. Surely Mr. Egbert Phillips was a gentleman of ability along certain lines. His sister Sarah was a sensible woman, she was far far from being a susceptible sentimentalist. Yet she was already under the Phillips spell. Either Judge Knowles was right--very, very much right--or he was overwhelmingly wrong. If left to Bayport opinion as a jury there was no question concerning the verdict. Egbert would be triumphantly acquitted.

Sears, however, did not, at this time, spare much thought to the Phillips riddle. He had other, and, it seemed to him, more disturbing matters to deal with. The quarrel between Elizabeth Berry and young Kent was one of those, for he felt that, in a way, he was the cause of it. George had, of course, behaved like a foolish boy and had been about as tactless as even a jealous youth could be, but there was always the chance that some one else had sowed the seeds of jealousy in his mind. He determined to see Kent, explain, have a frank and friendly talk, and, if possible, set everything right--everything between the two young people, that is. But when, on his first short walk along the road, he happened to meet Kent, the latter paid no attention to his hail and strode past without speaking. Sears shouted after him, but the shout was unheeded.

Elizabeth was almost as contrary. When he attempted to lead the conversation to George, she would not follow. When he mentioned the young man's name she changed the subject. At last when, his sense of guilt becoming too much for him, he began to defend Kent, she interrupted the defense.

"Cap'n Kendrick," she said, "I understand why you take his part. And it is like you to do it. But when you begin to blame yourself or me then I shan't listen."

"Blame *you*! Why, Elizabeth, I had no idea of blamin' you. The whole thing is just a--a misunderstandin' between you and George, and I want to straighten it out, that's all. If anybody is to blame I really think I am. I should have thought more about--about, what he calls appearances; that is, perhaps I should."

She lost patience. "Oh, do stop!" she cried. "You know you are talking nonsense."

"Well but, Elizabeth, I feel--wicked. I wouldn't for the world be the cause of a break between you two. If that should happen because of me I couldn't rest easy."

This conversation took place in the smaller sitting room of the Fair Harbor, the room which she and her mother used as a sort of office. She had been standing by the window looking out. Now she turned and faced him.

"Cap'n Kendrick," she asked, "just what do you mean by a 'break' between George Kent and me? Are you under the impression that he and I were--were engaged?"

"Why--why, weren't you?"

"No. Why should you think we were?"

"Well--why, there seemed to be a sort of general idea that--that you were. People--Bayport folks seemed to think--seemed to think----"

She stamped her foot. "They don't think, most of them, they only talk," she declared. "I certainly never said we were. And he didn't either, did he?"

Kent had said that he and Elizabeth were engaged--practically--whatever that might mean. But the captain thought it wisest just then to forget.

"Why--no, I guess not," he answered.

"Of course he didn't ... Cap'n Kendrick. I--oh, you might as well understand this clearly. I have known George for a long time. I liked him. For a time I thought--well I thought perhaps I liked him enough to--to like him a lot more. But I was mistaken. He--he kept doing things that I didn't like. Oh, they had nothing to do with me. They were things that didn't seem--what you would call square and aboveboard. Little things that.... It was about one of these that we disagreed just before the 'Down by the Sea' theatricals. But he explained that and--and--well, he can be so nice and likable, that I forgave him. But lately there have been others. He has changed. And now all this foolishness, and.... There, Cap'n Kendrick, I didn't mean to say so much. But I want you to understand, and to tell every one else who talks about George Kent and me being engaged, that there never was any such engagement."

It would be rather difficult to catalogue all of Sears Kendrick's feelings as he listened to this long speech. They were mixed feelings, embarrassment, sorrow, relief--and a most unwarranted and unreasonable joy. But he repressed the relief and joy and characteristically returned to self-chastisement.

"Yes--oh--I see," he faltered. "I guess likely I didn't understand exactly. But just the same I don't know but George was right in some things he said. I shouldn't wonder if I had been careless about--about appearances. I don't know but--but my seein' you so much--and our goin' to Orham together might set some folks talkin'. Of course it doesn't seem hardly possible that anybody could be such fools, considerin' you--and then considerin' me--but----"

She would not hear any more. "I don't propose to consider *them*," she declared with fierce indignation. "I shall see you or any one else just as often as I please. Now that you are to take care of my money for me I have no doubt I shall see you a great deal oftener than I ever did. And if those--those talkative persons don't like it, they may do the next best thing.... No, that is enough, Cap'n Kendrick. It is settled."

And it did appear to be. If anything, she saw him oftener than before, seemed to take a mischievous delight in being seen with him, in running to the Minot place on errands connected with the Harbor business, and in every way defying the gossips.

And gossip accepted the challenge. From the time when it became known that Sears Kendrick was to be the trustee of Elizabeth Berry's twenty-thousand dollar legacy the tide of public opinion, already on the turn, set more and more strongly against him. And, as it ebbed for Captain Sears, it rose higher and higher for that genteel martyr, Mr. Egbert Phillips.

Sears could not help noticing the change. It was gradual, but it was marked. He had never had many visitors, but occasionally some of the retired sea dogs among the town-folk would drop in to swap yarns, or a younger captain, home from a voyage, would call on him at the Minot place. The number of those calls became smaller, then they ceased. Doctor Sheldon was, of course, as jolly and friendly as ever, and Bradley, when he drove over from Orham on a legal errand, made it a point to come and see him. But, aside from those, and Sarah Macomber, and, of course, Elizabeth Berry, no one came.

When he walked, as he did occasionally now that his legs were stronger--they had quite recovered from the strain put upon them by the Foam Flake's outbreak--up and down the sidewalk from Judge Knowles' corner to the end of the Fair Harbor fence, the people whom he met seldom stopped to chat with him. Or, if they did, the chat was always brief and, on their part, uneasy. They acted, so it seemed to him, guilty, as if they were doing something they should not do, something they were not at all anxious to have people see them do. And when he drove with Judah down to the store the group there no longer hailed him with shouts of welcome. They spoke to him, mentioned the weather perhaps, grinned in embarrassed fashion, but they did not ask him to sit down and join them. And when his back was turned, when he left the store, he had the feeling that there were whispered comments--and sneers.

It was all impalpable, there was nothing openly hostile, no one said anything to which he could take exception--he only wished they would; but he felt the hostility nevertheless.

And among the feminine element it was even more evident. When he went to church, as he did semi-occasionally, as he walked down the aisle he felt that the rustle of Sunday black silks and bonnet strings which preceded and followed him was a whisper of respectable and self-righteous disapproval. It was not all imagination, he caught glimpses of sidelong looks and headshakes which meant something, and that something not applause. Once the Reverend Mr. Dishup took for his text Psalm xxxix, the sixth verse, "He heapeth up riches and knoweth not who shall gather them." The sermon dealt with, among others, the individual who in his lifetime amassed wealth, not knowing that, after his death, other individuals scheming and unscrupulous would strive to divert that wealth from the rightful heirs for their own benefit.

It was a rather dull sermon and Sears, his attention wandering, happened to turn his head suddenly and look at the rest of the congregation. It seemed to him that at least a quarter of the heads in that congregation were turned in his direction. Now, meeting his gaze, they swung back, to stare with noticeable rigidity at the minister.

Over at the Fair Harbor his comings and goings were no longer events to cause pleasurable interest and excitement. The change there was quite as evident. Miss Snowden and Mrs. Brackett, leaders of their clique, always greeted him politely enough, but they did not, individually or collectively, ask his advice or offer theirs. There were smiles, significant nods, knowing looks exchanged, especially, he thought or imagined, when he and Miss Berry were together. Cordelia Berry was almost cold toward him. Yet, so far as he knew, he had done nothing to offend her.

He spoke to Elizabeth about her mother's attitude toward him. She said it was his imagination.

"It may be," she said, "that you don't consult her quite enough about Fair Harbor matters, Cap'n Kendrick. Mother is sensitive, she is matron here, you know; perhaps we haven't paid as much deference to her opinion as we should. Poor mother, she does try so hard, but she isn't fitted for business, and knows it."

That Sunday, after his return from church, the captain asked Judah a point blank question.

"Judah," he said, "I want you to tell me the truth. What is the matter with me, nowadays? The whole ship's company here in Bayport are givin' me the cold shoulder. Don't tell me you haven't noticed it; a blind man could notice it. What's wrong with me? What have I done? Or what do they say I've done?"

Judah was very much embarrassed. His trouble showed in his face above the whiskers. He had been bending over the cookstove singing at the top of his lungs the interminable chantey dealing with the fortunes of one Reuben Ranzo.

"Ranzo was no sailor,
Ranzo, boys, Ranzo!
Ranzo was a tailor,
Ranzo, boys, Ranzo!

"Oh, poor Reuben Ranzo!
Ranzo, boys, Ranzo!
Hurrah for Reuben Ranzo!
Ranzo, boys, Ranzo!

"Ranzo was no sailor,
Ranzo, boys, Ranzo!
He shipped on board a whaler,
Ranzo, boys, Ranzo!"

And so on, forever and forever. Judah had reached the point where:

"They set him holy-stonin',
Ranzo, boys, Ranzo!
And cared not for his groanin',
Ranzo, boys, Ranzo!

"Oh, poor Reuben Ranzo!
Ranzo, boys, Ranzo!
Hurrah for----'

"Eh? Did you say somethin', Cap'n Sears?"

Sears repeated his question, and then, as no answer seemed to be forthcoming, repeated it once more, with an order to "step lively." Judah groaned and shook his head.

"I've been sort of afraid you might think somethin' was queer, Cap'n Sears," he admitted. "I was hopin' you wouldn't, though, not till it begun to blow over. All them kind of things do blow over, give 'em time. One voyage I took--to Shanghai, seems to me 'twas, either that or Rooshy somewheres--there was a ship's carpenter aboard and word got spread around that he had a wooden leg. Now he didn't, you know; matter of fact, all he had out of the way with him was a kind of--er--er--sheet-iron stove lid, as you might call it, riveted onto the top of his head. He was in the Mexican war, seemed so, and one of them cannon balls had caved in his upper deck, you understand, and them doctors they----"

"Here, here, Judah! I didn't ask you about any iron-headed carpenters, did I?"

"No; no, you never, Cap'n Sears. But what I started to say was that----"

"All right, but you stick to what I want you to say. Tell me what's the matter with me in Bayport?"

Judah groaned again. "It 'tain't so much that there's any great that's wrong along of you, Cap'n," he said, "as 'tis that

there ain't nothin' but what's so everlastin' right with another feller. That's the way I size it up, and I've been takin' observations for quite a spell. Bayport folks are spendin' seven days in the week lovin' this Egbert Phillips. Consequentially they ain't got much time left to love you in. Fools? Course they be, and I've told some of 'em so till I've got a sore throat hollerin'. But, by the creepin'----"

"Judah! Has Phillips been saying things about me?"

"Hey? Him? No, no, no! He don't say nothin' about nobody no time, nothin' out of the way, that is. He's always praisin' of you up, so they tell me, and excusin' you and forgivin' you."

"Forgivin' me? What do you mean by that?"

"Hold on! don't get mad at *me*, Cap'n Sears. I mean when they say what a pity 'tis that he, the man whose wife owned all this Seymour property and the fifty thousand dollars and such--when they go to poorin' him and heavin' overboard hints about how other folks have the spendin' of that money and all--he just smiles, sad but sort of sweet, and says it's all right, his dear Lobelia done what seemed to her proper, and if he has to suffer a little grain, why, never mind.... That's the way he talks."

"But where do I come in on that?"

"Well--well, you don't really, Cap'n Sears. Course you don't. But you--you have got the handlin' of that money, you know. And you are gettin' wages for skipperin' the Fair Harbor. I've heard it said--not by him, oh, creepin', no!--but by others, that *he* ought to have that skipper's job, if anybody had. Lots of folks seem to callate he'd ought to *own* the Harbor. But instead of that he don't own nothin', they say, and scratches along in two rooms, down to Joe Macomber's, and, underneath all his sufferin', he's just as sweet and uncomplainin' and long-endurin' and--and high-toned and sociable and--and----"

"Yes, yes. I see. Do they say anything more? What about my bein' Elizabeth Berry's trustee?"

Mr. Cahoon paused before replying. "Well, they do seem to hold that against you some, I'm afraid," he admitted reluctantly. "I don't know why they do. And they don't say much in front of me no more, 'cause, they realize, I callate, that I'm about ready to knock a few of 'em into the scuppers. But it--it just don't help you none, Cap'n, takin' care of that money of Elizabeth's don't. And it does help that Eg man.... Why? Don't ask me. I--I'm sick and disgusted. *I* shan't go to no church vestry to hear him lecture on Eyetalian paintin' or--or glazin', or whatever 'tis. And have you noticed how they bow down and worship him over to the Fair Harbor? Have you noticed Cordelia Berry? She's makin' a dum fool of herself, ain't she? Not that that's a very hard job."

Judah's explanations did not explain much, but they did help to increase Sears' vague suspicions. He had noticed--no one could help noticing--the ever-growing popularity of Mr. Phillips. It was quite as evident as the decline of his own. What he suspected was that the two were connected and that, somehow or other, the smooth gentleman who boarded and lodged with the Macomers was responsible, knowingly, calculatingly responsible for the change.

Yet it seemed so absurd, that suspicion. He and Phillips met frequently, sometimes at church, or oftenest at the Harbor--Egbert's visits there were daily now, and he dined or supped with the Berrys and the "inmates" at least twice a week. And always the Phillips manner was kind and gracious and urbane. Always he inquired solicitously concerning the captain's health. There was never a hint of hostility, never a trace of resentment or envy. And always, too, Sears emerged from one of those encounters with a feeling that he had had a little the worst of it, that his seafaring manners and blunt habit of speech made him appear at a marked disadvantage in comparison with this easy, suave, gracefully elegant personage. And so many of those meetings took place in the presence of Elizabeth Berry.

Elizabeth liked Egbert, there was no doubt of that. Once when she and the captain were together in the Fair Harbor office Phillips entered. Sears and Elizabeth were bending over the ledger and Egbert opened the door. Sears and the young lady were not in the least embarrassed--of course there was not the slightest reason why they should be--but, oddly enough, Phillips seemed to be. He stepped back, coughed, fidgeted with the latch, and then began to apologize.

"I--I really beg your pardon," he said. "I am sorry.... I didn't know--I didn't realize--I'm *so* sorry."

Elizabeth looked at him in surprise. "But there is nothing for you to be sorry about," she declared. "What is it? I don't understand."

Egbert still retained his hold upon the latch with one hand. His hat, gloves and cane were in the other. It is perhaps the best indication of his standing in the community, the fact that, having lived in Bayport for some weeks and being by his own confession a poor man, he could still go gloved and caned on week days as well as Sundays and not be subject to ridicule even by the Saturday night gang in Eliphalet Bassett's store.

He fidgeted with the latch and turned as if to go.

"I should have knocked, of course," he protested. "It was most careless of me. I do hope you understand. I will come--"

ah--later."

"But I don't understand," repeated the puzzled Elizabeth. "It was perfectly all right, your coming in. There is no reason why you should knock. The cap'n and I were going over the bills, that's all."

Mr. Phillips looked--well, he looked queer.

"Oh!" he said. "Yes--yes, of course. But one doesn't always care to be interrupted in--even in business matters--ah--sometimes."

Elizabeth laughed. "I'm sure I don't mind," she said. "Those business matters weren't so frightfully important."

"I'm so glad. You ease my conscience, Elizabeth. Thank you.... But I am afraid the captain minds more than you do. He looks as if he didn't like interruptions. Now do you, Captain Kendrick?"

Sears was ruffled. The man always did rub him the wrong way, and now, for the first time, he heard him address Miss Berry by her Christian name. There was no real reason why he should not, almost every one in Bayport did, but Sears did not like it nevertheless.

"You don't fancy interruptions, Captain," repeated the smiling Egbert. "Now do you? Ha, ha! Confess."

For the moment Sears forgot to be diplomatic.

"That depends, I guess," he answered shortly.

"Depends? You see, I told you, Elizabeth. Depends upon what? We must make him tell us the whole truth, mustn't we, Elizabeth? What does it depend upon, Captain Kendrick; the--ah--situation--the nature of the business--or the companion? Now which? Ha, ha!"

Sears answered without taking time to consider.

"Upon who interrupts, maybe," he snapped. Then he would have given something to have recalled the words, for Elizabeth turned and looked at him. She flushed.

Egbert's serenity, however, was quite undented.

"Oh, dear me!" he exclaimed, in mock alarm. "After that I shall *have* to go. And I shall take great pains to close the door behind me. Ha, ha! *Au revoir*, Elizabeth. Good-by, Captain."

He went out, keeping his promise concerning the closing of the door. Elizabeth continued to look at her companion.

"Now why in the world," she asked, "did you speak to him like that?"

Sears frowned. "Oh, I don't know," he answered. "He--he riles me sometimes."

"Yes.... Yes, I should judge so. I have noticed it before. You don't like him for some reason or other. What is the reason?"

He hesitated. Aside from Judge Knowles' distrust and dislike--which he could not mention to her--there was no very valid reason, nothing but what she would have called prejudice. So he hesitated and reddened.

She went on. "*I* like him," she declared. "He is a gentleman. He is always polite and considerate--as he was just now about breaking in on our business talk. What did you dislike about that?"

"Well, I--well--oh, nothin', perhaps."

"I think nothing certainly. He is an old friend of mother's and of the people here in the Harbor. They all like him very much. I am sorry that you don't and that you spoke to him as you did. I didn't think you took unreasonable dislikes. It doesn't seem like you, Cap'n Kendrick."

So once more Sears felt himself to have been put in a bad position and to have lost ground while Phillips gained it. And, brooding over the affair, he decided that he must be more careful. If he were not so much in Elizabeth's company there would be no opportunity for insinuations--by Egbert Phillips, or any one else. So he put a strong check upon his inclination to see the young woman, and, overconscientious as he was so likely to be, began almost to avoid her. Except when business of one kind or another made it necessary he did not visit the Harbor. It cost him many pangs and made him miserable, but he stuck to his resolution. She should not be talked about in connection with him if he could help it.

He had had several talks with Bradley and with her about her legacy from Judge Knowles. The twenty-thousand was, so he discovered, already well invested in good securities and it was Bradley's opinion, as well as his own, that it should not be disturbed. The bonds were deposited in the vaults of the Harniss bank, and were perfectly safe. On dividend dates he and Miss Berry could cut and check up the coupons together. So far his duties as trustee were not burdensome. Bradley had invested Cordelia's five thousand for her, so the Berry family's finances were stable. In

Bayport they were now regarded as "well off." Cordelia was invited to supper at Captain Elkhanah Wingate's, a sure sign that the hall-mark of wealth and aristocracy had been stamped upon her. At that supper, to which Elizabeth also was invited but did not attend, Mr. Egbert Phillips shone resplendent. Egbert was not wealthy, a fact which he took pains to let every one know, but when he talked, as he did most of the evening, Mrs. Wingate and her feminine guests sat in an adoring trance and, after these guests had gone, the hostess stood by the parlor window gazing wistfully after them.

Her husband was unlocking the door of a certain closet upon the shelf of which was kept a certain bottle and accompanying glasses. The closet had not been opened before that evening, as the Reverend and Mrs. Dishup had been among the dinner guests.

"Elkhanah," observed Mrs. Wingate, dreamily, "I do think Mr. Phillips is the most elegant man I ever saw in my life. His language--and his manners--they are perfect."

Captain Elkhanah nodded. "He's pretty slick," he agreed.

If he expected by thus agreeing to please his wife, he must have been disappointed.

"Oh, *don't* say 'slick!'" she snapped. "I do wish you wouldn't use such countrified words."

"Eh?" indignantly. "Countrified! Well, I am country, ain't I? So are you, so far as that goes. So was he once--when he was teachin' a one-horse singin' school in this very town."

"Well, perhaps. But he has got over it. And it would pay you to take lessons from him, and learn not to say 'slick' and 'ain't!'"

Her husband grunted. "Pay!" he repeated. "I'll wait till he pays me the twenty dollars he borrowed of me two weeks ago. He wasn't too citified to do that."

Mrs. Wingate stalked to the stairs. "I'm ashamed of you," she declared. "You know what a struggle he is having, and how splendid and uncomplaining he is. And you a rich man! Any one would think you never saw twenty dollars before."

Captain Elkhanah poured himself a judicious dose from the bottle.

"Maybe I never *will* see *that* twenty again," he observed with a chuckle.

"Oh, you--you disgust me!"

"Oh, go----"

"*What?* What are you trying to say to me?"

"Go to bed," said the captain, and took his dose.

CHAPTER XIV

If Elizabeth noticed that Sears was not as frequent a visitor at the Fair Harbor as he had formerly been she said nothing about it. She herself had ceased to run in at the Minot place to ask this question or that. Since the occasion when Mr. Phillips interrupted the business talk in the office and his apologies had brought about the slight disagreement--if it may be called that--between the captain and Miss Berry, the latter had, so Sears imagined, been a trifle less cordial to him than before. She was not coldly formal or curt and disagreeable--her mother was all of these things to the captain now, and quite without reason so far as he could see--Elizabeth was not like that, but she was less talkative, less cheerful, and certainly less confidentially communicative. At times he caught her looking at him as if doubtful or troubled. When he asked her what was the matter she said "Nothing," and began to speak of the bills they had been considering.

On one occasion she asked him a point blank question, one quite irrelevant to the subject at hand.

"Cap'n Kendrick," she asked, "how do you think Judge Knowles came to appoint you to be manager here at the Harbor?"

He was taken by surprise, of course. "Why," he stammered, "I--why, I don't know. That is, all I know about it is what he

told me. He said he felt he ought to have some one, and I was near at home, and--and so he thought of me, I suppose."

"Yes, I know. You told me that.... But--but how did he know you wanted the position?"

"Wanted it? Good heavens and earth, I didn't want it! I fought as hard as I could not to take it. Why, I told you--you remember, that day when I first came over here; that time when Elvira and the rest wanted to buy the cast-iron menagerie; I told you then----"

"Yes," she interrupted again. "Yes, I know you did. But.... And the judge had never heard from you--had never...."

"Heard from me! Do you mean had I sent in an application for the job?"

"Oh, no, no! Not that. But you and he had never been--er--close friends in the old days, when you were here before?"

He could not guess what she was driving at. "Look here, Elizabeth," he said, "I've told you that I scarcely knew Judge Knowles before he sent for me and offered me this place. No man alive was ever more surprised than I was then. Why, I gathered that the judge had talked about me to you before he sent for me. Not as manager here, of course, but as--well, as a man. He told you that I was goin' to call, you said so, and I *know* you and he had talked and laughed together about my fight with the hens in Judah's garden."

The trouble, whatever its cause, seemed to vanish. She smiled. "Yes, yes," she said. "Of course we had. He did like you, Judge Knowles did, and that was all--of course it was."

"All what?"

"Oh, nothing, nothing. How is Judah? I haven't seen him for two days."

She would not mention Judge Knowles again, but for the remainder of their session with the accounts she was more like her old self than she had been for at least a week, or so it seemed to him.

This was but one of those queer and disconcerting flare-ups of hers. One day, a week or so after she had questioned him concerning his appointment, he happened to be in the Harbor kitchen, and alone--of itself a surprising thing. Elvira Snowden and her group were holding some sort of committee meeting in the sitting room. Elvira was continually forming committees or circles for this purpose or that, purposes which fizzled out at about the third meeting of each group. Esther Tidditt was supposed to be in charge of the kitchen on this particular morning, but she had gone into the committee meeting in order to torment Elvira and Mrs. Brackett, a favorite amusement with her.

So Sears, wandering into the kitchen, happened to notice that the door of the store closet had been left open, and he was standing in front of it idly looking in. He was brought out of his day dream, which had nothing to do with the closet or its contents, by Elizabeth's voice. She had entered from the dining room and he had not heard her.

"Well," she asked, "I trust you find everything present or accounted for?"

Her tone was so crisply sarcastic that he turned in astonishment.

"Why--what?" he faltered.

"I said I trusted that you found everything in that closet as it should be. Have you measured the flour? My mother is matron here, Cap'n Kendrick, and she will be glad to have you take any precautions of that kind, I am sure. So shall I. But don't you think it might as well be done while she or I are here?"

He was bewildered.

"I don't know what you mean, Elizabeth," he said.

"Don't you?"

"No, I don't. I came in just now by the back door, and there was no one in the kitchen, so--so I waited for a minute."

"Why did you come by the back door? You didn't use to. Mother and I are usually in the office, or, at least, we are always glad to come there when you call."

He was still bewildered, but irritated, too.

"Why did I come by the back door?" he repeated. "Why, I've come that way a dozen times in the last fortnight. Don't you want me to come that way?"

Now she looked a trifle confused, but the flush was still on her cheeks and the sparkle in her eye.

"I'm sure I don't care how often you come that way," she said. "But--well, mother is matron here, Cap'n Kendrick. She may not be--perhaps she isn't--the most businesslike and orderly person in the world, but she is my mother. If you have any complaints to make, if you want to find out how things are kept, or managed, or----"

"Here!" he broke in. "Wait! What do you mean? Do you suppose I sneaked into this kitchen by myself to peek into

that closet, and--and spy on your mother's managin'?... You don't believe anything of that kind. You can't."

She was more embarrassed now. "Why--why, no, I don't, Cap'n Kendrick," she admitted. "Of course I know you wouldn't sneak anywhere. But--but I have been given to understand that you and--well, Mr. Bradley--have not been--are not quite satisfied with the management--with mother's management. And----"

"Wait! Heave to!" Sears was excited now, and, as usual when excited, drifted into nautical phraseology. "What do you mean by sayin' I am not satisfied? Who told you that?"

"Why--well, you are not, are you? You questioned her about the coal a week ago, about how much she used in a week. And then you asked her about keeping the fires overnight, if she saw how many were kept, and if there was much waste. And two or three times you have been seen standing by the bins--figuring."

"Good Lord!" His exclamation this time was one of sheer amazement. "Good Lord!" he said again. "Why, I have been tryin', now winter is comin' on, to figure out how to save coal cost for this craft--for the Fair Harbor. You know I have. I asked your mother about the fires because I know how much waste there is likely to be when a fire is kept carelessly. And as for Bradley and I not bein' satisfied with your mother that is the wildest idea of all. I never talked with Bradley about the management here. It isn't his business, for one reason."

She was silent. Her expression had changed. Then she said, impulsively, "I'm sorry. Please don't mind what I said, Cap'n Kendrick. I--I am rather nervous and--and troubled just now. Of course, you are not obliged to come over here as--as often as you used.... But things I have heard---- Oh, I shouldn't pay attention to them, I suppose. I--I am very sorry."

But he was not quite in the mood to forgive. And one sentence in particular occupied his attention.

"Things you have heard," he repeated. "Yes.... I should judge you must have heard a good deal. But who did you hear it from?... Look here, Elizabeth; how did you know I was here in the kitchen now? Did you just happen to come out and find me by accident?"

She reddened. "Why--why----" she stammered.

"Or did some one tell you I was out here--spyin' on the pickles?"

His tone was a most unusual one from him to her. She resented it.

"No one told me you were 'spying'," she replied; coldly. "I have never thought of you as--a spy, Cap'n Kendrick. I have always considered you a friend, a disinterested friend of mother's and mine."

"Well?... What does that 'disinterested' mean?"

"Why, nothing in particular."

"It must mean somethin' or you wouldn't have said it. Does it mean that you are beginnin' to doubt the disinterested part?... I'd like to have you tell me, if you don't mind, how you knew I was alone here in the kitchen? Who took the pains to tell you that?"

Her answer now was prompt enough.

"No one took particular pains, I should imagine," she said, crisply. "Mr. Phillips told me, as it happened. Or rather, he told mother and mother told me. He is to speak to the--to Elvira's 'travel-study' committee in the sitting room, and, as he often does, he walked around by the garden path. When he passed the window he saw you standing by the closet, that was all."

Sears did not speak. He turned to the door.

She called to him. "Wait--wait, please," she cried. "Mr. Phillips did not say anything, so far as I know, except to mention that you were here."

The captain turned back again. "Somebody said somethin'," he declared. "Somebody said enough to send you out here and make you speak to me like--like that. And somebody has been startin' you to think about how I got the appointment as manager. Somebody has been whisperin' that I am not satisfied with your mother's way of doin' things and am schemin' against her. Somebody has been droppin' a hint here and a hint there until even you have begun to believe 'em.... Well, I can't stop your belief, I suppose, but maybe some day I shall stop Commodore Egbert, and when I do he'll stop hard."

"You have no right to say I believe anything against you. I have always refused to believe that. Do you suppose if I hadn't believed in and trusted you absolutely I should have.... But there! You know I did--and do. It is only when--when----"

"When Egbert hints."

"Oh! ... How you do hate Mr. Phillips, don't you?"

"Hate him?... Why, I--I don't know as you'd call it hate."

"I know. It is plain to see. You have hated him ever since he came. But why? He has never--you won't believe this, but it is true--he has never, to me at least, said one word except in your praise. He likes and admires you. He has told me so."

"Does he tell your mother the same thing?"

She looked at him. "Why do you couple my mother's name with his?" she demanded quickly. "Why should he tell her anything that he doesn't tell me?"

It was a question which Sears could not answer. For some time he had noticed and guessed and feared, but he could not tell her. So he was silent, and to remain silent was perhaps the worst thing he could have done.

"What do you know against Mr. Phillips?" she asked. "Tell me. Do you know *anything* to his discredit?"

Again he did not answer. She turned away.

"I thought not," she said. "Oh, envy is such a *mean* trait. Well, I suppose I shouldn't expect to have many friends--lasting friends."

"Here! hold on, Elizabeth. Don't say that."

"What else can I say? I am sorry I spoke to you as I did, but--I think you have more than paid the debt.... Yes, mother, I am coming."

She went out of the room and Sears limped moodily home, reflecting, as most of mankind has reflected at one time or another, upon the unaccountableness of the feminine character. So far as he could see he had said much less than he would have been justified in saying. She had goaded him into saying even that. He pondered and puzzled over it the greater part of the night and then reached the conclusion which the male usually reaches under such circumstances, namely, that he had better ask her pardon.

So when they next met he did that very thing and she accepted the apology. And at that meeting, and others immediately following it, no word was said by either concerning "spying" or Mr. Egbert Phillips. Yet the wall between them was left a little higher than it had been before, their friendship was not quite the same, and an experienced person, not much of a prophet at that, could have foretold that the time was coming when that friendship was to end.

It was little Esther Tidditt who laid the coping of the dividing wall. Elvira Snowden built some of the upper tiers, but Esther finished the job. Almost unbelievable as it may seem, she did not like Mr. Phillips. Of course with her tendency to take the off side in all arguments and to be almost invariably "agin the government," the fact that the rest of feminine Bayport adored the glittering Egbert might have been of itself sufficient to set up her opposition. But he had, or she considered that he had, snubbed her on several occasions and she was a dangerous person to snub. Judah expressed it characteristically when he declared that anybody who "set out" to impose on Esther Tidditt would have as lively a time as a bare-footed man trying to dance a hornpipe on a wasp's nest. "She'll keep 'em hoppin' high, *I* tell ye," proclaimed Judah.

Little Mrs. Tidditt would have liked to keep Mr. Phillips hopping high, and did administer sly digs to his grandeur whenever she could. In the praise services among the "inmates" which were almost sure to follow a call of the great man at the Fair Harbor it was disconcerting and provoking to the worshipers to have Esther refer to the idol as "that Eg." Mrs. Brackett took her to task for it.

"You ought to have more respect for his wife's memory, if nothin' else," snapped Susanna. "If it hadn't been for her and her generosity you wouldn't be here, Esther Tidditt."

"Yes, and if it hadn't been for her *he* wouldn't be here. He'd have been teachin' singin' school yet--if he wasn't in jail. *You* can call him Po-or de-ar Mr. Phillips,' if you want to; *I* call him 'Old Eg.' And he is a bad egg, too, 'cordin' to my notion. Prob'ly that's why his wife and Judge Knowles hove him out of the nest."

And, as Egbert climbed in popularity while Captain Sears Kendrick slipped back, it followed naturally that Mrs. Tidditt became more and more the friend and champion of the latter. She went out of her way to do him favors and she made it her business to keep him posted on the happenings and gossip at the Fair Harbor. He did not encourage her in this, in fact he attempted tactfully to discourage her, but Esther was not easily discouraged.

It was she who first called his attention to Miss Snowden's fondness for the Phillips society.

"Elviry's set her cap for him," declared Mrs. Tidditt. "The way she sets and looks mushy at him when he's preachin' about Portygee pictures and such is enough to keep a body from relishin' their meals."

But of late, according to Esther, Elvira was no longer the first violin in the Phillips orchestra.

"She's second fiddle," announced the little woman. "There's another craft cut acrost her bows. If you ask me who 'tis I can tell you, too, Cap'n Sears."

And Sears made it a point not to ask. Once it was Elvira herself who more than hinted, and in the presence of Elizabeth and the captain. The latter pair were at the desk together when Miss Snowden passed through the room.

"Where is mother?" asked Elizabeth. "Have you seen her, Elvira?"

Elvira's thin lips were shut tight.

"Don't ask *me*," she snapped, viciously. "She's out trapping, I suppose."

"Trapping!" Elizabeth stared at her. "What are you talking about? Trapping what?"

"I don't know. *I'm* not layin' traps to catch anything--or *anybody* either."

She sailed out of the room. Miss Berry turned to Sears.

"Do you know what she means, Cap'n Kendrick?" she asked.

Sears did know, or would have bet heavily on his guess. But he shook his head. Elizabeth was not satisfied.

"Why do you look like that?" she persisted. "*Do* you know?"

"Eh?... Oh, no, no; of course not.... I--I think I saw your mother goin' out of the gate as I came across lots. She--I presume likely she was goin' to the store or somewhere."

"She didn't tell me she was going. Was she alone?"

"Why--why, no; I think--seems to me Mr. Phillips was with her."

For the next few minutes the captain devoted his entire attention to the letter he was writing. He did not look up, but he was quite conscious that her eyes were boring him through and through. During the rest of his stay she was curt and cool. When he went she did not bid him good-by.

So the fuse was burning merrily and the inevitable explosion came three days later. The scene was this time not the Fair Harbor office, but the Minot kitchen. Judah was out and the captain was alone, reading the *Item*. The fire in the range was a new one and the kitchen was very warm, so Sears had opened the outer door in order to cool off a bit. It was a beautiful late October forenoon.

The captain was deep in the *Item's* account of the recent wreck on Peaked Hill Bars. A British bark had gone ashore there and the crew had been rescued with difficulty. He was himself dragged, metaphorically speaking, from the undertow by a voice just behind him.

"Well, you're takin' it easy, ain't you, Cap'n Sears?" observed Mrs. Tidditt. "I wish *I* didn't have nothin' to do but set and read the news."

"Oh, good mornin', Esther," said the captain. He was not particularly glad to see her. "What's wrong; anything?"

"Nothin' but my batch of gingerbread, and a quart of molasses'll save that. Can you spare it? Oh, don't get up. I know where Judah keeps it; I've been here afore."

She went to the closet, found the molasses jug, and filled her pitcher. Then she came back and sat down. She had not been invited to sit, but Esther scorned ceremony.

"No, sir," she observed, as if carrying on an uninterrupted conversation, "*I* can't set and read the newspapers. And I can't go to walk neither, even if 'tis such weather as 'tis to-day. Some folks can, though, and they've gone."

Sears turned the page of the *Item*. He made no comment. His silence did not in the least disturb his caller.

"Yes, they've gone," she repeated. "Right in the middle of the forenoon, too.... Oh, well! when the Admiral of all creation comes to get you to go cruisin' along with him, you go, I suppose. That is, some folks do. I'd like to see the man *I'd* make such a fool of myself over."

The captain was reading the "Local Jottings" now. Mrs. Tidditt kept serenely on.

"I wouldn't let any man make such a soft-headed fool of me," she declared. "'Twould take more than a mustache and a slick tongue to get *my* money away from me--if I had any."

Sears was obliged to give up the Jottings. He sighed and put down the paper.

"What's the matter, Esther?" he asked. "Who's after your money?"

"Nobody, and good reason why, too. And I ain't out cruisin' 'round the fields with an Eg neither."

"With an egg? Who is?"

"Who do you think? Cordelia Berry, of course. Him and her have gone for what he calls a little stroll. He said she was workin' her poor brain too hard and a little fresh air would do her good. Pity about her poor brain, ain't it? Well, if 'twan't

a poor one he'd never coax her into marryin' *him*, that's sartin."

"Esther, don't talk foolish."

"Nothin' foolish about it. If them two ain't keepin' company then I never saw anybody that was. He's callin' on her, and squirin' her 'round, and waitin' on her mornin', noon and night. And she--my patience! she might as well hang out a sign, 'Ready and Willin'!' She says he's the one real aristocrat she has seen since she left her father's home. Poor Cap'n Ike, he's all forgotten."

Sears stirred uneasily. Barring Tidditt exaggeration, he was inclined to believe all this very near the truth. It merely confirmed his own suspicions.

His visitor went gayly on. "I'm sorry for Elizabeth," she said. "I don't know whether the poor girl realizes how soon she's liable to have that Eg for a step-pa. I shouldn't wonder if she suspected a little. I don't see how she can help it. But, Elviry Snowden--oh, dear, dear! If *she* ain't the sourest mortal these days. I do get consider'ble fun out of Elviry. She's the one thing that keeps me reconciled to life."

The captain thought he saw an opportunity to shift Mrs. Berry from the limelight and substitute some one else.

"I thought Elvira Snowden was the one you said meant to get Egbert," he suggested.

"So I did, and so she was. But she don't count nowadays."

"Why doesn't she?"

"Well, if you ask me I shall give you an answer. Elviry Snowden ain't fell heir to five thousand dollars and Cordelia Berry has. That's why."

Sears uneasily shifted again. This conversation was following much too closely his own line of reasoning.

"Five thousand isn't any great fortune," he observed, "to a man like Phillips."

The little woman nodded. "It's five thousand dollars to a man just *like* Phillips--now," she said, significantly. "And, more'n that, Cordelia's matron at the Harbor. The Fair Harbor ain't a Eytalian palace maybe, but it's a nice, comftable place where the matron's husband might live easy and not pay board.... That's *my* guess. Other folks can have theirs and welcome."

"But----"

"There ain't no buts about it, Cap'n Kendrick. You know it's so. Eg Phillips is goin' to marry Cordelia Berry. My name ain't Elijah nor Jeremiah--no, nor Deuteronomy nuther--but I can prophesy that much."

She rose with a triumphant bounce, turned to the open door behind her, and saw Elizabeth Berry standing there. Sears Kendrick saw her at the same time.

There are periods in the life of each individual when it seems as if Fate was holding a hammer above that individual's head and, at intervals, as the head ventures to lift itself, knocking it down again. Each successive tap seems a bit harder, and the victim, during the interval of its falling, wonders if it is to be the final and finishing thump.

Sears did not wonder this time, he knew. His thought, as he saw her there, saw the expression upon her face and realized what she must have heard, was: "Here it is! This is the end."

Yet he was the first of the two to speak. Elizabeth, white and rigid, said nothing, and even Mrs. Tidditt's talking machinery seemed to be temporarily thrown out of gear. So the captain made the attempt, a feeble one.

"Why, Elizabeth," he faltered, "is that you?... Come in, won't you?"

She did come in, that is, she came as far as the door mat. Then she turned, not to him, but to his companion.

"What do you mean by speaking in that way of my mother?" she demanded.

Esther was still a trifle off balance. Her answer was rather incoherent.

"I--I don't know's I--as I said--as I said much of anything--much," she stammered.

"I heard you. How dare you tell such--such *lies*?"

"Lies?"

"Yes; mean, miserable lies. What else are they? How dare you run to--to *him* with them?"

Mrs. Tidditt's hand, that grasping the handle of the molasses pitcher, began to quiver. Her eyes, behind her steel-rimmed spectacles, winked rapidly.

"Elizabeth Berry," she snapped, with ominous emphasis, "don't you talk to me like that!"

"I shall talk to you as--as.... Oh, I should be ashamed to talk to you at all. My mother--my kind, trustful, unsuspecting mother! And you--you and he *dare*----"

Kendrick, in desperation, tried to put in a word.

"Elizabeth," he begged, "don't misunderstand. Esther hasn't been runnin' here to tell me things. She came over to borrow some molasses from Judah, that's all."

"Oh, stop! I tell you I heard what she said. And you were listening. Listening! Without a word of protest. I suppose you encouraged her. Of course you did. No doubt this isn't the first time. This may be her usual report. Not content with--with prying into closets and--and coal bins and--and----"

"Elizabeth!"

"Doing these things for yourself was not enough, I suppose. You must encourage her--pay her, perhaps--to listen and whisper scandal and to spy----"

"Stop! Stop right there!" The captain was not begging now. Even in the midst of her impassioned outburst the young woman paused, halted momentarily by the compelling force of that order. But she halted unwillingly.

"I shall not stop," she declared. "I shall say----"

"You have said a whole lot too much already. And you don't mean what you have said."

"I do! I do! Oh, I can't tell you what I think of you."

"Well," dryly, "you have made a pretty fair try at tellin' it. If it is what you really think of me it'll do--it will be quite enough. I shan't need any more."

He was looking at her gravely and steadily and before his look her own gaze wavered. If they had been alone it is barely possible that ... but they were not alone. Mrs. Tidditt was there and, by this time, as Judah would have said, "her neck-feathers were on end" and her spurs sharpened for battle. She hopped into the pit forthwith.

"I need consider'ble more," she cackled, defiantly. "I've been called a spy and a scandal whisperer and the Lord knows what else. Now I'll say somethin'."

"Esther, be still."

"I shan't be still till I'm ready, not for you, Sears Kendrick, nor for her nor nobody else. I ain't a spy, 'Lizbeth Berry, and I ain't paid by no livin' soul. But I see what I see with the eyes the Almighty give me to see with, and after I've seen it--not alone once but forty dozen times--I'll talk about it if I want to, when I want to, to anybody I want to. Now that's that much."

Elizabeth, scornfully silent, was turning to the door, but the little woman hopped--that seems the only word which describes it--in her way.

"You ain't goin'," she declared, "till I've finished. 'Twon't take me long to say it, but it's goin' to be said. I told Cap'n Sears that Eg Phillips was chasin' 'round with your mother. He is. And if she ain't glad to have him chase her then I never see anybody that was. I said them two was call'latin' to get married. Well ... well, if they ain't then they'd ought to be, that's all I'll say about *that*. And don't you ever call me a spy again as long as you live, 'Lizbeth Berry."

She hopped again, to the doorway this time. There she turned for a farewell cackle.

"One thing more," she said. "I told the cap'n I believed the reason that that Eg man wanted to marry Cordelia was on account of her bein' able to give him five thousand dollars and the Fair Harbor to live in. I do believe it. And you can tell her so--or him so. But afore I told anybody I'd think it over, if I was you, 'Lizbeth Berry. And I'd think *him* over a whole lot afore I'd let him and his 'ily tongue make trouble between you and your *real* friends.... There! Good-by."

She went away. Kendrick pulled at his beard.

"Elizabeth," he began, hastily, "I'm awfully sorry that this happened. Of course you know that I----"

She interrupted him. "I know," she said, "that if I ever speak to you again it will be because I am obliged to, not because I want to."

She followed Mrs. Tidditt. Sears Kendrick sat down once more in the rocking chair.

He did a great deal of hard and unpleasant thinking before he rose from it. When he did rise it was to go to the drawer in the bureau of the spare stateroom where he kept his writing materials, take therefrom pen, ink and paper and sit down at the table to write a letter. The letter was not long of itself, but composing it was a rather lengthy process. It was addressed to Elizabeth Berry and embodied his resignation as trustee and guardian of her inheritance from Judge Knowles.

"As I see it [he wrote] I am not the one to have charge of that money. I took the job, as you know, because the judge asked me to and because you asked me. I took it with a good deal of doubt. Now, considering the way you feel towards me, I haven't any doubt that I should give it up. I don't want you to make the mistake of thinking that I feel guilty. So far as I know I have not done anything which was not square and honest and aboveboard, either where you were concerned, or your mother, or what I believed to be the best interests of the Fair Harbor. And I am not giving up my regular berth as general manager of the Harbor itself. Judge Knowles asked me to keep that as long as I thought it was necessary for the good of the institution. I honestly believe it is more necessary now than it ever was. And I shall stay right on deck until I feel the need is over. I shan't bother you with my company any more than I can help, but you will have to put up with it about every once in so often while we go over business affairs. So much for that. The trusteeship is different and I resign it to Mr. Bradley, who was the judge's second choice."

He paused here, deliberated for a time, and then added another paragraph.

"I feel sure Bradley will take it [he wrote]. If he should refuse I will not give it up to any one else. At least not unless I am perfectly satisfied with the person chosen. This is for your safety and for no other reason."

He sent the letter over by Judah. Two days later he received a reply. It, too, was brief and to the point.

"I accept your resignation [wrote Elizabeth]. It was Judge Knowles' wish that you be my trustee, and, as you know, it was mine also. Apparently you no longer feel bound by either wish, and of course I shall not beg you to change your mind. I have no right to influence you in any way. I have seen Mr. Bradley and he has consented to act as trustee for me. He will see you in a day or two. As for the other matters I have nothing to say. Whenever you wish to consult with me on business affairs I shall be ready."

There was a postscript. It read:

"I feel that I should thank you for what you have already done. I do thank you sincerely."

So that ended it, and ended also what had been a happy period for Sears Kendrick. He made no more informal daily visits to the Fair Harbor. Twice a week, at stated times, he and Elizabeth met in the office and conferred concerning bills, letters and accounts. She was calm and impersonal during these interviews, and he tried to be so. There was no reference to other matters and no more cheerful and delightful chats, no more confidences between them. It did seem to him that she was more absent-minded, less alert and attentive to the business details than she had been, and at times he thought that she looked troubled and careworn. Perhaps, however, this was but his imagining, a sort of reflection of his own misery. For he was miserable--miserable, pessimistic and pretty thoroughly disgusted with life. His health and strength were gaining always, but he found little consolation in this. He could not go to sea just yet. He had promised Judge Knowles to stick it out and stick he would. But he longed--oh, how he longed!--for the blue water and a deck beneath his feet. Perhaps, a thousand miles from land, with a gale blowing and a ship to handle, as a real deep-sea skipper he could forget--forget a face and a voice and a succession of silly fancies which could not, apparently, be wholly forgotten by the middle-aged skipper of an old women's home.

One morning, after a troubled night, on his way to a conference with Elizabeth at the Fair Harbor office, he met Mr. Egbert Phillips. The latter, serene, benign, elegant, was entering at the gateway beneath the swinging sign which proclaimed to the other world that within the Harbor all was peace. Of late Captain Kendrick had found a certain flavor of irony in the wording of that sign.

Kendrick and Phillips reached the gate at the same moment. They exchanged good mornings. Egbert's was sweetly and condescendingly gracious, the captain's rather short and brusque. Since the encounter in the office where, in the presence of Elizabeth, Phillips' polite inuendoes had goaded Sears into an indiscreet revelation of his real feeling toward the elegant widower--since that day relations between the two had been maintained on a basis of armed neutrality. They bowed, they smiled, they even spoke, although seldom at length. Kendrick had made up his mind not to lose his temper again. His adversary should not have that advantage over him.

But this morning to save his life he could not have appeared as unruffled as usual. The night had been uncomfortable, his waking thoughts disturbing. His position was a hard one, he was feeling rebellious against Fate and even against Judge Knowles, who, as Fate's agent, had gotten him into that position. And the sight of the tall figure, genteelly

swinging its cane and beaming patronage upon the world in general, was a little too much for him. So his good morning was more of a grunt than a greeting.

It may be that Egbert noticed this. Or it may be that with his triumph so closely approaching a certainty he could not resist a slight gloat. At all events he paused for an instant, a demure gleam in his eye and the corner of his lip beneath the drooping mustache lifting in an amused smile.

"A beautiful day, Captain," he said.

Kendrick admitted the day's beauty. He would have passed through the gateway, but Mr. Phillips' figure and Mr. Phillips' cane blocked the way.

"It seems to me that we do not see as much of you here at the Harbor as we used, Captain Kendrick," observed Egbert. "Or is that my fancy merely?"

The captain's answer was noncommittal. Again he attempted to pass and again the Phillips' walking-stick casually prevented.

"I trust that nothing serious has occurred to deprive us of your society, Captain?" queried the owner of the stick, solicitously. "No accident, no further accident, or anything of that sort?"

"No."

"And you are quite well? Pardon me, but I fancied that you looked--ah--shall I say disturbed--or worried, perhaps?"

"No. I'm all right."

"I am so glad to hear it. I gathered--that is, I feared that perhaps the cares incidental to your--" again the slight smile--"your labors as general supervisor of the Harbor might be undermining your health. I am charmed to have you tell me that that is not the case."

"Thanks."

"Of course--" Mr. Phillips drew a geometrical figure with the cane in the earth of the flower bed by the path--"of course," he said, "speaking as one who has had some sad experience with illness and that sort of thing, it has always seemed to me that one should not take chances with one's health. If the cares of a particular avocation--situation--position--whatever it may be--if the cares and--ah--disappointments incidental to it are affecting one's physical condition it has always seemed to me wiser to sacrifice the first for the second. And make the sacrifice in time. You see what I mean?"

Kendrick, standing by the post of the gateway, looked at him.

"Why, no," he said, slowly, "I don't know that I do. What do you mean?"

The cane was drawn through the first figure in the flower bed and began to trace another. Again Mr. Phillips smiled.

"Why, nothing in particular, my dear sir," he replied. "Perhaps nothing at all... I had heard--mere rumor, no doubt--that you contemplated giving up your position as superintendent here. I trust it is not true?"

"It isn't."

"I am delighted to hear you say so. We--we of the Harbor--should miss you greatly."

"Thanks. Do you mind telling me who told you I was goin' to give up the superintendent's position?"

"Why, I don't remember. It came to my ears, it seemed to be a sort of general impression. Of course, now that you tell me it is not true I shall take pains to deny it. And permit me to express my gratification."

"Just a minute. Did they say--did this general impression say why I was givin' up the job?"

"No-o, no, I think not. I believe it was hinted that you were not well and--perhaps somewhat tired--a little discouraged--that sort of thing. As I say, it was mere rumor."

Sears smiled now--that is, his lips smiled, his eyes were grave enough.

"Well," he observed, deliberately, "if you have a chance, Mr. Phillips, you can tell those mere rumorers that I'm not tired at all. My health is better than it has been for months. So far from bein' discouraged, you can tell 'em that--well, you know what Commodore Paul Jones told the British cap'n who asked him to surrender; he told him that he had just begun to fight. That's the way it is with me, Mr. Phillips, I've just begun to fight."

The cane was lifted from the flower bed. Egbert nodded in polite appreciation.

"Really?" he said. "How interesting, Captain!"

Kendrick nodded, also. "Yes, isn't it?" he agreed. "Were you goin' into the Harbor, Phillips? So am I. We'll walk along

together."

But that night he went to his bed in better spirits. Egbert's little dig had been the very thing he needed, and now he knew it. He had been discouraged; in spite of his declaration in his letter to Elizabeth Berry, he had wished that it were possible to run away from the Fair Harbor and everything connected with it. But now--now he had no wish of that kind. If Judge Knowles could rise from the grave and bid him quit he would not do it.

Quit? Not much! Like Paul Jones, he had just begun to fight.

CHAPTER XV

But there was so little that was tangible to fight, that was the trouble. If Mr. Egbert Phillips was the villain of the piece he was such a light and airy villain that it was hard to take him seriously enough. Even when Kendrick was most thoroughly angry with him and most completely convinced that he was responsible for all his own troubles, including the loss of Elizabeth Berry's friendship--even then he found it hard to sit down and deliberately plan a campaign against him. It seemed like campaigning against a butterfly. The captain disliked him extremely, but he never felt a desire to knock him down. To kick him--yes. Perhaps to thump the beaver hat over his eyes and help him down the brick path of the Harbor with the judicious application of a boot, grinning broadly during the process--that was Sears Kendrick's idea of a fitting treatment for King Egbert the Great.

The captain had done his share of fighting during an adventurous lifetime, but his opponents had always been men. Somehow Phillips did not seem to him like a man. A creature so very ornamental, with so much flourish, so superlatively elegant, so overwhelmingly correct, so altogether and all the time the teacher of singing school or dancing school--how could one seriously set about fighting such a bundle of fluff? A feather-duster seemed a more fitting weapon than a shotgun.

But the fluff was flying high and in the sunshine and was already far out of reach of the duster. Soon it would be out of reach of the shotgun. Unless the fight was made serious and deadly at once there would be none at all. Unless having already lost about all that made life worth living, Sears Kendrick wished to be driven from Bayport in inglorious rout, he had better campaign in earnest. Passive resistance must end.

As a beginning he questioned Judah once more concerning Phillips' standing in the community. It was unchanged, so Judah said. He was quite as popular, still the brave and uncomplaining martyr, always the idol of the women and a large proportion of the men.

"Did you hear about him down to the Orthodox church fair last week?" asked Mr. Cahoon. "You didn't! Creepin'! I thought everybody aboard had heard about that. Seems they'd sold about everything there was to sell, but of course there was a few things left, same as there always is, and amongst 'em was a patchwork comforter that old Mrs. Jarvis--Cap'n Azariah Jarvis's second wife she was--you remember Cap'n Azariah, don't ye, Cap'n Sears? He was the one that used to swear so like fury. Didn't mean nothin' by it, just a habit 'twas, same as usin' tobacco or rum is with some folks. Didn't know when---- Eh? Oh, yes, about that comforter. Why, old Mrs. Jarvis she made it for the fair and it wan't sold. 'Twas one of them log-cabin quilts, you know. I don't know why they call 'em log cabins, they don't look no more like a log cabin than my head does. I cal'late they have to call 'em somethin' so's to tell 'em from the risin' sun quilts and the momin'-glory quilts and--and the Lord-knows-what quilts. The womenfolks make mo-ore kinds of them quilts and comforters, seems so, than----

"Eh? Oh, yes, I'm beatin' up to Egbert, Cap'n Sears; I'll be alongside him in a minute, give me steerage way. Well, the log-cabin quilt wan't sold and they wanted to sell it, partly because old Mrs. Jarvis would feel bad if nobody bought it, and partly because the meetin'-house folks would feel worse if any money got away from 'em at a fair. So Mr. Dishup he says, 'We'll auction of it off,' he says, 'and our honored and beloved friend, Mr. Phillips, will maybe so be kind enough to act as auctioneer.' So Eg, he got up and apologized for bein' chose, and went on to say what a all-round no-good auctioneer he'd be but how he couldn't say no to the folks of the church where his dear diseased wife had worshiped so long, and then he started in to sell that comforter. Did he *sell* it? Why, creepin', crawlin', hoppin' ... Cap'n Sears, he could have sold a shipload of them log-cabins if he'd had 'em handy. He held the thing up in front of 'em, so they tell me, and he just praised it up same as John B. Gough praises up cold water at a temp'rance lecture. He told how the old woman had worked over it, and set up nights over it, and got her nerves all into a titter and her finger ends all rags, as you might say, and how she had done it just to do somethin' for the meetin'-house she thought so much of, the church

that her loved and lost husband used to come to so reg'lar. *That* was all fiddlesticks, 'cause Cap'n Az never went to church except for the six weeks after he was married, and pretty scatterm' long the last three of *them*.

"Well, he hadn't talked that way very long afore he had that whole vestry as damp as a fishin' schooner's deck in a Banks fog. All hands--even the men that had been spendin' money for the fair things, tidies and aprons and splint work picture-frames and such, even they was cryin'. And then old Mrs. Jarvis--and she was cryin', too--she went and whispered to the minister and he whispered to Phillips and Phillips, he says: 'Ladies and gentlemen,' he says, 'I have just learned that a part of this quilt was made from a suit of clothes worn by Cap'n Jarvis on his last v'yage,' he says. '*Just* think of it,' says he, 'this blue strip here is a part of the coat worn by him as he trod the deck of his ship homeward bound--bound home to his wife, bound home to die.'

"Well, all hands cried more'n ever at that, and Mrs. Jarvis got up, with the tears a-runnin', and says she: 'It wan't his coat,' she says. 'I sold the coat and vest to a peddler. 'Twas his----' But Egbert cut in afore she could tell what 'twas, and then he got 'em to biddin'. Creepin' Henry, Cap'n Sears! that log-cabin quilt sold for nine dollars and a half, and the man that bought it was Philander Comstock, the tailor over to Denboro. And Philander told me himself that he didn't know why he bought it. '*I* made that suit of clothes for Cap'n Azariah, myself,' he says, 'and he died afore I got half my pay for it. But that Phillips man,' he says, 'could sell a spyglass to a blind man.'"

The captain asked Judah if he had heard any testimony on the other side; were there any people in Bayport who did not like Mr. Phillips. Judah thought it over.

"We-ll," he said, reflectively, "I don't know as I've ever heard anybody come right out and call him names. Anybody but Esther Tidditt, that is; she's down on him like a sheet anchor on a crab. Sometimes Elviry snaps out somethin' spiteful, but most of that's jealousy, I callate. You see, Elviry had her cap all set for this Egbert widower--that is, all hands seems to callate she had--and then she began to find her nose was bein' put out of j'int. You know who they're sayin' put it out, Cap'n Sears? There seems to be a general notion around town that----"

Kendrick interrupted; this was a matter he did not care to discuss with Judah or any one else. There had been quite enough said on that subject.

"Yes, yes, all right, Judah," he said, hastily. "But the men? Do the men like him as well as the women?"

"Why--why, yes, I guess so. Not quite so well, of course. That wouldn't be natural, would it, Cap'n Sears?"

"Perhaps not. But have you ever heard any man say anything against him, anything definite? Does he pay his bills?"

"Eh? Why, I don't know. I ain't never----"

"All right. Who does he chum around with mostly? Who are his best friends?"

Mr. Cahoon gave a list of them, beginning of course with the Wingates and the Dishups and the members of the Shakespeare Reading Society and ending with George Kent.

"He cruises along with George a whole lot," declared Judah. "Them two are together about half the time. George don't work to the store no more. You knew that, didn't you?"

If Sears had heard it, he had forgotten. Judah went on to explain.

"He hove up his job at Elphalet's quite a spell ago," he said "He's studyin' law along with Bradley same as ever, but 'he's busy lawin' here in Bayport, too. Some of his relations died and left a lot of money, so folks tell, and George is what they call administer of the estate. It's an awful good thing for him, all hands callate. Some say he's rich."

The captain vaguely remembered Kent's disclosure to him concerning his appointment as administrator of his aunt's estate. He had not exchanged a word with the young man since the evening of the latter's call and Elizabeth's interruption. It seemed a long while ago. Much--and so much that was unpleasant--had happened since then. Kent and he had met, of course, and on the first two or three occasions, Kendrick had spoken. The young fellow had not replied. Now, at the mention of his name, Kendrick felt an uneasy pang, almost of guilt. He had done nothing wrong, of course yet if it had not been for him perhaps the two young people might still have been friends or even more than friends. It was true that Elizabeth had told him but there, what difference did it make what she told him? She had told him other things since, things that he could not forget.

"Well, all right, Judah," he said. "It wasn't important. Run along."

Judah did not run along. He remained, looking at his lodger with a troubled expression. The latter noticed it.

"What is it, Judah?" he asked. "Anything wrong?"

Mr. Cahoon's fingers moved uneasily through the heavy foliage upon his chin. "Why--why, Cap'n Sears," he stammered, "can I ask you somethin'?"

"Certain. Fire away."

"Well--well--it--it ain't true, is it, that you done anything to set Elizabeth Berry against that young Kent feller? You never told her nothin'--or did nothin'--or--or----"

He seemed to find it hard to finish his sentence. The captain did not wait, but asked a question of his own.

"Who said I did, Judah?" he asked.

"Hey?... Oh, I--I don't know. Why--why, some of them sculpin'-mouths down to the store they say that you--that you told Elizabeth a lot of things--or did somethin' or 'nother to spite George with her. Of course I knew 'twan't so, but--but--"

"But they said it was, eh? Well, it isn't true. I haven't done anything of that kind, Judah."

The Cahoon fist descended upon the kitchen table with a thump. "I knew it!" roared Judah. "I knew dum well 'twas a cargo of lies. Now just wait. Let one of them swabs just open his main hatch and start to unload another passel of that cargo. If I don't----"

"Shh, shh! Don't do that. I tell you what to do. If you want to help me, Judah, you say nothin', but try and find out who told them these things. Some one has been pretty busy tellin' things to my discredit for some time. Don't let any one know what you're after, but see if you can find out who is responsible. Will you?"

"Sartin sure I will. And when I do find out----"

"When you do, let me know. And Judah, one thing more: Find out all that you can find out about this Phillips man. See if he owes anybody money. See if he pays his debts. See if he--well, find out all you can about him; but don't let any one know you're tryin' to find out, that's all. Do you understand?"

"Eh?... Why, I guess likely I do.... But--but.... Eh? Cap'n Sears, do you mean to say you cal'late that that Eg Phillips is at the back of all this talk against you in Bayport? Do you mean that?"

"Humph! So there is talk against me; a lot of it, I suppose?"

Judah forgot to be discreet. "Talk!" he shouted. "There's more underhand, sneakin' lies about you goin' around this flat-bottomed, leaky, gurry-and-bilgewater tub of a town than there is fiddlers in Tophet. I've denied 'em and contradicted 'em till I'm hoarse from hollerin'. I've offered to fight anybody who dast to say they was true, but, by the hoppin' Henry, nobody ever said any more than that they'd heard they was. And I never could find out who started 'em. And do you mean to say you believe that long-legged critter with the beaver hat and the--the mustache like a drowned cat's tail is responsible?"

Captain Kendrick hesitated for an instant. Then he nodded. "I think he is, Judah," he said, solemnly.

"Then, by the creepin', crawlin'----"

"Wait! I don't know that he is. I don't know much about him. But I mean to find out all about him, if I can. And I want you to help me."

"I'll help. And when you find out, Cap'n?"

"Well, that depends. If I find out anything that will give me the chance, I'll--I'll smash him as flat as that."

He struck the table now, with his open palm. Mr. Cahoon grinned delightedly.

"I bet you will, Cap'n Sears!" he vowed. "And if he ain't flat enough then I'll come and jump on him. And I ain't no West Injy hummin'-bird neither."

Kendrick's next move was to talk with his sister. Her visits at the Minot place had not been quite as frequent of late. She came, of course, but not as often, or so it seemed to the captain, and when she came she carefully avoided all reference to her new boarder. Sears knew the reason, or thought he did. He had hurt her feelings by intimating that Mr. Phillips might not be as altogether speckless as she thought him. He had not enthused over her giving up the best parlor to his Egbertship and Sarah was disappointed. But, loyal and loving soul that she was, she would not risk even the slightest disagreement with her brother, and so when she called, spoke of everything or everybody but the possible cause of such disagreement. Yet the cause was there and between brother and sister, as between Elizabeth and Sears, lay the slim, lengthy, gracefully undulating shadow of Judge Knowles' pet bugbear, who was rapidly becoming Sears Kendrick's bugbear as well.

The captain had not visited the Macomber home more than twice since Judah carted him away from it in the blue truck-wagon. One fine day, however, he and the Foam Flake made the journey again, although with the buggy, not the wagon. He chose a time when he knew Kent was almost certain to be over at Bradley's office in Orham and when Phillips was not likely to be in his rooms. Of course there was a chance that he might encounter the latter, but he thought it unlikely. His guess was a good one and Egbert was out, had gone for a ride, so Mrs. Macomber said. Mrs. Cap'n Elkanah Wingate had furnished the necessary wherewithal for riding. "The Wingates let him use their horse and

team real often," said Sarah. "They're awful fond of him, Mrs. Wingate especial. I don't know as Cap'n Elkanah is so much; he is kind of cross-grained sometimes and it's hard for him to like anybody very long."

She was hard at work, ironing this time, but she would have put the flatiron back on the stove and taken her brother to the sitting room if he had permitted. "The idea of a man like you, Sears, havin' to sit on an old broken-down chair out here in the wash-shed," she exclaimed. "It ain't fittin'."

The captain sniffed. "I guess if it's fittin' for you to be workin' out here I shouldn't complain at sittin' here," he observed. "Is that Joel's shirt? He's gettin' awfully high-toned--and high collared, seems to me."

Mrs. Macomber was slightly confused. "Why, no," she said, "this isn't Joe's shirt. It's Mr. Phillips's. Ain't it lovely linen? I don't know as I ever saw any finer."

Her brother leaned back in the broken chair. "Do you do his washin' for him, Sarah?" he demanded.

"Why--why, yes, Sears. You see, he's real particular about how it's done, and of course you can't blame him, he has such lovely things. He tried two of the regular washwomen, Elsie Doyle and Peleg Carpenter's wife, and they did 'em up just dreadful. So, just to help him out one time, I tried 'em myself. And they came out real nice, if I do say it, and he was so pleased. So ever since then I have been doin' 'em for him. It's hardly any trouble--any extra trouble. I have to do our own washin', you know."

Sears did know, also he knew the size of that washing.

"Does he pay you for it?" he asked, sharply. "Pay you enough, I mean?"

"Why--why, yes. Of course he doesn't pay a whole lot. Not as much maybe as if he was a stranger, somebody who didn't pay me regular board, you know."

"Humph! Do you get your money?"

"Why, yes. Of course I do."

"He doesn't owe you anything, then, for board or lodgin' or anything?"

Mrs. Macomber hesitated. "Nothin' much," she replied, after a moment. "Of course he gets a little behind sometimes, everybody does that, you know. But then his dividend payments or somethin' come to him and he pays right up in a lump. It's kind of nice havin' it come that way, seems more, you know."

"Yes. So long as it keeps on comin'. His dividends, you say? I thought the story was that he hadn't any stocks left to get dividends from. I thought he told all hands that he was poverty-stricken, that when he was cut out of the Harbor property and the fifty thousand he hadn't a copper."

"Oh no not as bad as that. He had some stocks and bonds, of course. Why, if he hadn't where would he get *any* money from? How could he live?"

"I don't know. He seems to be livin', though, and pretty well. Has he got the parlor yet?"

"Yes, and it's fixed up so pretty. He's got his pictures and things around. Wouldn't you like to see it? He's out, you know."

They went into the parlor and the bedroom adjoining, that which the captain had occupied during his stay. Both rooms were as neat as wax--Sears expected that, knowing his sister's housekeeping--but he had scarcely expected to find the rooms so changed. The furniture was the same, but the wall decorations were not.

"What's become of the alum basket and the wax wreath and the Rock of Ages chromo?" he asked.

"Oh, he took 'em down. That is, he didn't do it himself, of course, but he had Joel do it. They're up attic. Mr. Phillips said they was so like the things that his wife used to have in the dear old home that he couldn't bear to see 'em. They reminded him so of her. He asked if we would mind if they was removed and we said no, of course."

"Humph! And the Macomber family coffin plates, those you had set out on black velvet with all Joel's dead relations names on 'em, in the plush and gilt frame? Are those up attic, too?"

"Yes."

"I should have thought 'twould have broken Joel's heart to part with *them!*"

"Sears, you're makin' fun. I don't blame you much. I always did hate those coffin plates, but Joel seemed to like 'em. They were in his folks' front parlor, he says."

"Yes. That 'Death of Washin'ton' picture and the rounder-case thing with the locks of hair in it were there, too, you told me once. That must have been a lively room. Those--er--horse pictures are Egbert's, I suppose?"

"Yes. He is real fond of horses."

The "horse pictures" were colored plates of racers.

"That's a portrait of his wife over there," explained Sarah. "She had it painted in Italy on purpose for him."

"Is that so? Well, I'm glad it was for him. I shouldn't think it was hardly fittin' for anybody outside the family. Of course Italy's a warm climate, but----"

"Sears!" Mrs. Macomber blushed. "Of course I didn't mean *that* picture," she protested. "And you know I didn't. I wouldn't have that one up at all if I had *my* way. But he says it's an old master and very famous and all like that. Maybe so, but I'm thankful the children ain't allowed in here. That's Lobelia over there."

In the bedroom were other pictures, photographs for the most part. Many of them were autographed.

"They're girl friends of his wife's," said Sarah. "She met 'em over abroad. Real pretty, some of them, ain't they?"

They were, and the inscriptions were delightfully informal and friendly. Lobelia Phillips' name was not inscribed, but her husband's was occasionally. Upon the table, by a half-emptied cigar box, lay a Boston paper of the day before. It was folded with the page of stock market quotations uppermost. Sears picked it up. One item was underscored with a pencil. It was the record of the day's sales of "C. M.," a stock with which the captain was quite unfamiliar. His unfamiliarity was not surprising; he had little acquaintance with the stock market.

Back in the wash-shed, brother and sister chatted while the ironing continued. Sears led the conversation around until it touched upon George Kent. George was still boarding with them, so Sarah said. Yes, he had given up his place as bookkeeper at Bassett's store.

"He's administrator of his aunt's estate," she went on. "You knew that, Sears? It's a pretty responsible position for such a young man, I guess. I'm afraid it's a good deal of worry for him. He's seemed to me kind of troubled lately. I thought at first it might be on account of Elizabeth Berry--everybody knows they've had some quarrel or somethin'--but I'm beginnin' to be afraid it may be somethin' else. He and Mr. Phillips are together about all the time. They're great friends, and I'm so glad, because if George *should* be in any trouble--about business or anything--a man of Mr. Phillips' experience would be a wonderful friend to have."

"What makes you think it may be a business trouble?" asked the captain, casually.

Mrs. Macomber hesitated. "Why," she said, "I heard somethin' yesterday that made me think so. It wasn't meant for me to hear, but I just happened to. I don't know as I'd ought to say anything about it--I shouldn't to anybody but you, Sears--yet it has worried me a good deal. Mr. Phillips and George were standin' together in the hall as I went by. They didn't see me, and I heard George say, 'Somethin' *must* be done about it,' he says. 'It can't go on for another week.' And Mr. Phillips said, kind and comfortin'--nice as he always is, but still it did seem to me a little mite impatient--'I tell you it is all right,' he said. 'Wait a while and it will be all right.' Then George said somethin' that I didn't catch, and Mr. Phillips said, 'But I can't, I tell you. I'm in exactly the same boat.' And George said, 'You've *got* to! you've got to! If you don't it'll be the end of me.' That was what he said--'It will be the end of me.' And oh, Sears, he did sound *so* distressed. It has troubled me ever since. What do you suppose it could be that would be the end of him?"

Her brother shook his head. "Give it up," he said. "Humph!... And Egbert said he was in the same boat, did he? That's interestin'. It must be a pretty swell liner; he wouldn't be aboard anything else."

But Mrs. Macomber declined to joke. "You wouldn't laugh," she declared, "if you had heard George talk. He's just a boy, Sears, a real kind-hearted, well-meanin' boy, and I hate to think of him as in any more trouble."

"Any more? What do you mean by more?"

"Why--why--oh, well, everybody knows he and Elizabeth ain't keepin' company any longer. And--and----"

"And everybody thinks I am to blame. Well, I'm not, Sarah. Not intentionally, anyhow. And, if George would let me, I should be glad to be a friend of his. Not as grand and top-lofty a friend as Admiral Egbert, of course, but as good as my rank and ratin' in life will let me be."

"Sears," reproachfully, "I hate to hear you speak in that sarcastic way. And I can't see why you mistrust Mr. Phillips so."

"Can't you? Well, I don't know as I can, myself; but if I live long enough I may find a reason.... As for Kent--well, I tell you, Sarah: You keep an eye on the boy. If he still seems worried, or more worried, and you think it advisable, you might give him a message from me. You remind him that one time he told me if he ever got into real trouble he should come to me for help. You can say--if you think it advisable--that I am just as willin' to give that help now as ever I was."

"Oh, Sears, do you mean it? Why, I thought--I was afraid that you and he----"

"That's all right. I am the young fellow's friend--if he wants me to be. And, although I'm a thousand sea miles from guaranteein' to be able to help him, I'm willin' to try my hardest.... But there! the chances are he won't listen if you do tell

him, so use your own judgment in the matter. But, Sarah, will you do me a favor?"

"Sears! How can you! As if I wouldn't do anything for you!"

"I know you would. And this isn't so very much, either. I'm kind of interested in this Phillips man's dividends and things. I'd like to know how he makes his money. I noticed that that newspaper in his room was folded with the stock price page on top. Is he interested in stock and such things?"

"Why, yes, he is. I've heard him and George talkin' about what they call the 'market.' That means stocks, doesn't it?"

"Um-hm, usually. Well, Sarah, if he happens to mention any particular stock he owns, or anything like that, try and remember and let me know, will you?"

"Yes, of course, if you want me to. But why, Sears? There's nothing wrong in a man like Mr. Phillips bein' interested in such things, is there? I should think it would be--well, sort of natural for a person who has been rich as he used to be to keep up his interest."

"I presume likely it is."

"Then why do you want to know about it?"

The captain picked up his hat. "Oh, for no particular reason, maybe, Sarah," he replied. "Perhaps *I* shall be rich sometime--if I live to be a hundred and eighty and save a dollar a day as I go along--and then I shall want to know how to invest my money. Let me know if you hear anything worth while, won't you, Sarah?"

"Yes, Sears. And if I get a chance I am goin' to tell George what you said about bein' his friend and willin' to help him. Good-by, Sears. I'm *so* glad you came down. Come again soon, won't you? You're the only brother I've got, you know."

Kendrick drove the Foam Flake back to the Minot place, reflecting during the journey upon what he had seen and heard while visiting his sister. It amounted to very little in the way of tangible evidence against Egbert Phillips. Sporting prints and dashing photographs were interesting perhaps, and in a way they illuminated the past; but they did not illumine the present, they shed no light upon their owner's means of living, nor the extent of those means. Egbert occupied the best rooms at the Macomber's, but, apparently, he paid for his board and lodging--yes, and his washing. He might be interested in stocks, but there was nothing criminal in that, of itself. The Kendrick campaign was, so far, an utter failure.

Another week dragged by with no developments worth while. Judah, much inflated with the importance of his commission as a member of the Kendrick secret service, made voluminous and wordy reports, but they amounted to nothing. Mr. Phillips had borrowed five dollars of Caleb Snow. Had he paid the debt? Oh, yes, he had paid it. He smoked "consider'ble many" cigars, "real good cigars, too; cost over ten cents a piece by the box," so he told Thoph Black. But, so far as Black or Judah knew, he had paid for them. He owed a fair-sized bill at the livery-stable, but the stable owner "wan't worried none." There was little of interest here. No criminal record, rather the contrary.

Esther Tidditt dropped in from time to time, loaded, as Judah said, "to the guards" with Fair Harbor gossip. Captain Sears did not encourage her visits. Aside from learning what he could concerning the doings of Egbert Phillips, he was little interested in petty squabbles and whispers among the "mariners' women." Except by Esther he was almost entirely ignored by the inmates. Elizabeth he saw daily for a short time, but for her sake he made those times as brief as he could. Her mother he saw occasionally; she spoke to him only when necessary. Elvira, Mrs. Brackett, Desire Peasly and the rest gave him the snippiest of bows when they met and whispered and giggled behind his back.

It had seemed to him that Elizabeth looked more careworn of late. He did not mention it to her, of course, but it troubled him. He speculated concerning the cause and was inclined, entirely without good reason, to suspect Egbert, just as he was inclined to suspect him of being the cause of most unpleasantness. Something that Mrs. Tidditt said during one of her evening "dropping-ins" supplied a possible base for suspicion in this particular case.

"Elizabeth and her mother has had some sort of a rumpus," declared Esther. "They ain't hardly on speakin' terms with one another these days. That is," she added, "Cordelia ain't. I guess likely Elizabeth would be as nice as she always is if her ma would give her the chance. Cordelia goes around all divided up between tears and joy, as you might say. When she's nigh her daughter she looks as if she was just about ready to cry--lee scuppers all awash, as my husband used to say when I was in the same condition; which wan't often, for cryin' ain't much in my line. Yes, when Elizabeth's lookin' at her she's right on the ragged edge of tears. But you let that dratted Eg heave in sight with all sail sot and signals flyin' and she's all smiles in a minute. Oh, what a fool a fool woman can be when she sets out to be!... Hey? What did you say, Cap'n Kendrick?"

"I didn't say anything, Esther."

"Oh, didn't you? I thought you did. There's one ray of comfort over acrost, anyhow. Elizabeth ain't in love with old Eggie, even if her mother is. She and he have had a run-in or I miss my guess."

The captain was interested now. "What makes you think that?" he asked.

"Oh, from things I've seen. He's all soft soap and sweet ile to her same as he always was--little more so, if anything--but she is cold as the bottom of a well to him. No, they've had a row and of course the reason's plain enough. That night over here when she called me a spy and a lot more names I told her a few things for her own good. I told her she had better think over what I said about that Eg's schemin' to get her mother and the five thousand dollars. I told her to think that over and think Eg over, too. She was terribly high and mighty then, but I bet you she's done some thinkin' since. Yes, and come to the conclusion that, spy or no spy, I was tellin' the plain truth.... Hey, Cap'n Kendrick?"

"Eh?... Oh, yes, yes; I shouldn't wonder, Esther."

"I shouldn't wonder, neither. But it won't have no effect on Cordelia. She'd put her best Sunday bonnet on the ground and let that Eg dance the grand fandango on it if he asked her to. Poor, soft-headed critter."

"Yes, yes.... Humph! Any other news? How is Elvira?"

"Oh, she's full of spite and jealousy as a yeast jug is full of pop. She pretends that the idea of anything serious between Cordelia and Phillips is just silliness. Might as well talk about King Solomon in all his glory marryin' the woman that done his washin'--that's what she pretends to believe. It's all Cordelia and not Eg at all, that's what she says. But she knows better, just the same. She's got somethin' else to think about now. That aunt of hers over to Ostable, the one that owns them iron images she wanted the Harbor to buy--she's sick, the aunt is. Elvira's pretty worried about her; she's the old woman's only relation."

Kendrick had heard nothing further from his sister in the matter of young Kent and his trouble, whatever the latter might be. Sears had pondered a good deal concerning it and tried to guess in what possible way the boy could be "in the same boat" with Egbert. There was little use in guessing, however, and he had given up trying. And another week passed, another fruitless, dreary, hopeless week.

Judah's lodge night came around again and Mr. Cahoon, after asking his skipper's permission, departed for the meeting, leaving Sears Kendrick alone. It was a beastly November evening, cold and with a heavy rain beating against the windows of the Minot kitchen, and a wind which shrieked and howled about the corners and gables of the old house, rattled every loose shingle, and set the dry bones of the wisteria vine scratching and thumping against the walls. The water was thrown in bucketfuls against the ancient panes and poured from the sashes as if the latter were miniature dams in flood time.

Sears sat by the kitchen stove, smoking and trying to read. He could make a success of the smoking, but the attempt at reading was a failure. It was so much easier to think, so much easier to let his thoughts dwell upon his own dismal, wretched, discouraging story than to follow the fortunes of Thaddeus of Warsaw through the long succession of printed pages. And he had read Thaddeus's story before. He knew exactly how it would end. But how would his own story end? He might speculate much, but nowhere in all his speculations was there a sign of a happy ending.

His pipe went out, he tossed the book upon the table among the supper dishes--Judah had been in too great a hurry to clear away--and leaned back in his chair. Then he rose and walked--he could walk pretty well now, the limp was but slight--to the window and, lifting the shade, peered out.

He could see nothing, or almost nothing. The illumined windows made yellow pools of light upon the wet bricks below them, and across the darkness above were shining ribbons of rain. Against the black sky shapes of deeper blackness were moving rapidly, the bare thrashing branches of the locust tree. It was a beastly night, so he thought as he looked out at it; a beastly night in a wretched world.

Then above the noises of screeching wind and splashing water he heard other sounds, sounds growing louder, approaching footsteps. Some one was coming up the walk from the road.

He thought of course that it was Judah returning. He could not imagine why he should return, but it was more impossible to imagine any one else being out and coming to the Minot place on such a night. A figure, bent to the storm, passed across the light from the window. Captain Kendrick dropped the shade and strode through the little entry to the back door. He threw it open.

"Come in, Judah," he ordered. "Come in quick, before we both drown."

But the man who came in was not Judah Cahoon. He was George Kent.

CHAPTER XVI

The young man plunged across the threshold, the skirts of his dripping overcoat flapping about his knees and the water pouring from the brim of his hat. He carried the ruin of what had been an umbrella in his hand. It had been blown inside out, and was now but a crumpled tangle of wet fabric and bent and bristling wire. He stumbled over the sill, halted, and turning, addressed the man who had opened the door.

"Cap'n," he stammered, breathlessly, "I--I--I've come to see you. I--I know you must think--I don't know what you can think--but--but----"

Kendrick interrupted. He was surprised, but he did not permit his astonishment to loosen his grip on realities.

"Go in the other room," he ordered. "In the kitchen there by the fire. I'll be with you soon as I shut this door. Go on. Don't wait!"

Kent did not seem to hear him.

"Cap'n," he began, again, "I----"

"Do as I tell you. Go in there by the stove."

He seized his visitor by the shoulder and pushed him out of the entry. Then he closed and fastened the outer door. This was a matter of main strength, for the gale was fighting mad. When the latch clicked and the hook dropped into the staple he, too, entered the kitchen. Kent had obeyed orders to the extent of going over to the stove, but he had not removed his hat or coat and seemed to be quite oblivious of them or the fire or anything except the words he was trying to utter.

"Cap'n Kendrick," he began again, "I----"

"Sshh! Hush! Take off your things. Man alive, you're sheddin' water like a whistlin' buoy. Give me that coat. And that umbrella, what there is left of it. That's the ticket. Now sit down in that rocker and put your feet up on the hearth... Whew! Are you wet through?"

"No. No, I guess not. I----"

"Haven't got a chill, have you? Can't I get you somethin' hot to drink? Judah generally has a bottle of some sort of life-saver hid around in the locker somewhere. A hot toddy now?... Eh? Well, all right, all right. No, don't talk yet. Get warm first."

Kent refused the hot toddy and would have persisted in talking at once if his host had permitted. The latter refused to listen, and so the young man sat silent in the rocking chair, his soaked trouser legs and boots steaming in the heat from the open door of the oven, while the captain bustled about, hanging the wet overcoat on a nail in the corner, tossing the wrecked umbrella behind the stove and pretending not to look at his caller.

He did look, however, and what he saw was interesting certainly and might have been alarming had he been a person easily frightened or unduly apprehensive. Kent's wet cheeks had dried and they were flushed now from the warmth, but they were haggard, his eyes were underscored with dark semicircles, and his hands as he held them over the red-hot stove lids were trembling. He looked almost as if he were sick, but a sick man would scarcely be out of doors in such a storm. He had, apparently, forgotten his desire to talk, and was now silent, his gaze fixed upon the wall behind the stove.

Kendrick quietly placed a chair beside him and sat down.

"Well, George?" he asked.

Kent started. "Oh!" he exclaimed. And then, "Oh, yes! Cap'n Kendrick, I--I know you must think my coming here is queer, after--after----"

He hesitated. The captain helped him on.

"Not a bit, George," he said. "Not a bit. I'm mighty glad to see you. I told you to come any time, you remember. Well, you've come, haven't you? Now what is it?"

Kent's gaze left the wall and turned toward his companion. "Cap'n Kendrick," he began, then stopped. "Cap'n Kendrick," he repeated, "I--Mrs. Macomber said--she told me you said that--that----"

"All right, George, all right. I told her to remind you that one time you promised to come to me if you was in any--er--"

well, trouble, or if you had anything on your mind. I judge that's what you've come for, isn't it?"

Kent started violently. His feet slipped from the hearth and struck the floor with a thump.

"How did you know I was in trouble?" he demanded. "Who told you? Did they tell you what----"

"No, no, no. Nobody told me anything especial. Sarah did say you hadn't looked well lately and she was afraid you was worried about somethin'. That's all. I've been worried myself durin' my lifetime and I've generally found it helped a little to tell my worries to somebody else. At any rate it didn't do any harm. What's wrong, George? Nothin' serious, I hope."

Kent breathed heavily. "Serious!" he repeated. "I-I...." Then in a sudden outburst: "Oh, my God, Cap'n Kendrick, I think they'll put me in jail."

Sears looked at him. Then, leaning forward, he laid a hand on the boy's knee.

"Nonsense, George," he exclaimed, heartily. "Stuff and nonsense! They don't put fellows like you in jail. You're scared, that's all. Tell me about it."

"But they will, they will. You don't know Ed Stedman. He doesn't like me. He always has had it in for me. He's prejudiced Clara against me and she hates me, too. They're pressing me for the money now. The last letter I had from them Stedman said he wouldn't wait another fortnight. And a week is gone already. He'll----"

"Hold on. Who's Stedman?"

"Oh, I thought you knew. He's my half-sister's husband up in Springfield. When my aunt died.... But I told you I was administrator of her estate. I remember I told you. That day when----"

"Yes, yes, I remember; that is, I remember a little. Tell me the whole of it. What's happened?"

"Yes--yes, I want to. I'm going to. Oh, if you *can* help me I'll--I'll never forget it. I'll do anything for you, Cap'n Kendrick. I know I shouldn't have done it. I had no right to take the risk. But Mr. Phillips said--he said----"

"Eh?" Sears' interruption this time was quite unpremeditated. "Phillips?" he repeated, sharply. "Egbert, you mean? Oh, yes.... Humph.... Is he mixed up in this?"

"Why--why, yes. If it hadn't been for him it wouldn't have happened. I don't mean that he is to blame, exactly. I guess nobody is to blame but myself. But when I think---- Oh, Cap'n Kendrick, do you suppose you can help me out of it? If you can, I----"

Here followed another outburst of agonized entreaty. The boy's nerves were close to breaking, he was almost hysterical. Slowly and with the exercise of much patience and tact the captain drew from him the details of his trouble. It was, as he told it, a long and complicated story, but, boiled down, it amounted to something like this:

Kent and Phillips had been very friendly for some time, their intimacy beginning even before the latter came to board at Sarah Macomber's. Egbert's polished manners, his stories of life abroad, his easy condescending geniality, had from the first made a great impression upon George. The latter, already esteeming himself above the average of mentality and enterprise in what he considered the "slow-poke" town of Bayport, found in the brilliant arrival from foreign parts the personification of his ideals, a satisfying specimen of that much read of *genus*, "the complete man of the world." He fell on his knees before that specimen and worshiped. Such idolatry could not but have some effect, even upon as *blase* an idol as Mr. Phillips, so the latter at first tolerated and then even encouraged the acquaintanceship. He began to take this young follower more and more into his confidence, to speak with him concerning matters more intimate and personal.

George soon gathered that Egbert had been much in moneyed circles. He spoke casually of the "market" and referred to friends who had made and remade fortunes in stocks, as well as of others whose horses had brought them riches, or who had brought off what he called *coups* at foreign gaming tables. The young man, who had been brought up in a strict Puritanical household, was at first rather shocked at the thought of gambling or racing, but Mr. Phillips treated his prejudices in a condescendingly joking way, and Kent gradually grew ashamed of his "insularity" and *bourgeois* ideas. Egbert habitually read the stock quotations in the Boston *Advertiser* and the mails brought him brokers' circulars and letters. Kent was led to infer that he still took a small "flyer" occasionally. "Nothing of consequence, my boy, nothing to get excited about; haven't the wherewithal since our dear friend Knowles and his--ah--satellites took to drawing wills and that sort of thing. But if my friends in the Street send me a bit of judicious advice--as they do occasionally, for old times' sake--why, I try to cast a few crumbs upon the waters, trusting that they may be returned, in the shape of a small loaf, after not too many days. Ha, ha! Yes. And sometimes they do return--yes, sometimes they do. Otherwise how could I rejoice in the good, but sometimes tiresome, Mrs. Macomber's luxurious hospitality?"

It seemed an easy way to turn one's crumbs into loaves. Kent, now the possessor of the little legacy left him by his aunt, wished that the eight hundred dollars, the amount of that legacy, might be raised to eight thousand. He was executor of the small estate, which was to be equally divided between his half-sister and himself. There had been a little

land involved, that had been sold and the money, most of it, paid him. So he had in his possession about sixteen hundred dollars, half his and half Mrs. Stedman's. If he could do no better than double his own eight hundred it would not be so bad. He wished that *he* had friends in the Street.

He hinted as much to Phillips. The latter was, as always, generously kind. "If I get the word of another good thing, my boy, I shall be glad to let you in. Mind, I shan't advise. I shall take no responsibility--one mustn't do that. I shall only pass on the good word and tell you what I intend doing myself." George, very grateful, felt that this was indeed true friendship.

The chance at the good thing came along in due season. The New York brokerage firm wrote Phillips concerning it. It appeared that there was a certain railway stock named Central Midland Common. According to the gossip on the street, Central Midland--called C. M. for short--was just about due for a big rise. Certain eminent financiers and manipulators were quietly buying and the road was to be developed and exploited. Only a few, a select few, knew of this and so, obviously, now was the time to get aboard. Kent asked questions. Was Egbert going to get aboard? Egbert smilingly intimated that he was thinking of it. Would it be possible for him, Kent, to get aboard at the same time? Well, it might be; Egbert would think about that, too.

He did think about it and, as a result of his thinking, he and Kent bought C. M. Common together. Of course to buy any amount worth while would be impossible because of the small amount of ready cash possessed by either. "But," said Phillips, "I seldom buy outright. The latest quotation of C. M. is at 40, or thereabouts. I intend buying about two hundred shares. That would be eight thousand dollars if I paid cash, but of course I can't do that. I shall buy on a ten per cent margin, putting up eight hundred. If it goes up twenty points I make two thousand dollars. If it goes up fifty points, as they say it will, why----" And so on.

It ended--or began--by Phillips and Kent buying, as partners, four hundred shares of C. M. on a ten per cent margin. George turned over to Egbert the eight hundred dollars in cash, and Egbert sent to the brokers six hundred of those dollars and a bond, which he had in his possession, for one thousand dollars. Yes, Kent, had seen the broker's receipt. Yes, the bond was a good one; at least the brokers were perfectly satisfied. Where did Egbert get the bond? Kent did not know. It was one he owned, that is all he knew about it.

For a week or so after the purchase was made C. M. Common did continue to rise in price. At one time they had a joint profit of nearly two thousand dollars. Of course that seemed trifling compared with the thousands they expected, and so they waited. Then the market slumped. In two days their profit had gone and C. M. Common was selling several points below the figure at which they purchased. By the end of the fourth day, unless they wished to be wiped out altogether, additional margin--another ten per cent--must be deposited immediately.

And to George Kent this seemed an impossibility because he had not another eight hundred, or anything like it, of his own.

Why, oh, why, had he been such a fool? In his chagrin, disappointment and discouragement he asked himself that question a great many times. But when he asked it of his partner in the deal that partner laughed at him. According to Phillips he had not been a fool at all. The slump was only temporary; the stock was just as good as it had ever been; all this was but a part of the manipulation, the insiders were driving down the price in order to buy at lower figures. And letters from the brokers seemed to bear this out. Nevertheless the fact remained that more margin must be deposited and where was Kent's share of that margin coming from?

The rest of the story was exactly like fifty thousand similar stories. In order to save the eight hundred dollars of his own George put up as margin with the New York brokers the eight hundred dollars belonging to Mrs. Stedman, his half sister. Again he paid the eight hundred to Phillips, who sent to New York another one thousand dollar bond and six hundred in cash. And C. M. Common continued to go down, went down until once more the partners were in imminent danger of being wiped out. Then it rose a point or so, and there the price remained. All at once every one seemed to lose interest in the stock; instead of thousands of shares bought and sold daily, the sales dropped to a few odd lots. And instead of the profits which were to have been theirs by this time, the firm of Phillips and Kent owned together a precarious interest in four hundred shares of Central Midland Common which if sold at present prices would return them only a minimum of their investment, practically nothing when brokerage commissions should be deducted.

And then Edward Stedman, Kent's brother-in-law, demanded an immediate settlement of the estate. The land had been sold, the estate had been settled--he knew it--now he and his wife wanted their share.

So that was the situation which was driving the young fellow to desperation. *What* could he do? He could not satisfy Stedman because he had not eight hundred dollars and he could not confess it, at least not without answering questions which he did not dare answer. As matters stood he was a thief; he had taken money which did not belong to him. He and Stedman had not been friendly for a long time. According to George his brother-in-law would put him in jail without the slightest compunction. And, even if he managed--which he was certain he could not--to avoid imprisonment, there was the disgrace and its effect upon his future. Why, if the affair became known, at the very least

his career as a lawyer would be ruined. Who would trust him after this? He would have to go away; but where could he go? He had counted on his little legacy to help him get a start, to--to help him to all sorts of things. Now---- Oh, what *should* he do? Suicide seemed to be the sole solution. He had a good mind to kill himself. He should--yes, he was almost sure that he should do that very thing.

It was pitiful and distressing enough, and Kendrick, although he did not take the threat of self-destruction very seriously--somehow he could scarcely fancy George Kent in the role of a suicide--was sincerely sorry for the boy. He did his best to comfort.

"There, there, George," he said, "we won't talk about killin' ourselves yet awhile. Time enough to hop overboard when the last gun's fired, and we haven't begun to take aim yet. Brace up, George. You'll get through the breakers somehow."

"But, Cap'n Kendrick, I can't--I can't. I've got only a week or so left, and I haven't got the money."

"Sshh! Sshh! Because you haven't got it now doesn't mean you won't have it before the week's out--not necessarily it doesn't.... Humph! Let's take an observation now, and get our bearin's, if we can. You've talked this over with Egbert--with Phillips, of course. After all, he was the fellow that got you into it. What does he say?"

It appeared that Mr. Phillips said little which was of immediate solace. He professed confidence unbounded. C. M. was a good stock, it was going higher, all they had to do was wait until it did.

"Yes," put in Sears, "that's good advice, maybe, but it's too much like tellin' a man who can't swim to keep up till the tide goes out and he'll be in shallow water. The trouble is neither that man nor you could keep afloat so long. Is that all he said? He understands your position, doesn't he, George?"

Yes, Mr. Phillips understood, but he could do nothing to help. He had no money to lend--had practically nothing except the two one thousand dollar bonds, and those were deposited as collateral with the brokers.

"Um--ye-es," drawled Kendrick. "Those bonds are interestin' of themselves. We'll come to those pretty soon. But hasn't he got *any* ready money? Seems as if he must have a little. Why, you paid him sixteen hundred in cash and, accordin' to your story, he sent only twelve hundred along with the bonds. He must have four hundred left, at least. That is, unless he's been heavin' overboard more 'crumbs' that you don't know about."

Kent knew nothing of his partner's resources beyond what the latter had told him. And, at any rate, what good would four hundred be to him? Unless he could raise eight hundred within the week----

"Yes, yes, yes, I know. But four hundred is half of eight hundred and seems to me if I was in his shoes and had been responsible for gettin' you into a clove hitch like this I'd do what I could to get you out. And he couldn't--or wouldn't--do anything; eh?"

"He can't, Cap'n Kendrick. He can't. Don't you see, he hasn't got it. He's poor, himself. Of course he came here to Bayport, after his wife's death, thinking that he owned the Fair Harbor property and--and a lot more. Why, he thought he was rich. *He* didn't know that old Knowles had used his influence with Mrs. Phillips when she was half sick and tricked her into----"

"Here, here!" The captain's tone was rather sharp this time. "Never mind that. Old Knowles, as you call him, was a friend of mine.... I thought he was your friend, too, George, for the matter of that."

George was embarrassed. "Well, he was," he admitted. "I haven't got anything against him; in fact he was very good to me. But that is what Mr. Phillips says, you know, and everybody--or about everybody--seems to believe it. At least they are awfully sorry for Phillips."

"So I judged. But about you, now. Do *you* believe in--er--Saint Egbert as much as you did?"

"Why--why, I don't know. I---- Of course it seems almost as if he ought to do something to help me, but if he can't he can't, I suppose."

"I suppose not. Look here, he won't tell anybody about your scrape, will he?"

The junior partner in the firm of Phillips and Kent was indignant.

"Of course not," he declared. "He told me he should not breathe a word. And he is really very much disturbed about it all. He told me himself that he felt almost guilty. Mr. Phillips is a gentleman."

"Is that so? Must be nice to be that way. But tell me a little more about those bonds, George. There were two of 'em, you say, a thousand dollars each."

"Yes."

"And you don't know what sort of bonds they were?"

His visitor's pride was touched. "Why, of course I know," he declared. "What sort of a business man would I be if I

didn't know that, for heaven's sake?"

Sears did not answer the question. For a moment it seemed that he was going to, but if so, he changed his mind. However, there was an odd look in his eye when he spoke.

"Beg your pardon, George," he said. "I must have misunderstood you. What bonds were they?"

"They were City of Boston bonds. Seems to me they were--er--er--well, I forget just what--er--issue, you know, but that's what they were, City of Boston bonds."

"I see ... I see.... Humph! Seems kind of odd, doesn't it?"

"What?"

"Oh, nothin'. Only Phillips, accordin' to his tell, is pretty close to poverty. Yet he hung on to those two bonds all this time."

"Well, he had to hang on to something, didn't he? And he probably has a *little* more; if he hasn't what has he been living on?"

"Yes, that's so--that's so. Still.... However, we won't worry about that. Now, George, sit still a minute and let me think."

"But, Cap'n Kendrick, do you think there is a chance? I'm almost crazy. I--I--"

"Sshh! shh! I guess likely we'll get you off the rocks somehow. Let me think a minute or two."

So Kent possessed his soul in such patience as it could muster, while the wind howled about the old house, the wistaria vine rattled and scraped, the shutters groaned and whined, and the rain dashed and poured and dripped outside. At length the captain sat up straight in his chair.

"George," he said, briskly, "as I see it, first of all we want to find out just how this affair of yours stands. You write to those New York brokers and get from them a statement of your account--yours and Egbert's. Just what you've bought, how much margin has been put up, how much is left, about those bonds--kind, ratin', numbers and all that. Ask 'em to send you that by return mail. Will you?"

"Why--why, yes, I suppose so. But I have seen all that. Mr. Phillips----"

"We aren't helpin' out Phillips now. He isn't askin' help, at least I gather he's satisfied to wait. You get this statement on your own hook, and don't tell him you're gettin' it. Will you?"

"I'll write for it to-night."

"Good! That'll get things started, anyhow. Now is there anything else you want to tell me?"

"No--no, I guess not. But, Cap'n Kendrick, do you honestly think there is a chance for me?"

For an instant his companion lost patience. "Don't ask that again," he ordered. "There is a chance--yes. How much of a chance we can't tell yet. You go home and stop worryin'. You've turned the wheel over to me, haven't you? Yes; well, then let me do the steerin' for a spell."

Kent rose from his chair. He drew a long breath. He looked at the captain, who had risen also, and it was evident that there was still something on his mind. He fidgeted, hesitated, and then hurried forth a labored apology.

"I--I am awfully ashamed of myself, Cap'n Kendrick," he began.

"That's all right, George. We all make mistakes--business mistakes especially. If I hadn't made one, and a bad one, I might not be stranded here in Judah's galley to-night."

"I didn't mean business. I meant I was ashamed of treating you as I have. Ever since that time when--when Elizabeth was here and I came over and--and said all those fool things to you, I--I've been ashamed. I *was* a fool. I am a fool most of the time, I guess."

"Oh, I guess not, George. We're all taken with the foolish disease once in a while."

"But I was such a fool. The idea of my being jealous of you--a man pretty nearly old enough to be my father. No, not so old as that, of course, but--older. I don't know what ailed me, but whatever it was, I've paid for it.... She--she has hardly spoken to me since."

"I'm sorry, George."

"Yes.... Has she--has she said anything about me to you, Cap'n?"

"Why--er--no, George, not much. She and I are not--well, not very confidential, outside of business matters, that is."

"No, I suppose not. Mr. Phillips told me she had--well, that she and you were not--not as----"

"Yes, all right, all right, George; I understand. Outside of Fair Harbor managin' we don't talk of many things."

"No, that's what he said. He seemed to think you two had had some sort of quarrel--or disagreement, you know. But I never took much stock in that. After all, why should you and she be interested in the same sort of things? She isn't much older than I am, about my age really, and of course you----"

"Yes, yes," hastily. "All right.... Well, I guess your coat is middlin' dry, George. Here it is."

"Thanks. But that wasn't all I meant to say. You see, Cap'n Kendrick, I did treat you so badly and yet all the time I've had such confidence in you. Ever since you gave me that advice the night of the theatricals I've--well, somehow I've felt as if a fellow could depend on you, you know--always, in spite of everything. Eh, why, by George, *she* said that very thing about you once, said it to me. She said you were so dependable. Say, that's queer, that she and I should both think the very same thing about you."

"Um-m. Yes, isn't it?"

"Yes. It shows, after all, how closely alike our minds, hers and mine, work. We"--he hesitated, reddened, and then continued, with a fresh outburst of confidence: "You see, Cap'n," he said, "I have felt all the time that this--this trouble between Elizabeth and me, wasn't going to last. I was to blame--at least, I guess I probably was, and I meant to go to her and tell her so. But I waited until--until I had pulled off this stock deal. I meant to go to her with two or three thousand dollars that I had made myself, you see, and--and ask her pardon and--well, then I hoped she would--would.... You understand, don't you, Cap'n Kendrick?"

"Why--er--yes, I guess likely, George, in a way."

"Yes. I wanted to show her that I *was* good for something, and then--and then, maybe it would be all right again. You see?"

"Surely, George. Yes, yes.... Ready for your coat?"

Kent ignored the coat. He did not seem to realize that his companion was holding it. "Yes," he stammered, eagerly. "I think if I went to her in that way it would be all right again. I was hasty and--and silly maybe, but perhaps I had some excuse. And, Cap'n Kendrick, I'm sure she does--er--like me, you know. I'm sure of it.... But now--" as reality came once more crashing through his dream, "I--I---- Oh, think of me now! I may be put in prison. And then.... Oh, but Cap'n Kendrick, that's why I came to you. I knew you'd stand by me, I knew you would. I treated you damnably, but--but you know, it was on account of her, really. I knew you'd understand that. You won't hold a grudge against me? You really will help me? If you don't----"

Kendrick seized his arm. "Shut up, George," he commanded brusquely. "Shut up. I'll get you out of this, I promise it."

"You will? You promise?"

"Yes. That is, I'll see that you don't go to jail. If we can't get the eight hundred of your sister's from these brokers I'll get it somehow--even if I have to borrow it."

"Oh, Great Scott, that's great! That's wonderful. I can hardly believe it. I'll make it up to you somehow, you know. You're the best man I ever knew. And--and--if she and I--that is, when she and I are--are as we used to be--well, then I shall tell her and she'll be as grateful as I am, I know she will."

"All right, George, all right. Run along. The rain's easin' up a little, so now's your time. Don't forget to write to those brokers.... Good night."

"Good night, Cap'n. I shall tell your sister how good you've been to me. She told me to come to you. Of course she doesn't know why I came, but----"

"No, and she mustn't know. Don't you tell her or anybody else. Don't you do it."

"I--why, I won't if you say so, of course. Good night."

Kendrick closed the door. Then he came back to his seat before the stove. When Judah returned home he found that his lodger had gone to the spare stateroom, but he could hear his footsteps moving back and forth.

"Ahoy, there, Cap'n Sears!" hailed Judah. "What you doin', up and pacin' decks this time of night? It's pretty nigh eight bells, didn't you know it?"

The pacing ceased. "Why, no, is it?" replied the captain's voice. "Guess I'd better be turmin' in, hadn't I? How's the weather outside?"

"Fairin' off fast. Rain stopped and it's clear as a bell over to the west'ard. Clear day and a fair wind to-morrer, I call'late."

Kendrick made no further comment and Judah prepared for bed, singing as he did so. He sang, not a chantey this time, but portions of a revival hymn which he had recently heard and which, because of its nautical nature, had stuck in his

memory. The chorus commanded some one or other to

"Pull for the shore, sailor,
Pull for the shore.
Leave that poor old stranded wreck
And pull for the shore."

Mr. Cahoon sang the chorus over and over. Then he ventured to tackle one of the verses.

"Light in the darkness, sailor,
Day is at hand."

"Judah!" This from the spare stateroom.

"Aye, aye, Cap'n Sears."

"Better save the rest of that till the day gets here, hadn't you?"

"Eh? Oh, all right, Cap'n. Just goin' to douse the glim this minute. Good night."

Three days after this interview in the Minot kitchen George Kent again came to call. He came after dark, of course, and his visit was brief. He had received from the New York brokers a detailed statement of his and Phillips' joint account. The statement bore out what he had already told Sears. Four hundred shares of Central Midland Common had been purchased at 40. Against this the partners deposited sixteen hundred dollars. Later they had deposited another sixteen hundred. The New York firm were as confident as ever that the stock was perfectly good and the speculation a good one. They advised waiting and, if possible, buying more at the present low figure.

All this was of little help. The only information of any possible value was that concerning the bonds which Egbert had contributed as his share of the margin. Those, according to the brokers, were two City of Boston 4-1/2s, of one thousand dollars each, numbered A610,312 and A610,313.

Kent would have stayed and talked for hours if Kendrick had permitted. He was as nervous as ever, even more so, because the days were passing and the time drawing near when his brother-in-law would demand settlement. The captain comforted him as well as he could, bade him write his sister or her husband that he would remit early in the following week, and sent him home again more hopeful, but still very anxious.

"I don't see how I'm going to get the money, Cap'n Kendrick," he kept repeating. "I don't see how all this helps us a bit. I don't see----"

Kendrick interrupted at last.

"You don't have to see," he declared. "You've left it to me, now let me see if *I* can see. I told you that, somehow or other, I'd tow you into deep water. Well, give me a chance to get up steam. You write that letter to your brother-in-law and hold him off till the middle of next week. That's all you've got to do. I'll do the rest."

So Kent had to be satisfied with that. He departed, professing over and over again his deathless gratitude. "If you do this, Cap'n Kendrick," he proclaimed, "I never, never will forget it. And when I think how I treated you I can't see why you do it. I never heard of such----"

"Sshh! shhh!" The captain waved him to silence. "I don't know why I am doin' it exactly, George," he said.

"I do. You're doing it for my sake, of course, and----"

"Sshh! I don't know as I am--not altogether. Maybe I'm doin' it to try and justify my own judgment of human nature--mine and Judge Knowles'. If that judgment isn't right then I'm no more use than a child in arms, and I need a guardian as much as--as----"

"As I do, you mean, I suppose. Well, I do need one, I guess. But I don't understand what you mean by your judgment of human nature. Who have you been judging?"

"Never mind. Now go home. Judah's out again and that's a mercy. I don't want him or any one else to know you come here to see me."

George went, satisfied for the time, but Sears Kendrick, left face to face with his own thoughts, knew that he had told the young man but a part of the truth. It was not for Kent's sake alone that he had made the rash promise to get back eight hundred of the sixteen hundred, or another eight hundred to take its place. Neither was it entirely because he hoped to confirm his judgment in the case of Egbert Phillips. The real reason lay deeper than that. Kent had declared that he still loved Elizabeth Berry and that he had reason to think she returned that love. Perhaps she did; in spite of some things she had said after their quarrel, it was possible--yes, probable that she did. If, by saving her lover from disgrace, he might insure her future and her happiness, then--then--Sears would have made rasher promises still and have undertaken to carry them out.

The brokers' letter helped but little, if any. He entered the names and numbers of the bonds in his memorandum book. Those bonds still perplexed him. He could not explain them, satisfactorily. It might be that Egbert had more left from his wife's estate than Judge Knowles expected him to have or that Bradley was inclined to think he had. Lobelia's will bequeathed to her beloved husband "all stocks, bonds, securities, etc.," remaining. But Knowles had more than intimated that none remained. The pictures of the horses and the ladies in Egbert's room at Sarah Macomber's confirmed the captain's belief that the Phillips past had been a hectic one. It seemed queer that, out of the ruin, there should have been preserved at least two thousand dollars in good American--yes, City of Boston--bonds.

In the back of the Kendrick head was a theory--or the ghost of a theory--concerning those bonds. He did not like to believe it, he would not believe it yet, but it was a possibility. Elizabeth had been bequeathed twenty thousand dollars. She and Egbert had been close friends for a time. She had liked him, had trusted him. Of late, so Esther Tidditt said, that friendship had been somewhat strained. Was it possible that.... Humph! Well, Bradley might know. He was Elizabeth's guardian, he would know if her investments had been disturbed.

Then, too, if worst came to the worst and he had to raise the eight hundred, which he had promised Kent, by borrowing it, he could, he thought, arrange to get from Bradley an advance of that amount, or a part of it, against his salary as manager of the Fair Harbor.

So he determined, as the next move, to go to Orham and visit the lawyer. On Saturday morning, therefore, he and the Foam Flake once more journeyed along the wood road to Orham.

CHAPTER XVII

The trip was cold and long and tedious. The oaks and birches were bare of leaves and the lakes and little ponds looked chill and forbidding. Judah's prophecy of a clear day was only partially fulfilled, for there were great patches of clouds driving before the wind and when those obscured the sun all creation looked dismal enough, especially to Kendrick, who was in the mood where any additional gloom was distinctly superfluous. But the Foam Flake jogged on and at last drew up beside the Bradley office.

Another horse and buggy were standing there and the captain was somewhat surprised to recognize the outfit as one belonging to the Bayport livery man. A gangling youth in the latter's employ was on the buggy seat and he recognized the Foam Flake first and his driver next.

"Why, good mornin', Cap'n," hailed the youth. "You over here, too?"

Sears, performing the purely perfunctory task of hitching the Foam Flake to a post, smiled grimly.

"No, Josiah," he replied. "I'm not here. I'm over in South Hamiss all this week. Where are you?"

"Eh?... Where be I?... Say, what----"

"Yes, yes, Josiah, all right. Just keep a weather eye on this post, will you, like a good fellow?"

"On the post? On the horse, you mean?"

"No, I mean on the post. If you don't this--er--camel of mine will eat it. Thanks. Do as much for you some time, Josiah."

He went into the building, leaving the bewildered Josiah in what might be described as a state of mind.

"Is the commodore busy?" he asked of the boy at the desk.

"Yes, he is," replied the boy. "But he won't be very long, I don't think."

"Humph! That's what you don't think, eh? Well, now just between us, what do you think?... Never mind, son, never mind, I'm satisfied if you are. I'll wait. By the way, somebody from my home port is in there with him, I judge."

"Um--hm. Miss Berry, she's there."

"Miss Berry! Elizabeth Berry?... Is she there now?"

The boy nodded. "Um-hm," he declared, "she's there, but I guess they're 'most done. I heard her chair scrape a minute or two ago, so I think she's comin' right out."

Kendrick rose from his own chair. "I'll wait outside," he said, and went out to the platform again. Josiah, evidently

lonely and seeking conversation, hailed him at once.

"Say, that old horse of yours *is* a cribbler, ain't he," he observed. "He's took one chaw out of that post already."

Sears paid no attention. He walked around to the rear of the little building and, leaning against its shingled side, waited, gazing absently across the fields to the spires and roofs of Orham village.

He was sorry that Elizabeth was there just at this time. True they met almost daily at the Fair Harbor office, but those meetings were obligatory, this was not. And meeting her at all, relations between them being what they were, was very hard for him. Since George Kent's disclosure of his feelings and hopes those meetings were harder still. Each one made his task, that of helping the boy toward the realization of those hopes, so much more difficult. He was ashamed of himself, but so it was. No, in his present frame of mind he did not want to meet her. He would wait there, out of sight, until she had gone.

But he was not allowed to do so. He heard the office door open, heard her step--he would have recognized it, he believed, anyway--upon the platform. He heard her speak to Josiah. And then that pest of an office boy began shouting his name.

"Cap'n Kendrick," yelled the boy. "Cap'n Kendrick, where are you?"

He did not answer, but the other imbecile, Josiah, answered for him.

"There he is, out alongside the buildin'," volunteered Josiah. "Cap'n Kendrick, they want ye."

Then both began shrieking "Cap'n Kendrick" at the top of their voices.

To pretend not to hear would have been too ridiculous. There was but thing to do and he did it.

"Aye, aye," he answered, impatiently. "I'm comin'!"

When he reached the platform Elizabeth was still there. She was surprised to see him, evidently, but there was another expression on her face, an expression which he did not understand. He bowed gravely.

"Good mornin'," he said. She returned his greeting, but still she continued to look at him with that odd expression.

"Mr. Bradley's all ready for you," announced the office boy, who was holding the door open. Sears' foot was at the threshold when Elizabeth spoke his name. He turned to her in surprise.

"Yes?" he replied.

For an instant she was silent. Then, as if obeying an uncontrollable impulse, she came toward him.

"Cap'n Kendrick," she said. "May I speak with you? In private? I won't keep you but a moment."

"Why--why, yes, of course," he stammered. He turned to the office boy. "Go and tell Mr. Bradley I'll be right there," he commanded. The boy went.

Elizabeth spoke to her charioteer, who was leaning forward on the buggy seat, his small eyes fixed upon the pair and his large mouth open.

"Drive over to that corner, Josiah," she said. "To that store there--yes, that's it. And wait there for me. I'll come at once."

Josiah reluctantly drove away. Elizabeth turned again to Kendrick.

"Cap'n Kendrick," she began. "I shan't keep you long. I realize that you must be surprised at my asking to speak with you--after everything. And, of course, I realize still more than you can't possibly wish to speak with me."

He attempted to say something, to protest, but she did not give him the chance.

"No, don't, don't," she said, hurriedly. "Don't pretend. I know how you feel, of course. But I have been wanting to tell you this for a long time. I hadn't the courage, or I was too much ashamed, or something. And this is a strange place to say it--and time. But when I saw you just now I--I felt as if I must say it. I couldn't wait another minute. Cap'n Kendrick, I want to beg your pardon."

To add to his amazement and embarrassed distress he saw that she was very close to tears.

"Why--why--" he stammered.

"Don't say anything. There isn't anything for *you* to say. I don't ask you to forgive me--you couldn't, of course. But I--I just had to tell you that I am so ashamed of myself, of my misjudging you, and the things I said to you. I know that you were right and I was all wrong."

"Why--why, here, hold on!" he broke in. "I don't understand."

"Of course you don't. And I can't explain. Probably I never can and you mustn't ask me to. But--but--I had to say this. I had to beg your pardon and tell you how ashamed I am.... That's all.... Thank you."

She turned and almost ran from the platform, down the steps and across the street to the waiting buggy. Sears Kendrick stared after her, stared until that buggy disappeared around the bend in the road. Then he breathed heavily, straightened his cap, slowly shook his head, and entered the lawyer's office. He was still in a sort of trance when he sat down in the chair in the inner room and heard Bradley bid him good morning. He returned the good morning, but he heard, or understood, very little of what the lawyer said immediately afterward. When he did begin vaguely to comprehend he found the latter was speaking of Elizabeth Berry.

"I wish I knew what her trouble is," Bradley was saying. "She won't tell me, won't even admit that there is any trouble, but that doesn't need telling. The last half dozen times I have seen her she has seemed and looked worried and absent-minded. And this morning she drove way over here to ask me some almost childish questions about her investments, the money the judge left her. Wanted to know if it was safe, or something like that. She didn't admit that was it, exactly, but that was as near as I could get to what she was driving at. Do you know what's troubling her, Kendrick?"

Sears shook his head. "No-o," he replied. "I've heard--but no, I don't know. She wanted to be sure her money was safe, you say?"

"Why, not safely invested, I don't think that was it. She seemed to want to know what I'd done with the bonds themselves and the other securities of hers. I told her they were in the deposit vaults over at the Bayport bank; that is, some of them were there and some of them were in the bank at Harniss. Then she asked if any one could get them, anybody except she or I. Of course I told her no, and not even I without an order from her. She seemed a little relieved, I thought, but when I asked questions she shut up like a quahaug. But that seemed a silly errand to come away over here on. Don't you think so, Cap'n? ... Eh? What's the matter? What are you looking at me like that for?"

The captain *was* looking at him, was looking with an expression of intense and eager interest. He did not answer Bradley's question, but asked one, himself.

"Did she ask anything more about--well, about her bonds?" he demanded. "Think now; I'll tell you why by and by."

The lawyer considered. "No-o," he said. "Nothing of importance, surely. She asked--she seemed to want to know particularly if it was possible for any one except the owner or a duly accredited representative to get at securities in the vaults of those banks. That seemed to be the information she was after.... Now what have you got up your sleeve?"

"Nothin'--nothin'. I guess. Or somethin', maybe; I don't know. Bradley, would you mind tellin' me this much: Of course I'm not Elizabeth's trustee any more, but would it be out of the way if you told me whether or not you reinvested any of her twenty thousand in City of Boston bonds? City of Boston 4-1/2s; say?"

Bradley did not answer for a moment. Then from a pigeon hole in his desk he took a packet of papers and selected one.

"Yes," he said, gravely. "I put ten thousand of her money in those very bonds. My brokers up in Boston recommended them strongly as being a safe and good investment.... And now perhaps you'll tell us why you asked about that?"

Sears' brows drew together. Here was his vague theory on the way, at least, to confirmation.

"You tell me somethin' more first," he said. "'Tisn't likely you've got the numbers of those bonds on that piece of paper, is it?"

"Likely enough. I've got the numbers and the price I paid for 'em. Why?"

Kendrick took his memorandum book from his pocket. "Were two of those numbers A610,312 and A610,313?" he asked.

Bradley consulted his slip of paper. "No," he replied. "Nothing like it."

"Eh? You're sure?"

"Of course I'm sure. Say, what sort of a trustee do you think I am?"

Sears did not answer. If the lawyer was sure, then his "theory," instead of being confirmed, was smashed flat.

"Humph!" he grunted, after a moment. "Do you mind my lookin' at that paper of yours?"

Bradley pushed the slip across the desk. The captain looked at it carefully. "Humph!" he said again. "You're right. And those are five hundred dollar bonds, all of 'em. Well, that settles that. And now it's all fog again.... Humph! In a way I'm glad--but--- Pshaw!"

"Yes. And *now* maybe you'll tell me what you're after? Don't you think it's pretty nearly time?"

"Why, perhaps, but I'm afraid that's what I can't tell--you or anybody else.... Bradley, just one more thing. Do you happen to know whether there was any of those Boston bonds in Lobelia Phillips' estate? That is, did any of 'em come to her husband from her?"

The lawyer's answer was emphatic enough.

"Yes, I do know," he said. "There wasn't any. Those bonds are a brand new issue. They have been put out since her death."

Here was another gun spiked. Kendrick whistled. Bradley regarded him keenly.

"Cap'n," he demanded, "are you on the trail of that Eg Phillips? Do you really think you've got anything on him? Because if you have and you don't let me into the game I'll never forgive you. Of all the slick, smooth, stuck-up nothings that---- Say, have you?"

Kendrick shook his head. "I'm afraid not, Squire," he observed. "And, at any rate, I couldn't tell you, if I had. ... Eh? And *now* what?"

For the lawyer had suddenly struck the desk a blow with his hand. He was fumbling in another pigeon-hole and extracting therefrom another packet of papers.

"Cap'n Kendrick," he said, "I know where there are--or were, anyhow--more of those Boston 4-1/2s."

"Eh? You do?"

"Yes. And they were thousand dollar bonds, too.... Yes, and.... Give me those numbers again."

Sears gave them. Bradley grinned, triumphantly.

"Here you are," he exclaimed. "Five one thousand dollar City of Boston 4-1/2s, bought at so and so much, on such and such a date, numbered A610,309 to A610,313 inclusive. Cap'n Sears, those bonds are--or were, the last I knew--in the vault of the Bayport National Bank."

Kendrick rose to his feet. "You don't tell me!" he cried. "Who put 'em there?"

"I put 'em there. And I bought 'em. But they don't belong to me. There was somebody else had money left to them, and I, on request, invested it for the owner. Now you can guess, can't you?"

Cap'n Sears sat down heavily. "Cordelia?" he exclaimed. "Cordelia Berry, of course!... Bradley, what an everlastin' fool I was not to guess it in the first place! *There's* the answer I've been hunting for."

But, as he pondered over it during the long drive home he realized that, after all, it was not by any means a completely satisfying answer. True it confirmed his previous belief that the bonds which Phillips had deposited with the New York brokers were not a part of the residue of his wife's estate. He had obtained them from Cordelia Berry. But the question as to how and why he had obtained them still remained. Did he get them by fraud? Did she lend them to him? If she lent them was it a loan without restrictions? Did she know what he meant to do with them; that is, was Cordelia a silent partner in Egbert's stock speculations? Or, and this was by no means impossible considering her infatuation, had she given them to him outright?

Unless there was an element of fraud or false pretense in the transference of those bonds, the mere knowledge of whence they came was not likely to help in regaining George Kent's sixteen hundred dollars. For the matter of that, even if they had been obtained by fraud, if they were not Phillips' property, but Cordelia's, still the return of Kent's money might be just as impossible provided Phillips had nothing of his own to levy upon. He--Kendrick--might compel the brokers to return Mrs. Berry's City of Boston 4-1/2s to their rightful owner, but how would that help Kent?

Well, never mind that now. If the worst came to the worst he could still borrow the eight hundred which would save George from public disgrace. And the fact remained that his campaign against the redoubtable Egbert had made, for the first time, a forward movement, however slight.

His thoughts turned to Elizabeth. The causes of her worry and trouble were plain enough now. Esther Tidditt had declared that she and Phillips were by no means as friendly as they had been. Of course not. She, too, had been forced to realize what almost every one else had seen before, the influence which the fellow had obtained over her mother. Her visit to Bradley and her questions concerning the safety of securities in the bank's vaults were almost proof positive that she knew Egbert had those bonds and perhaps feared he might get the others. He should not get them if Sears Kendrick could help it. She had asked his pardon, she had confessed that he was right and that she had been wrong. She believed in him again. Well, in return he would fight his battle--and hers--and George's--harder than ever. The fight had been worth while of itself, now it was more than ever a fight for her happiness. And Egbert--by the living jingo, Egbert was in for a licking.

So, to the mild astonishment of the placid Foam Flake, who had been meandering on in a sort of walking doze, Captain Kendrick tugged briskly at the reins and broke out in song, the hymn which Judah Cahoon had sung a few nights before:

"Light in the darkness, sailor,

Day is at hand."

Judah himself was singing when his lodger entered the kitchen, but his was no joyful ditty. It was a dirge, which he was intoning as he bent over the cookstove. A slow and solemn and mournful wail dealing with death and burial of one "Old Storm Along," whoever he may have been.

"Old Storm Along is dead and gone
To my way, oh, Storm Along.
Old Storm Along is dead and gone
Ay--ay--ay, Mister Storm A-long.

"When Stormy died I dug his grave
To my way, oh, Storm Along,
I dug his grave with a silver spade.
Ay--ay--ay, Mister Storm A-long.

"I hove him up with an iron crane,
To my way, oh, Storm Along,
And lowered him down with----"

Kendrick broke in upon the flow of misery.

"Sshh! All hands to the pumps!" he shouted. "Heavens, what a wail! Sounds like the groans of the dyin'. Didn't your breakfast set well, Judah?"

Judah turned, looked at him, and grinned sheepishly. "'Tis kind of a lonesome song, ain't it?" he admitted. "Still we used to sing it consider'ble aboard ship. Don't you know we did, Cap'n?"

The captain grunted. "Maybe so," he observed, "but it's one of the things that would keep the average man from going to sea. What's the news since I've been gone--anything?"

Judah nodded. "Um-hm," he said. "I call'ate 'twas the news that set me goin' about old Storm Along. Esther Tidditt's been over here half the forenoon, seemed so, tellin' about Elviry Snowden's aunt over to Ostable. She's dead, the old woman is, and she died slow and agonizin', 'cordin' to Esther. Elviry was all struck of a heap about it. And now she's gone."

"Gone! Elvira? Dead, you mean?"

"Hey? No, no! The aunt's dead, but Elviry ain't. She's gone over to Ostable to stay till after the funeral. She's about the only relation to the remains there is left, so Esther tells me. There was a reg'lar young typhoon over to the Harbor when the news struck. 'Twas too late for the up train so they had to hire a horse and team and then somebody had to be got to pilot it, 'cause Elviry wouldn't no more undertake to drive a horse than I would to eat one. And the trouble was that the livery stable boy--that Josiah Ellis--was off drivin' somebody else somewheres."

"Yes, I saw him."

"Hey? You did? Where? Who was he drivin'?"

"Never mind that. Heave ahead with your yam."

"Well, the next thing they done was to come cruisin' over here to see if I wouldn't take the job. Hoppin', creepin', jumpin' Henry! I shut down on *that* notion almost afore they got their hatches open to tell me about it. Suppose likely I'd set in a buggy alongside of Elviry Snowden and listen to her clack from here to Ostable? Not by a two-gallon jugful! Creepin'! She'd have another corpse on her hands time we got there. So I said I was sick."

"Sick! Ha, ha! You're a healthy lookin' sick man, Judah."

"Um-hm. Mine must be one of them kind of diseases that don't show on the outside. But I was sick then, all right--at the very notion. And, Cap'n Sears, who do you call'ate finally did invite himself to drive that Snowden woman to Ostable? You'll never guess in *this* world."

"Well, I don't intend to wait until the next world to find out; so you'll have to tell me, Judah. Who was it?"

"Old Henfruit."

"*Who?*"

"Old Henfruit, that's what I call him. That Eg thing"

"What? Phillips?"

"Yus. That's the feller."

"But why should he do it?"

"Oh, just to show off how polite and obligin' he is, I presume likely. Elviry she was sniffin' around and swabbin' her deadlights with her handkercher and heavin' overboard lamentations about her poor dear Aunt So-and-so layin' all alone over there and she couldn't get to her--as if 'twould make any difference to a dead person whether she got to 'em or not, and anyhow I'd *want* to be dead afore Elviry Snowden got to me--and---- Oh, yes, well, pretty soon here comes Eg, beaver hat and mustache and all, purrin' and wantin' to know what was the matter. And, of course all hands of 'em started to tell him, 'specially that Aurora Chase, who is so everlastin' deaf she hadn't heard the yarn more'n half straight and wan't sure yet whether 'twas a funeral or a fire. And so----"

"There, there, Judah! Get back on the course. So Egbert drove Elvira over to Ostable, did he?"

"Sartin sure. When Elviry saw him she kind of flew at him same as a chicken flies to the old hen. And he kind of spread out his wings, as you might say, and comforted her and, next thing you know, he'd offered to be pilot and she and him had started on the trip. So that's the news.... Esther said 'twas good as a town hall to see Cordelia Berry when them two went away together. You see, Cordelia is so dreadful gone on that Eg man that she can't bear to see another female within hailin' distance of him. Been just the same if 'twas old Northern Lights Chase he'd gone with. Haw, haw!"

The Fair Harbor was still buzzing with the news of Miss Snowden's bereavement when Kendrick visited there next day. The funeral was to take place the day after that and Mrs. Brackett was going and so was Aurora. As Miss Peasley and some of the others would have liked to go, but could not afford the railway fare, there was some jealousy manifest and a few ill-natured remarks made in the captain's hearing. Elvira, it seemed, had sent for her trunk, as she was to remain in Ostable for a week or two at least.

The captain and Elizabeth had their customary conference in the office concerning the Harbor's bills and finances. Kendrick's greeting was a trifle embarrassed--recollection of the interview at Orham was fresh in his mind. Elizabeth colored slightly when they met, but she did not mention that interview and, although pleasant and kind, kept the conversation strictly confined to business matters.

That afternoon Sears encountered Egbert for the first time in a week or so. The captain was on his way to the barn at the rear of the Harbor grounds. He was about to turn the bend in the path, the bend which he had rounded on the day of his first excursion in those grounds, and which had afforded him the vision of Miss Snowden and Mrs. Chase framed in the ivy-draped window of The Eyrie. As he passed the clump of lilacs, now bare and scrawny, he came suddenly upon Phillips. The latter was standing there, deep in conversation with Mrs. Berry. Theirs should, it would seem, have been a pleasant conversation, but neither looked happy; in fact, Cordelia looked as if she had been crying.

Sears raised his cap and Egbert lifted the tall hat with the flourish all his own. Cordelia did not bow nor even nod. Kendrick, as he walked on toward the barn, was inclined to believe he could guess the cause of Mrs. Berry's distress and her companion's annoyance; he believed that City of Boston 4-1/2s might be the subject of their talk. If so, then perhaps those bonds had come into the gentleman's possession in a manner not strictly within the law. Or, at all events, the lady might not know what had become of them and be requesting their return. He certainly hoped that such was the case. It was the one thing he yearned to find out before making the next strategic advance in his and Egbert's private war.

But a note from Bradley which he received next day helped him not at all. It was a distinct disappointment. Bradley had, at his request, made some inquiries at the Bayport bank. The lawyer was a director in that institution and he could obtain information without arousing undue curiosity or answering troublesome questions. The two one thousand dollar bonds had been removed from the vaults by Cordelia Berry herself. She had come alone, and on two occasions, taking one bond at each visit. She did not state why she wanted them and the bank authorities had not considered it their business to ask.

So that avenue of hope was closed. Egbert had not taken the bonds, and how they came into his possession was still as great a puzzle as ever. And the time--the time was growing so short. On Wednesday Kent had promised to send his brother-in-law eight hundred dollars. It was Saturday when Bradley's letter came. Each evening George stopped at the Minot place to ask what progress had been made. The young man's nervousness was contagious; the captain's own nerves became affected.

"George," he ordered, at last, "don't ask me another question. I promised you once, and now I promise you again, that by Wednesday night you shall have enough cash in hand to satisfy your sister and her husband. Don't you come nigh me until then."

On Monday, the situation remaining unchanged, Sears determined upon a desperate move. He would see Egbert alone and have a talk with him. He had, after careful consideration, decided what his share in that talk was to be. It must be two-thirds "bluff." He knew very little, but he intended to pretend to much greater knowledge. He might trap his adversary into a damaging admission. He might gain something and he could lose almost nothing. The attack was risky,

a sort of forlorn hope--but he would take the risk.

That afternoon he drove down to the Macomber house. There he was confronted with another disappointment. Egbert was not there. Sarah said he had been away almost all day and would not be back until late in the evening.

"He's been away considerable the last two or three days," she said. "No, I'm sure I don't know where he's gone. He told Joel somethin' about bein' out of town on business. Joel sort of gathered 'twas in Trumet where the business was, but he never told either of us really. He wasn't here for dinner yesterday or supper either, and not for supper the day before that."

"Humph! Will he be here to-morrow, think?"

"I don't know, but I should think likely he would, in the forenoon, anyhow. He's almost always here in the forenoon; he doesn't get up very early, hardly ever."

"Oh, he doesn't. How about his breakfast?"

Mrs. Macomber looked a bit guilty.

"Well," she admitted, "I usually keep his breakfast hot for him, and--and he has it in his room."

"You take it in to him, I suppose?"

"We-ll, he's always been used to breakfastin' that way, he says. It's the way they do over abroad, accordin' to his tell."

"Oh, Sarah, Sarah!" mused her brother. "To think *you* could slip so easy on that sort of soft-soap. Tut, tut! I'm surprised.... Well, good-by. Oh, by the way, how about his majesty's board bill? Paid up to date, is it?"

His sister looked even more embarrassed, and, for her, a trifle irritated.

"He owes me for three weeks, if you must know," she said, "but he'll pay it, same as he always does."

"Look out, look out! Can't be too sure.... There, there, Sarah, don't be cross. I won't torment you."

He laughed and Mrs. Macomber, after a moment, laughed too.

"You are a tease, Sears," she declared, "and always was. Shall I tell Mr. Phillips you came to see him?"

"Eh? No, indeed you shan't. Don't you mention my name to him. He loves me so much that he might cry all night at the thought of not bein' at home when I called. Don't tell him a word. I'll try again."

The next forenoon he did try again. Judah had some trucking to do in the western part of the village and the captain rode with him on the seat of the truck wagon as far as the store. From there he intended to walk to his sister's, for walking, even as long a distance as a mile, was no longer an impossibility. As he alighted by the store platform Captain Elkanah Wingate came out of the Bassett emporium.

"Mornin', Kendrick," he hailed.

Sears did not share Bayport's awe of the prosperous Elkanah. He returned the greeting as casually as if the latter had been an everyday citizen.

"Been spendin' your money on Elphalet's bargains?" he inquired.

The great man did not resent the flippancy. He seemed to be in a particularly pleasant humor.

"Got a little extra to spend to-day," he declared, with a chuckle. "Picked up twenty dollars this mornin' that I never expected to see again."

"So? You're lucky."

"That's what I thought. Say, Kendrick, have you had any--hum--business dealings with that man Phillips? No," with another chuckle, "I suppose you haven't. He doesn't love you over and above, I understand. My wife and the rest of the women folks seem to think he's first mate to Saint Peter, but, between ourselves, he's always been a little too much of a walkin' oil barrel to suit me. He borrowed twenty of me a good while ago and I'd about decided to write it down as a dead loss. But an hour or so ago he ran afoul of me and, without my saying a word, paid up like a man, every cent. Had a roll of bills as thick as a skys'l yard, he did. Must have had a lucky voyage, I guess. Eh? Ha, ha!"

He moved off, still chuckling. Kendrick walked down the lower road pondering on what he had heard. Egbert, the professed pauper, in possession of money and voluntarily paying his debts. What might that mean?

Sarah met him at the door. She seemed distressed.

"There!" she cried, as he approached. "If this isn't too bad! And I was afraid of it, too. You've walked way down here, Sears, on those poor legs of yours, and Mr. Phillips has gone again. And I don't think he'll be back before night, if he is then. He said not to worry if he wasn't, because he might have to go to Trumet. Isn't it a shame?"

It was a shame and a rather desperate shame. This was Tuesday. If the interview with Egbert was to take place at all, it should be that day, or the next. He looked at his sister's face and something in her expression caused him to ask a question.

"What is it, Sarah?" he demanded. "What's the rest of it?"

She hesitated. "Sears," she said, after looking over her shoulder to make sure none of the children was within hearing, "there's somethin' else. I--I don't know, but--but I'm almost *sure* Mr. Phillips won't be back to-night. I think he's gone to stay."

"Stay? What do you mean? Did he take his dunnage--his things--with him?"

"No. His trunk is in his room. And he didn't have a satchel or a valise in his hand. But, Sears, I can't understand it--they're gone--his valises are gone."

"Gone! Gone where?"

"I don't know. That's the funny part of it. He's always kept two valises in his room, a big one and a little one. I went into his room just now to make the beds and clean up and I didn't see those valises anywhere. I thought that was funny and then I noticed that the things on his bureau, his brushes and comb and things, weren't there. Then I looked in his bureau drawers and everything was gone, the drawers were empty.... Sears, what *do* you suppose it means?"

Her brother did not answer at once. He tugged at his beard and frowned. Then he asked:

"Didn't he say a word more than you've told me? Or do anything?"

"No. He had his breakfast out here with us this mornin'. Then he went back to his room and, about nine or so, he came out to me and paid his board bill---- Oh, I told you he'd pay it, Sears; he always does pay--and then----"

"Here! Heave to! Hold on, Sarah! He paid his bill, all of it?"

"Yes. Right up to now. That was kind of funny, bein' the middle of the week instead of the end, but he said we might as well start with a clean ledger, or somethin' nice and pleasant like that. Then he took a bundle of money from his pocketbook--a great, *big* bundle it was, and--Why, why, Sears, what is it? Where are you goin'?"

The captain had pushed by her and was on his way to the front of the house.

"Goin'?" he repeated. "I'm goin' to have a look at those rooms of his. You'd better come with me, Sarah."

CHAPTER XVIII

The keeper of the livery stable was surprised. "Why, yes," he said, "Mr. Phillips was here a spell ago. He said he was callin' to go to Trumet to-day on a business cruise, and he hired Josiah and the bay horse and buggy to get him over there. They left about ten o'clock, I should say 'twas. I had a mind to ask him why he didn't take the train, but then I thought 'twould be poor business for a fellow that let teams, so I kept still. Hey? Ho, ho!"

The captain, somewhat out of breath after his hurried walk from the Macomber home to the stable, pondered a moment "Did he have a valise or satchel or anything with him?" he asked.

"No. Nothin' but his cane. Couldn't navigate a yard without his cane that feller couldn't, seemed so. Looked kind of spruced up, too. Dressed in his best bib and tucker, he was, beaver hat and all. Cal'late he must be goin' to see his best girl, eh. Ho, ho! Guess not though; from what I hear his best girl's down to the Fair Harbor."

Kendrick pondered a moment longer.

"Did he pay for the team?" he inquired.

"Hey? Yis, paid in advance, spot cash. But what you askin' all this for, Cap'n? Wanted to see him afore he went, did you?"

Sears nodded. "Just a business matter," he explained, and walked away. He did not walk far, only to the corner. There on the low stone wall bordering on the east the property of Captain Orrin Eldridge, he seated himself to rest and cogitate.

His cogitations were most unsatisfactory. They got him nowhere. He and his sister had pretty thoroughly inspected Egbert's quarters at the Macomber house. The Phillips trunk was still there, and the "horse pictures" and the photographs of Lobelia's charming lady friends! but there was precious little else. Toilet articles, collars, ties and more intimate articles of wearing apparel were missing and, except for a light coat and a summer suit of clothes, the closets were empty. And, as Sarah had said, the two valises had vanished. Egbert had told his landlady he was going to Trumet; he had told the livery man the same thing. But by far the easiest way to reach Trumet was by train. Why had he chosen to be driven there over a long and very bad road? And *what* had become of the valises?

And then occurred the second of a series of incidents which had a marked and helpful bearing up Captain Kendrick's actions that day. He said afterwards that, for the first time since his railway accident, he really began to believe the tide of luck was turning in his direction. The first of those incidents had been his meeting and talk with Captain Elkanah. That had sent him hurrying to the Macomers' earlier than he intended. The second incident was that now, as he sat there on the Eldridge wall, down the road came the Minot truck wagon with the Foam Flake in the shafts and Judah Cahoon swinging and jolting on the seat.

Judah spied him and hailed.

"Ahoy, there, Cap'n Sears!" he shouted, pulling the old horse to a standstill. "Thought you was down to Sary's long ago. What you doin' on that wall--gone to roost so early in the day?"

The captain smiled. "Not exactly, Judah," he replied. "But what are you doin' 'way back here? I thought you were haulin' Seth Bangs's wood for him."

"Huh!" in disgust; "I thought I was, too, but there was some kind of mix-up in the time. Callate 'twas that Hannah Bangs that muddled it--she could muddle a cake of ice, that woman. Kind of born with a knack for makin' mistakes, she is; and she's the biggest mistake herself, 'cordin' to my notion. Seems 'twas to-morrow, not to-day, Seth expected me to come."

"Humph! So you had your cruise up there for nothin'?"

"Yus. Creepin', jumpin'! Think of it, Cap'n. I navigated this old--er--er--spavin-rack 'way up to where them folks live, three mile on the Denboro road 'tis, and then had to come about and beat for home again. I ... Oh, say I sighted a chum of ours up along that way. Who do you callate 'twas, Cap'n Sears? Old Eg, that's who. Toggled out from truck to keelson as usual, beaver and all, and----"

"Here! Hold up! What's that, Judah? You saw Phillips up on the Denboro road, you say? What was he doin' there? When did you see him?"

"'Bout an hour ago, or such matter. He was aboard one of the livery stable teams and that Josiah Ellis was pilotin' him. I sung out to Josiah, but he never answered. Says I----"

"Sshh! Where were they bound; do you know?"

"Denboro, I presume likely. That's the only place there is to be bound to, on that road; 'less you're goin' perchin' up to Seabury's Pond, and folks don't do much perchin' in December. Not with beaver hats on, anyhow. Haw, haw! Eg and Josiah was all jammed up together on the buggy seat, with two big valises crammed in alongside of 'em, and ... Hi! What's the matter, Cap'n Sears? What's your hurry?"

The captain did not answer. He *was* hurrying--hurrying back to the livery stable. Half an hour later he, too, was on the seat of a hired buggy, driving the best horse the stable afforded up the lonely road leading to Denboro.

He met no one on that road--which winds and twists over the hills and through the wooded hollows from one side of the Cape to the other--until he was within a mile of Denboro village. Then he saw another horse and buggy approaching his. He recognized the occupant of that buggy long before he himself was recognized.

"Hi!" he shouted, as the two vehicles came near each other. "Hi! Josiah! Josiah Ellis!"

Josiah, serenely dozing, his feet propped against the dash and his cap over his eyes, came slowly to life.

"Hey?" he murmured, drowsily. "Yes; here I be.... Eh! What's the matter? Why, hello, Cap'n Kendrick, that you?"

"Whoa!" ordered the captain, addressing his own horse, who came to a standstill beside that driven by the other. "Stop, Josiah! Come up into the wind a minute, I want to speak to you. What have you done with Phillips?"

Josiah was surprised. "Why, how did you know I had Mr. Phillips aboard?" he asked. "Oh, I presume likely they told you at the stable. But how did you know he was goin' to Denboro? *I* never knew it till after we started. When we left port I supposed 'twas Trumet we was bound for, but we hadn't much more'n got under way when Mr. Phillips says he's changed his mind and wants to come over here. Didn't make no difference to *me*, of course. I get my wages, Saturday nights, just the same whether----"

"Where is Phillips now?"

"I was tellin' you. So we came about and headed for Denboro. Next thing we had to haul up abreast of that old tumbledown shed at the end of Tabby Crosby's lot there by the meetin'-house while Mr. Phillips hopped out and got a couple of great big satchels he'd left there. Big as trunks they was, pretty nigh, and time he got them stowed in here there wan't no room for knees nor feet nor nawthin' else seurecely. But, finally----"

"Hold on! Why did he have his dunnage in Tabitha Crosby's shed?"

"That's what *I* couldn't make out. He said he left 'em there so's not to have to go out of our way to get 'em at Joe Macomber's. But it's about as nigh to Joe's as 'tis to Tabby's, seems to me. Seemed funny enough, that did, but 'twan't no funnier than comin' way over to the Denboro depot to take the same train he might have took just as well at Bayport. *I* couldn't make it out. Can you, Cap'n Kendrick?"

"Did you leave him at the Denboro depot?"

"Yus. 'Bout an hour ago, or such matter. And the up train ain't due till four, and it's only half-past twelve now. I stopped at the Denboro House to get some diner. A feller has to eat once in a while, even if he ain't rich. And talk about chargin' high prices! All I had was some chowder and a piece of pie and tea, and I swan if they didn't stick me thirty-five cents! Yes, sir, thirty-five cents! And the pie was dried-apple at that. Don't talk to me no more about that Denboro House! If I ever----"

Kendrick heard no more. He was on his way to the railway station at Denboro. The mystery of the valises was, in one way, explained; in another it was more mysterious than ever. Evidently Phillips must have taken them from his rooms either early that morning or during the night--probably the latter--and hidden them in the Crosby shed. But why?

Denboro was a sleepy little village and at that hour on that raw December day the railway station was as sleepy as the rest of it. The station agent, who was also the telegraph operator, was locking his door preparatory to going home for dinner. He and the captain were old acquaintances. In days gone by he had sailed as second mate aboard a bark which Kendrick commanded. Now, retired from the sea, he was depot master and pound-keeper and constable in his native town. And, like most of Sears' shipmates, he was glad to see his former skipper.

They shook hands, exchanged observations concerning the weather, and then the depot master asked what he could do for his friend.

"I'm lookin' for a man named Phillips," explained Kendrick. "Josiah Ellis--fellow that drives for the livery stable over home--told me he left him here at your depot, Jim. About an hour ago, Josiah said it was. He doesn't seem to be here now; do you know where he's gone?"

Jim rubbed his chin. "Tall feller, thin, long mustache, beaver hat, talks important and patronizin' like a combination of Admiral Farragut and the Angel Gabriel?" he inquired.

"That's the man."

"He was here. Left them two valises yonder in my care. He's comin' back in time to take the three-fifteen."

"Three-fifteen? I thought the up train left here at half-past four or somethin' like that."

"The reg'lar train does. But there's a kind of combination, three or four freight and one passenger car, that comes up from Hyannis and goes on ahead of the other. It don't go only to Middleboro. He said he was call'latin' to take that. I had a notion he was goin' to change at Middleboro and go somewheres else from there."

"I see. Yes, yes. And you don't know where he is now?"

"Well, he asked where was the best place to eat and I told him some went to the hotel and some to Amanda Warren's boardin'-house. 'Most of 'em only go to the hotel once, though,' says I. I guess likely you'll find him at Amanda's."

So to Mrs. Warren's boarding-house the captain drove. The lady herself opened the door for him. Yes, the gentleman described had been there. Yes, he had eaten dinner and gone.

"Do you know where he has gone?" asked Kendrick.

Mrs. Warren nodded. "He asked me where Mr. Backus, the Methodist minister, lived," she said. "He was real particular to find out how to get there, so I guess that's where he was bound."

The Methodist minister! Why on earth Egbert Phillips should go to the home of a minister was another mystery beyond Sears Kendrick's power of surmise. However, he too inquired the way to the Backus domicile and once more took up the chase.

The Methodist parsonage was a neat little white house, green-shuttered, and with a white picket fence inclosing its little front yard. It being the home of a clergyman, Sears ventured to knock at the front door; otherwise he would, of

course, have gone around to the side entrance.

A white-haired little woman answered the knock. No, Mr. Backus was out, but he was expected back very soon. He had an appointment at two, so she was sure he would be in by that time. Would the captain come in and wait? There was another gentleman now in the parlor waiting. Yes, a tall gentleman with a mustache.

At last! Another minute, and Captain Kendrick, entering the Backus parlor, came face to face with the elusive object of his search, Mr. Egbert Phillips.

Egbert was sitting in a rocking chair by the marble-topped center table. A plush-covered photograph album was on that table and he was languidly turning its pages and inspecting, with a smile of tolerant amusement, the likenesses of the Backus friends and relatives. As the door opened he turned, his smile changing to one of greeting.

"Ah, Mr. Backus----" he began. And then he stopped. It was the captain who smiled now. His smile was as genial as a summer morn.

"Good afternoon, Mr. Phillips," he said. "How are you, sir?"

He stepped forward with extended hand. Still Egbert stood and stared. The photograph album, imperfectly balanced on the edge of the table, slipped to the floor.

The clergyman's wife seemed a trifle puzzled and perturbed by the Phillips expression and attitude.

"This gentleman said----" she began. "He said you and he----"

Kendrick helped her to finish: "I told the lady," he put in cheerfully, "that I had come 'way over from Bayport to see you about a little matter. I said we knew each other pretty well and I was sure you'd be glad to see me, even if I was kind of unexpected.... Excuse me, but you've dropped your picture book."

He stooped, picked up the album and replaced it on the table. This action occupied but a moment of time, nevertheless in that moment a portion at least of Egbert's poise returned. His smile might have been a bit uncertain, but it was a smile. And when Sears again extended his hand his own came to meet it.

"Of course, of course," he said. "Yes--ah--yes, indeed. How do you do, Kendrick?"

The captain beamed. "Oh, I'm feelin' tip-top," he declared. "The sight of you is enough to make me well, even if I was sick--which I'm not. Now if you and I might have a little talk?"

Mrs. Backus was anxious to oblige.

"You make yourselves right at home in here," she said. "If my husband comes I'll tell him to wait until you're through. Take all the time you want."

She was at the threshold, but Phillips detained her.

"Pardon me," he said, hastily, "but we mustn't abuse your hospitality to that extent. This--ah--gentleman and I can talk just as well out of doors. Really, I----"

"Oh, no! You must stay right here. Please do. It isn't the least trouble."

She went and the door closed behind her. Egbert glanced at the clock on the mantel and frowned. Captain Kendrick continued to smile.

"And here we are at last," he observed. "Quiet and sociable as you please. Sit down, Mr. Phillips, sit down."

But Egbert did not sit. He glanced at the clock once more and then at his watch.

"Sit down," repeated the captain. "I've been cruisin' so much this forenoon that I'm glad of the chance to sit. From what I've been able to learn you've been movin' pretty lively, too. A little rest won't do either of us any harm. Sit down, Mr. Phillips. Take the rocker."

Phillips walked to the front window, looked out, hesitated, and then, returning, did take the rocker. He looked at his fellow-townsmen.

"Well?" he asked.

Kendrick nodded. "Yes," he agreed, "it is well, real well, now that I've caught up with you. I'll say this for you, you're as good a craft for leavin' a crooked wake as any I ever chased. For a while there you had me hull down. But I'm here now--and so are you."

Egbert's slim hand slowly stroked his mustache.

"There appears to be some truth in that remark," he declared. "We do seem to be here--yes.... But----"

"But you are wonderin' why I am here? Well, to be honest, I came to find you. I judged that you were thinkin' of leavin'

us--for a spell, anyhow--and before you went I wanted to talk with you, that's all."

A pause, and more mustache stroking. The two men regarded each other; the captain blandly beaming, Phillips evidently pondering.

"I don't know," he said, at last, "what you may mean by my thinking of leaving you. However, that is not material, and I am always delighted to see you, of course. But as I am rather busy this afternoon perhaps you'll be good enough to come to the point.... If there is a point."

"Yes, there is. Oh, yes, there's a point. Two or three points."

"Indeed! How interesting. And what are they? Please be as--ah--brief as you can."

Sears crossed his legs. All this had been but preliminary maneuvering. Here now was the real beginning of the fight; and he realized only too keenly that his side in that fight was tremendously short of ammunition. But he did not mean that his adversary should guess that fact, and with the smiling serenity of absolute confidence he fired the opening gun.

"Egbert," he began--"you don't mind my callin' you Egbert? Knowin' you as well as I do, it seems foolish to stand on ceremony, don't you think? You don't mind?"

"Not at all. Charmed, I'm sure.... Well?"

"Well--yes. We've got a good many mutual friends--you and I, Egbert. One of 'em is named George Kent. He's a great friend of both of us. Nice boy, too."

At the mention of the name the Phillips hand, caressing the Phillips mustache, paused momentarily. But it resumed operations almost at once. Other than this there was no sign of perturbation on its owner's part. He slowly shook his head.

"My *dear* Captain Kendrick----" he drawled.

"Oh, call me Sears. *Don't* be formal."

"My dear man, if it is possible for you to come to the point? Without too great a strain on your--ah--intellect?"

"I'm comin', Egbert. Right abreast there now. George--our mutual friend--is in trouble. He has used some money that he can't spare, used it in a stock deal. I won't go into the particulars because you know 'em just as well as I do. You got him into the trouble in the first place, I understand. Now, to a man up a tree, as the boys say, it would seem as if you ought to be the one to get him out. Particularly as you are his very best friend. Don't you think so?"

Egbert sighed before answering, a sigh of utter weariness.

"And may I ask if *this* is the--ah--point?" he inquired.

"Why, yes--I guess so. In a way."

"And you are acting as our young friend's representative? He has seen fit to take you into his confidence concerning a matter which was supposed to be a business secret between--ah--gentlemen?"

"I could see he was in trouble and I offered to do what I could to help. Then he told me the whole thing."

"Indeed? A changeable youth. When I last heard him mention your name it was not--pardon me--in a--shall we say strictly affectionate tone?"

"That so? Too bad. But we are all liable to be mistaken in our judgments. Men--and women, too."

Again there was a slight pause; Egbert was regarding the speaker intently. The latter's countenance was about as expressive as that of a wooden idol, a good-natured one. Mr. Phillips glanced once more at the clock, languidly closed his eyes, opened them, sighed for the third time, and then spoke.

"So I am to understand that our--ah--juvenile acquaintance has turned his business affairs over to you," he said. "I congratulate him, I'm sure. The marked success which you have attained in the--ah--management of--ah--other business affairs has inspired him with perfect trust, doubtless."

"That must be it. The average man has to trust somebody and I gathered that *some* trusts of his were beginnin' to slip their moorin's. However, here's the situation. You got him to buy some stock on margin. The stock, instead of goin' up, as you prophesied, went down. You suggested his puttin' up more margin. He'd used all his own money, so he used some belonging to some one else. Now he's in trouble, bad trouble. What are you goin' to do about it?"

"I? My dear man, what should I do about it? What can I do? I have explained my situation to him. I am, owing to circumstances and the--ah--machinations of certain individuals--both circumstances and individuals of your acquaintance, I believe--in a most unfortunate position financially. I have no money, or very little. Our--your young

protege wished to risk some of his money in a certain speculation. I did the same. The speculation was considered good at the time. I still consider it good, although profit may be deferred. He took the risk with his eyes open. He is of age. He is not a child, although--pardon me--this new action of his might lead one to think him such. I am sorry for him, but I do not consider myself at all responsible."

"I see. But he has used money which wasn't his to speculate with."

"I am sorry, deeply sorry. But--is that my fault?"

"Well, that might be a question, mightn't it? You knew he was usin' that money?"

"Pardon me--pardon me, Kendrick; but is that--ah--strictly true?"

"Well, he says it is. However, the question is just this: Will you help him out by buyin' up his share in this C. M. deal? Pay him back his sixteen hundred and take the whole thing over yourself?"

Mr. Phillips for the first time permitted himself the luxury of a real smile.

"My *dear* man," he observed, "you're not seriously offering such a proposition as that, are you? You must be joking."

"It's no joke to poor George. And he's only a boy, after all. You wouldn't want him to go to jail."

The smile disappeared. "I should be pained," protested Egbert, and proved it by looking pained. "It would grieve me deeply. But I can't think such a contingency possible. No, no; not possible. And in time--my brokers assure me a very short time--the stock will advance."

"And you won't take over his share and get all that profit yourself?"

"I can't. It is impossible. I am so sorry. In former days--" with a gesture of resignation--"it would have been quite possible. Then I should have been delighted. But now.... However, you must, as a man of the world, see that all this is quite absurd. And it is painful to me, as a friend--still a friend of young Kent's. Pardon me again, but I am busy this afternoon and----"

He rose. Sears did not rise. He remained seated.

"Jail's a mean place," he remarked, with apparent irrelevance. "I'd hate to go there myself. So would you, I'll bet."

Another pause on Phillips' part. Then another wearied smile.

"Do you--ah--foresee any likelihood of either of us arriving at that destination?" he inquired.

"Well, *I'm* hopin' to stay out, for a spell anyway. Mr. Phillips--Egbert--yes, yes, Egbert, of course; we're gettin' better acquainted all the time, so we just mustn't stand on ceremony. Egbert, how about those City of Boston 4-1/2s you put up as security over there in New York? What are you goin' to do about *them*?"

Egbert had strolled to the window and was looking out. He continued to look out. The captain, his gaze fixed upon the beautifully draped, even though the least bit shiny, shoulders of the Phillips' coat, watched eagerly for some shiver, some sign of agitation, however slight. But there was none. The sole indication that the shot just fired had had any effect was the length of time Egbert took before turning. When he did turn he was still blandly smiling. He walked back to the rocker and settled himself upon its patchwork cushion.

"Yes?" he queried. "You were saying----"

"I was speakin' of those two one thousand dollar City of Boston bonds you sent your brokers, you know. Would you mind tellin' me how you got those bonds?"

Mr Phillips lifted one slim leg over the other. He lifted two slim hands and placed their finger tips together.

"Kendrick," he asked, "you will pardon me for speaking plainly? Thank you so much. I have already listened to you for some time--more time than I should have spared. For some reason you have--ah--seen fit to--shall we say pursue me here. Having found me, you make a most--pardon me again--unreasonable and childish demand on the part of young Kent. I cannot grant it. Now is there any use wasting more time by asking--pardon me once more--impertinent questions concerning my affairs? You can scarcely--well, even you, my dear Kendrick, can hardly expect me to answer them. Don't you think this--ah--extremely pleasant interview had better end pleasantly--by ending now?"

He would have risen once more, but Sears motioned him to remain in the rocker. The captain leaned forward.

"Egbert," he said briskly, "I'm busy, too; but I have spent a good many hours and some dollars to get at you and I shan't leave you until I get at least a part of what I came after. Those Boston bonds----"

"Are my property, sir?"

"Well, I don't know. The last anybody heard they were the property of Mrs. Cordelia Berry. Now you say they're yours. That's one of the matters to be settled before you and I part company, Egbert."

Mr. Phillips' aristocratic form stiffened. Slowly he rose to his feet.

"You are insulting," he proclaimed. "That will do. There is the door."

"Yes, I see it. It's a nice door; the grainin' on it seems to be pretty well done. How did you get hold of those bonds, Egbert?"

"If you don't go, I shall."

"All right. Then I'll go with you. You shan't take the three-fifteen or any other train till we've settled this and some other questions. Oh, it's a fact. No hard feelin', you know; just business, that's all."

Egbert moved toward the door. His caller rose to follow him. The captain often wondered afterward whether or not Phillips would really have left the room if there had been no interruption. The question remained a question because at that moment there was a knock on the other side of the door. It had a marked effect upon Egbert. He started, frowned and shot another glance at the clock.

"Excuse me," said Mrs. Backus, opening the door a crack, "but my husband has come."

Phillips seemed relieved, yet troubled, too.

"Yes--ah--yes," he said. "Will you kindly ask him to wait? Thank you."

The lady closed the door again. Egbert took a turn across the room and back. Kendrick smiled cheerfully.

"About those bonds?" he observed.

Phillips faced him.

"The bonds," he declared, "are mine. How I got them is not your business in the least."

"Just a minute, just a minute. Cordelia Berry----"

"Did Mrs. Berry tell you that I had them?"

"No need to bother with that part of it now. I know."

"But she did not give you authority to come to me about them? Don't pretend she did; I know better."

"I'm not goin' to pretend--that. She didn't."

"Humph!" with a sneer; "perhaps your authority comes from some one else. Her daughter, maybe? You and she are--or shall we say *were*--quite touchingly confidential at one time, I believe."

The tone and the remark were mistakes; it would have been much better for the Phillips cause if the speaker had continued to be loftily condescending. Sears kept a grip on his temper, but his own tone changed as he replied.

"Egbert," he said sharply, "look here. The facts, as far as a man without a spyglass can sight 'em through the fog, are just these: You got George Kent into a stock trade. He put up money--real money. You put up two thousand dollars in bonds and, because that was more than your share, he paid you four hundred dollars in cash. The last anybody knew the two bonds you put up were the property of Cordelia Berry. I want to know how you got hold of 'em."

"Am I to understand that you are accusing me of *stealing* those bonds?"

"I'm not accusin' you of anything in particular. George has put this affair of his in my hands; I've got what amounts to his signed power of attorney in my pocket. If those bonds are yours, and you can prove it, then I shan't say any more about 'em. If they still belong to Cordelia--well, that's another question, one I mean to have the answer to before you and I part company."

"Kendrick, I--- Do you realize that I can have you arrested for this?"

"I don't know. But it does seem to me that if those bonds aren't your property then you had no right to pledge 'em in that stock deal. And that your takin' Kent's four hundred dollars in part payment for 'em comes pretty nigh to what a lawyer would call gettin' money under false pretenses. So the arrests might be even--Stephen, so far as that goes."

This was the sheerest "bluff," but it was delivered with all the assurance in the world. It had not precisely the effect Sears had hoped for. Egbert did not seem so much frightened as annoyed by it. He frowned, walked across the room and back, looked at the clock, then out of the window, and finally turned to his opponent.

"Recognizing, of course," he sneered, "the fact that all this is absolutely none of your business, Kendrick; may I ask why you didn't come to me in Bayport instead of here?"

The captain's smile returned. "I did try to come, Egbert," he answered. "But you had gone and so had the things in your room. You told Sarah and the stable folks you were goin' to Trumet. When I found you hadn't gone there, but were bound for here--after hidin' your valises over night in Tabby Crosby's shed--I decided you might be goin' even farther

than Denboro, and that if I wanted to see you pretty soon--or ever, maybe--I'd better hoist sail and travel fast. When the depot folks told me you were askin' about the three-fifteen I felt confirmed in my judgments, as the fellow said. Now if you'll tell me about those bonds?"

Another turn by Phillips across the parlor and back. Then he asked, with sarcasm, "If I were to tell you that those bonds were given me by Mrs. Berry, you wouldn't believe it, I presume?"

"We-ll, I'd like to hear a little testimony from Cordelia first."

"May I ask why you did not go to her instead of to me?"

"I didn't have a chance. You got away too soon."

"Possibly you may have thought that she, too, would consider it none of your business. And, since you won't take my word, how do you expect me to prove--here in Denboro that those bonds are mine?"

"I don't know. But if it can't be proved in Denboro, then I'm afraid, Egbert, that you'll have to go back to Bayport with me and prove it there.... Oh, I know you'd hate to go, but----"

"Go! I flatly refuse to go, of course."

"I was afraid you would. Well, then I'd have to call in the constable to help get you under way. Jim Baker, the depot master, is constable here in Denboro. He and I were shipmates. He'd arrest the prophet Elijah if I asked him to, and not ask why, either."

"Kendrick----"

"Egbert, a spell ago you and I had a little chat together and I told you I had just begun to fight.... Well, I haven't really begun yet, but I'm gettin' up steam... Think it over."

Phillips stopped and, standing by the window, stared fixedly at the captain. The latter met the stare with a look of the blandest serenity. Behind the look, however, were feelings vastly different. If ever a forlorn hope skated upon thin ice, his and George Kent's was doing so at that moment. If Egbert *should* agree to return to Bayport, and if his statement concerning the ownership of the Boston bonds *was* true, then--well, then it would not be Mr. Phillips who might receive the attentions of the constable.

Egbert stopped staring and once more looked at the clock. Quarter past two! He turned again quickly.

"Kendrick," he snapped, "what *is* your proposition?"

"My proposition? I want you to pay me the sixteen hundred dollars Kent put into that C. M. stock deal. If you do that I'll give you his signed paper tumin' over to you all interest in the deal. You can make all the profit on it yourself--when it comes. Then in matter of Cordelia's bonds----"

Phillips lifted a hand.

"The bonds are not to be considered," he said, decisively. "If they are mine, as I say they are, you have no claim on them. If they are Mrs. Berry's, as you absurdly pretend to think they are, again you have no claim. If she says I have stolen them--which she won't--she may prosecute; but, again, my dear sir, she--ah--won't."

The slight smile accompanying the last sentence troubled the captain. It was not the smile of a frightened man. Before he could reply Egbert continued.

"But the bond matter may be settled later," he went on. "So far as I am concerned it is settled now. For our--ah--foolish young friend, Kent, however, I feel a certain sense of--shall we say pity?--and am inclined to make certain confessions. Silly sentimentalism on my part, doubtless--but pity, nevertheless. If you will give me the paper signed by him, which you claim to have, relinquishing all share in the stock at the New York brokers, I will--well, yes, I will pay you the sixteen hundred dollars."

It was Sears Kendrick who was staggered now. It was his turn to stare.

"You will pay me sixteen hundred dollars--*now*?" he gasped.

"Yes."

"But--but.... Humph! Well, thanks, Egbert--but your check, you know----"

"I have no time to waste in drawing checks. I will pay you in cash."

And, as Sears's already wide-open eyes opened wider and wider, he calmly took from his coat a pocketbook hugely obese and extracted from that pocketbook a mammoth roll of bank notes.

Ten minutes later the captain was again moving along the road between Denboro and Bayport, bound home this time. He was driving mechanically; the horse was acting as his own pilot, for the man who held the reins was too much

engrossed in thought to pay attention to such inconsequential matters as ruts or even roads. Sears was doing his best to find the answer to a riddle and, so far, the answer was as deeply shrouded in mist as ever a ship of his had been on any sea.

He was satisfied in one way, more than satisfied. His demand for the full sixteen hundred had been made with no real hope. Had Phillips consented to return eight hundred dollars of the amount, the offer would in the end have been accepted with outward reluctance but inward joy. Had he refused to return a penny Kendrick would not have been surprised. But Egbert, after making up his mind, had paid the entire sum without a whimper, had paid it almost casually and with the air of one obliging a well-meaning, if somewhat annoying, inferior. Inspecting and pocketing Kent's power of attorney and the captain's receipt he had dismissed his visitor at the parsonage door as King Solomon in all his glory might have graciously dismissed a beggar whose petition had been granted. And the look in his eye and the half smile beneath the long mustache were not those of one beaten at a game--no, they were not.

The recollection of that look and that smile bothered Sears Kendrick. He could not guess what was behind them. One thing seemed to be certain, his threats of prosecution and his bluffs concerning the Boston bonds had not alarmed Phillips greatly. He had not given in because he was afraid of imprisonment. No; no, the only symptoms of nervousness he had shown were his repeated glances at the clock, at his watch, and when he looked out of the parsonage window. More and more the captain was forced to the conclusion that Egbert had paid him to get rid of him, that he did not wish to be detained or to have Kendrick remain there, and his reasons must have been so important that he was willing to part with sixteen hundred dollars to get his visitor out of the way.

But what possible reason could be as important as that? Why had he run away from Bayport? Why was he taking the three-fifteen train--at Denboro? Why was he spending the time before the departure of that train in the parlor of the Methodist parsonage? And he had made an appointment with the minister himself. Was he expecting some one else at that parsonage?

Eh? The captain straightened on the buggy seat. He spoke aloud one word, a name.

"Cordelia!" he cried.

For another five minutes Captain Sears Kendrick, his frown growing deeper and deeper as the conviction was forced upon him, sat motionless in the buggy. Then he spoke sharply to his horse, turned the latter about, and drove rapidly back to Denboro. He could do nothing worth while, he could prevent nothing, but he could answer that riddle. He believed he had answered it already.

It was half-past three when he again knocked at the parsonage door. The Reverend Backus himself answered the knock.

"Why, no," he said, "Mr. Phillips has gone. Yes, I think--I am sure he took the train. You are his friend, aren't you? I am sorry you missed the--er--happy event. Mrs. Phillips--the new Mrs. Phillips--is a charmingly refined lady, isn't she? And Mr. Phillips himself is *such* a gentleman. I don't know when I have had the pleasure of--er--officiating at a pleasanter ceremony. I shall always remember it."

Mrs. Backus looked over her husband's shoulder.

"The bride came just after you left," she explained. "She was just a little late, she said; but it was all right, there was plenty of time. And she did look *so* happy!"

Captain Kendrick did not look happy. He had answered the riddle correctly. An elopement, of course. It was plain enough now. Oh, if he might have been there when that poor, silly, misguided woman arrived! He might not have been able to stop the marriage, but at least he could--and would--have told the bride a few pointed truths concerning the groom.

Mrs. Backus, all smiles, asked her husband a question. "What did you say her name was, dear?" she asked.

The minister hesitated. "Why--why--" he stammered, "it was---- Dear me, how forgetful I am!"

Sears supplied the information.

"Berry," he said, gloomily. "Cordelia Berry."

Mr. Backus seemed surprised. "Why, no," he declared. "That doesn't sound like the name.... It wasn't. No, it wasn't. It was--I have it--Snowden. Miss Elvira Snowden--of Ostable, I believe."

CHAPTER XIX

Not until Captain Kendrick entered the Minot kitchen late that afternoon did he get the full and complete answer to his puzzle. Judah supplied the missing details, supplied them with a rush, had evidently been bursting with them for hours.

"My hoppin', creepin', jumpin' prophets, Cap'n Sears," he roared, before his lodger could speak a word, "if I ain't got the dumdest news to tell you now, then nobody ever had none!... You ain't heard it, Cap'n, have you? *Don't* tell me you've heard it already! Have you?"

Sears shrugged his shoulders. "I don't know, Judah," he replied. "Have I?"

"Hoppin' Henry! *I hope* you ain't, 'cause I wanted to tell you myself. It's about Elviry Snowden. Have you heard anything about her?"

"Why--well, what have *you* heard?"

"Heard! They heard it fust over to the Harbor about a couple of hours ago. Bradley, the Orham lawyer feller, he'd heard it and he come over to see Elizabeth about somethin' or 'nother and he told it to all hands. You know that aunt of Elviry's over to Ostable, the one that died last week? Well all hands had cal'lated she was kind of on her beam ends--poor, I mean. When her husband died, don't you recollect some property they owned over to Harniss was goin' to be sold to auction? All them iron images Elviry wanted to buy was part of 'em; don't you remember?"

"Yes, I remember.

"Sartin sure you do. Well, so fur as that goes them images wan't sold because the widow changed her mind about 'em and had 'em all carted over to another little place she owned in Ostable, and set up in the yard there. She's been livin' on this place in Ostable and everybody figgered she didn't have much money else she'd stayed in the big house in Harniss. But, by Henry, since she's died it's come out that she was rich. Yes, sir, rich! She'd saved every cent, you see; never spent nothin'. A reg'lar mouser, she was--miser, I mean. And who do you suppose she's left it all to? Elviry, by the creepin'! Yes, sir, every last cent to Elviry Snowden."

"*No!!!*"

"Yes. Elviry's rich. 'Cordin' to Bradley's tell there's a lot of land and a house and barn, and all them iron images, and--wait; let me tell you--stocks, and things like that, and over ten thousand dollars cash in the bank, by Henry! In *cash*, where Elviry can get right ahold of it if she wants to. Much as thirty thousand, altogether, land and all. And... What in tunket are you laughin' at?"

For Captain Kendrick had thrown himself into the rocking chair and was shaking the pans on the stove with peal after peal of laughter.

It was so simple, so complete, and so wonderfully, gorgeously Egbertian. A little matter of arithmetic, that was all. Merely the substitution of twenty or thirty thousand dollars and a landed estate for five--no, three--thousand dollars and a somewhat cramped future at the Fair Harbor. The ladies in the case were incidental. When the choice was offered him the businesslike Phillips hesitated not a moment. He was on with the new love even before he was off with the old. And, in order to avoid the unpleasantness which was sure to ensue when the old found it out, he had arranged to be married at Denboro and to be far afield upon his wedding tour before the news reached Bayport.

Everything was clear now. Elvira's windfall explained it all. It was her money which had paid Captain Elkanah, and Sarah Macomber, and the livery man, and no doubt many another of Egbert's little bills. It was her money that was paying the honeymoon expenses. And, of course, it was her sixteen hundred dollars which had just been handed to Sears Kendrick in the parlor of the parsonage.

No wonder that, under the circumstances, Egbert had chosen to pay. It must have been a nerve-racking session for him, that interview with the captain. Each minute might bring his bride-to-be to the parsonage door, and if she learned before marriage of Cordelia's bonds and the Kent-Phillips stock speculation, not to mention the threatened arrest and consequent scandal, why--well, Elvira was fatuously smitten, but the chances were that the wedding would have been postponed, if nothing worse. No wonder Egbert preferred parting with a portion of his lady-love's fortune to the risk of parting with the lady herself--and the remainder of it.

Sears did not tell Judah of the elopement. He did not feel like it, then. His had been a tiring day and the strain upon his own nerves not slight. He wanted to rest, he wanted to think, and he did not want to talk. Judah spared him the trouble; he did talking enough for two.

After supper George Kent came hurrying into the yard. Sears had expected him and, when he came, led him into the "spare stateroom" and closed the door. Then, without any preliminaries, he took the sixteen hundred dollars from his

wallet and gave them to him.

"There's your money, George," he said.

Kent could not believe it. He had come here, in the last stages of despair. This was practically his final day of grace. The afternoon mail had brought him another letter from his brother-in-law, making immediate demand and threatening drastic action within the week. He had come, haggard, nervous and trembling, ready to proclaim again his intention of self-destruction.

He sat there, staring at the money in his hand, saying nothing. His face was as white as the clean towels on the captain's washstand. Kendrick, leaning forward, laid a hand on his knee.

"Brace up, George," he ordered, sharply. "Don't let go of the wheel."

Kent slowly lifted his gaze from the roll of bills to his friend's face.

"You--you *got* it!" he faltered.

"I got it--all of it. There's the whole sixteen hundred there. Count it."

"But--but, oh, my God! I--I----"

"Sshh! Steady as she is, George. Count your money. Put it on the table here by the lamp."

He took the bills from Kent's shaking fingers, arranged them on the table and, at last, coaxed or drove the young man into beginning to count them. Of course it was Kendrick himself who really counted; his companion did little but pick up the bank notes and drop them again. Suddenly, in the midst of the performance, he stopped, put his hands to his face and burst into hysterical sobs.

Sears let him cry for a time, merely stepping across to make sure that the bedroom door was tightly closed, and then standing above him with his hands on the bowed shoulders. After a little the sobs ceased. A moment later and George raised his head.

"Oh!" he exclaimed. "What a--a kid I am!"

Sears, who had been thinking pretty nearly that very thing, patted the shoulder beneath his hand.

"All right, George," he said. "Bein' a kid is no crime. In fact, it has some advantages."

"But--but, you see--I--I have been through purgatory this week, I----"

"I know. But you're all through and out now."

"Yes, I--I am. By George, I am, aren't I!... And you did it for me. *You* did!"

"Never mind that. I enjoyed doin' it. Yes," with a slight smile, "I had a pretty good time, take it by and large."

"And you got the--the whole of it! The whole!"

"Yes."

"But I can't understand.... Did--Cap'n Kendrick, did you borrow it for me?"

"No. I talked things over with your--er--side-partner and he decided to give it back."

"To give it back! Mr. Phillips did, you mean? But he wouldn't give it to me. I begged him to. I should have been satisfied with half of it--my sister's half. Indeed I should! But he said he couldn't give it to me, he didn't have it to give. And--and you got him to give me the whole! Cap'n Kendrick, I--I can't understand."

"You don't have to. There's your sixteen hundred. Now take it, and before you turn in this night you get ready to send your brother-in-law his half, and the papers that go with it, on the first mail. That's all I ask of you, George."

"I'll have it in the post office as soon as it opens to-morrow morning. You bet I will!"

"That's what I want to be able to bet. You send a money-order, that's safest. And--well, yes, George, you might show me the receipt."

"I'll show it to you. You can keep it for me, if you want to."

"Seein' it will do. And one thing more: you promise me now, on your word of honor, not to take any more of those stock market fliers for--well, for ten years, anyhow."

Kent promised; he would have promised anything. His color had come back, his spirits were now as high as they had been low, and he was striding up and down the room like a mad thing.

"But how did you get it for me?" he kept demanding. The captain bade him stop.

"Never mind how I got it," he declared. "I got it, and you've got it, and you'll have to be satisfied with that. Don't ask me again, George."

"I won't, but--but I can't understand Mr. Phillips giving it back. He didn't have to, you know. Say, I think it was mighty generous of him, after all. Don't you?"

Sears's lip twitched. "It looks as if somebody was generous," he observed. "Now run along, George, and fix up that letter to your brother-in-law."

"I'm going to. I'm going now. But, Cap'n Kendrick, I don't know what to say to you. I--why, great Scott, I can't begin to tell you how I feel about what you've done! I'd cut off my head for you; honest I would."

"Cuttin' off your own head would be consider'ble of a job. Better keep your head on, George.... And use it once in a while."

"You know what this means to me, Cap'n Kendrick. To my future and--and maybe some one else's future, too. Why, *now* I can go--I can say---- Oh, great Scott!"

Kendrick opened the bedroom door. "Come now, George," he said. "Good night--and good luck."

Kent would have said more, much more, even though Judah Cahoon was sitting, with ears and mouth open, in the kitchen. But the captain would not let him linger or speak. He helped him on with his coat and hat, and, with a slap on the back, literally pushed him out into the yard. Then he turned on his heel and striding again through the kitchen reentered the spare stateroom and closed the door behind him. Judah shouted something about its being "not much more'n two bells"--meaning nine o'clock--but he received no answer.

Judah did not retire until nearly eleven that night, but when, at last, he did go to his own room, there was a light still shining under the door of the spare stateroom and he could hear the captain's footsteps moving back and forth, back and forth, within. For two hours he had so heard them. Obviously the "old man" was pacing the deck, a pretty sure sign of rough weather present or expected. Mr. Cahoon was troubled, also disappointed. He would have liked to talk interminably concerning the sensational news of Miss Snowden's inheritance; he had not begun to exhaust the possibilities of that subject. Then, too, he was very anxious to learn where Captain Sears had been all day, and why. He tried in various ways to secure attention. But when, after singing eight verses of the most doleful ditty in his repertoire, he was not ordered to "shut up," was in fact ignored altogether, he quit disgusted. But, as he closed the door of his own bedchamber, he could still hear the regular footfalls in the spare stateroom.

Had he listened for another hour or more he would have heard them. Sears Kendrick was tramping back and forth, his hands jammed in his pockets, and upon his spirit the blackest and deepest and densest of clouds. It was the reaction, of course. He was tired physically, but more tired mentally. All day long he had been under a sharp strain, now he was experiencing the let-down. But there was more than that. His campaign against Egbert Phillips had kept him interested. Now the fight was over and, although superficially he was the victor, in reality it was a question which side had won. He had saved George Kent's money and his good name. And Cordelia Berry's future was safe, too, although her two thousand dollars might be, and probably were, lost. But, after all, his was a poor sort of victory. Egbert was, doubtless, congratulating himself and chuckling over the outcome of the battle; with thirty thousand dollars and ease and comfort for the rest of his life, he could afford to chuckle. Kent's happiness was sure. He could go to Elizabeth now with clean hands and youth and hope. Perhaps he had gone to her already. That very evening he and she might be together once more.

And for the man who had made this possible, what remained? Where were those silly hopes with which, at one time, he had deluded himself? He had dared to dream romance. Where was that romance now? Face to face with reality, what was to be *his* future? More days and weeks and years of puttering with the penny-paring finances of a home for old women?

He dressed next morning with a mind made up. He had dallied and deliberated and wished long enough. Now he *knew*. His stay in Bayport was practically ended. Give him a little time and luck enough to find a competent manager for the Fair Harbor, one with whom he believed Judge Knowles would have been satisfied, and he was through for good. He must play fair with the judge and then--then for the shipping offices of Boston or New York and a berth at sea. His health was almost normal; his battered limbs were nearly as sound as ever. He could handle a ship and he could handle men. His fights and sacrifices for others were finished, over and done with. Now he would fight for himself.

His breakfast appetite was poor. Judah, aghast at the sight of his untouched plate, demanded to know if he was sick. The answer to the question was illuminating.

"No," snapped the captain, "I'm not sick.... Yes, I am, too. I'm sick to death of this town and this place and this landlubber's job. Judah, are you goin' to spend the rest of your days playin' hired boy for Ogden Minot? Or are you comin' to sea again with me? Because to sea is where I'm goin'--and mighty quick."

Judah's mouth opened. "Hoppin' Henry!" he gasped. "Why, Cap'n Sears----"

"You don't *like* this job, do you? Hadn't you rather have your own galley on board a decent ship? Are you a sea-man-- or a washwoman? Don't you want to ship with me again?"

"*Want* to! Cap'n Sears, you know I'd rather go to sea along with you than--than be King of Rooshy. But you ain't fit to go to sea yet."

"Shut up! Don't you dare say that again. And stand by to pack your sea chest when I give the order.... No, I don't want to argue. I won't argue. Clear out!"

Mr. Cahoon, bewildered but obedient, cleared out. Not long afterward he drove away on the seat of the truck wagon to haul the Bangs wood, the task postponed from the previous day. Kendrick, left alone, lit a pipe and resumed his pacing up and down. Later on he took pen, ink and paper and seated himself at the table to write some letters to shipping merchants whose vessels he had commanded in the old days, the happy days before he gave up seafaring to become a poor imitation of a business man on shore.

He composed these letters with care. Two were completed and the third was under way, when some one knocked at the other door. He laid down his pen impatiently. He did not want to be interrupted. If the visitor was Kent he did not feel like listening to more thanks. If it was Esther Tidditt she could unload her cargo of gossip at some other port.

But the caller was neither George nor Esther. It was Elizabeth who entered the kitchen in answer to his command to "Come in." He rose to greet her. She looked pale--yes, and tired, but she smiled faintly as she bade him good morning.

"Cap'n Kendrick," she said, "are you very busy? I suppose you are, but--but if you are not too busy I should like to talk with you for a few minutes. May I?"

He nodded. "Of course," he said. "My business can wait a little longer; it has waited a good while, this particular business has. Sit down."

She took the rocker. He sat at the other side of the table, waiting for her to speak. It came to him, the thought that, the last time she had visited that kitchen, she had left it vowing never to speak to him again. Well, at least that was over; she no longer believed him a spy, and all the rest of it. There was, or should be, some comfort for him in knowing that.

Suddenly, just as she had done on the platform of the lawyer's office at Orham, she put out her hand.

"Don't!" she pleaded.

He started, confusedly. "Don't?" he stammered. "What?"

"Don't think of--of what you were thinking. If you knew--oh, Cap'n Kendrick, if you could only realize how wicked I feel. Even when I said those dreadful things to you I didn't mean them. And now---- Oh, *please* forget them, if you can."

He drew a long breath. "I never saw any one like you," he declared. "How did you know what I was thinkin'? ... Of course I wasn't thinkin' it, but----"

She interrupted. "Of course you were, you mean," she said, with a faint smile. "It isn't hard to know what you think. You don't hide your thoughts very well, Cap'n Kendrick. They aren't the kind one needs to hide."

He stared at her in guilty amazement. "Good land!" he ejaculated, involuntarily. "Don't talk that way. What do you mean by that?"

"I mean that your thoughts are always straightforward and--well, honest, like yourself... But we mustn't waste time. I don't know when we shall have another opportunity to be together like this, and there are some things I must say to you. Cap'n Kendrick, you know--you have heard the news?"

"News?... Oh, you mean about Elvira's inheritin' all that money?"

"That, of course. But that wasn't the news I meant. I mean about her eloping with--with that man."

Troubled even as Sears was at the sight of her evident distress, he could not but feel a thrill of satisfaction at the tone in which she referred to "that man." He nodded.

"I've heard it," he said. "I guess likely I was about the first Bayporter that did hear it. When did you hear?"

"A little while ago. He wrote--he wrote my mother a letter. It was at the post office this morning."

"He did? He *didn't*! The low-lived scamp!"

"Hush! Don't talk about him. Yes, he wrote her. *Such* a letter! She showed it to me. So full of hypocrisy, and lies and--oh, can't you imagine what it was?"

Kendrick's right fist tapped the table gently. "I guess likely I can," he said, grimly. "Well, some of these days I may run

afoul of Egbert again. When I do----" The fist closed a little tighter.

"You won't touch him. Promise me you won't. If you should, I---- Oh, dear! I think I should be afraid to touch your hands afterwards."

Sears smiled. "It might be safer to use my boot," he admitted. "Your mother--how is she?"

"Can't you imagine? I think--I hope it is her pride that is hurt more than anything. For some little time--well, ever since I found out that she was lending him money--I have done my best to make her see what he really is. But before that--oh, there is no use pretending, for you know--she was insane about him. And now, with the shock and the disillusionment and the shame, she is---- Oh, it is dreadful!"

"Do the--er--rest of 'em over there know it yet?"

"No, but they will very soon. And when they do! You know what some of them are, what they will say. We can't stay there, mother and I. We must go away--and we will."

She was crying, and if ever a man yearned for the role of comforter, Sears Kendrick was that man. He tried to say something, but he was afraid to trust his own tongue; it might run away with him. And before his attempt was at all coherent, she went on.

"Don't mind me," she said, hastily wiping her eyes. "I am nervous, and I have been through a bad hour, and--and I am acting foolishly, of course. I know that this is, in a way, the very best thing that could happen. This ends it, so far as mother is concerned. Oh, it might have been *so* much worse! It looked as if it were going to be. Now she *knows* what he is. I have known it, or been almost sure of it, for a long time. And you must have known it always, from the beginning. That is a part of what I came here for this morning. Please tell me how you knew and--and all about everything."

So he told her, beginning with what Judge Knowles had said concerning Lobelia's husband, and continuing on to the end. She listened intently.

"Yes," she said. "I see. I wish you could have told me at first. I think if I had known exactly how Judge Knowles felt I might not have been so foolish. But I should have known--I should have seen for myself. Of course I should. To think that I ever believed in such a creature, and trusted him, and permitted him to influence me against--against a friend like you. Oh, I must have been crazy!"

Kendrick shook his head. "No craziness about that," he declared. "I've seen some smooth articles in my time, seen 'em afloat and ashore, from one end of this world to the other, but of all the slick ones he was the slickest. It's a good thing the judge warned me before Egbert crossed my bows. If he hadn't--well, I don't know; *I* might have been lendin' him my last dollar, and proud of the chance--you can't tell.... I'm sorry, though," he added, "that he got those bonds of your mother's. Borrowed 'em of her, you say?"

"Yes. He was going to make better investments for her, I believe he said. But that doesn't make any difference. She has no receipts or anything to show. And of course if she should try to get them again there would be dreadful gossip, all sorts of things said. No, the bonds are gone and ... But how did you know about the bonds, Cap'n Kendrick?"

Sears had momentarily forgotten. He had, during his story of his war with Phillips, carefully avoided mentioning Kent's trouble. He had told of chasing Egbert to Denboro, but the particular reason for the pursuit he had not told. He was taken aback and embarrassed.

"Why--why----" he stammered.

But she answered her own question. "Of course!" she cried. "I know how you knew. George said that--that that man had used some bonds as a part of their stock speculation. I didn't think then of mother's bonds. That is what he did with them. I see."

The captain looked at her. Kent had told her of the C. M. deal. That meant that he had seen her, that already he had gone to her, to confess, to beg her pardon, to ... He sighed. Well, he should be glad, of course. He must pretend to be very glad.

"So--so you've seen George?" he stammered.

She colored slightly. "Yes," she answered. "He came to see me last evening.... Cap'n Kendrick you should hear him speak of you. You saved him from disgrace--and worse, he says. It was a wonderful thing to do. But I think you must be in the habit of doing wonderful things for other people."

He shrugged his shoulders. "Nothin' very wonderful about it," he said. "George is a good boy. He hadn't bumped into any Egberts before, that's all. He'll be on the lookout for 'em now. I'm glad for him--and for you."

If she understood what he meant she did not show any embarrassment.

"I don't know that you need be so glad for me," she said. "Yet in a way I am glad. The problem is settled now, mother's

and mine. She and I will go away."

"Go away? From the Fair Harbor?"

"Yes, and from Bayport. She has a little money left. Thanks to Judge Knowles, I have some of my own. She and I can live on the interest for a time, or until I can find a way to earn more."

"But--but--George?"

"I think George is going away, too. He spoke of Boston. But there is another thing I meant to say to you. I hate to leave you with the entire care of the Fair Harbor on your hands. I shall try and help you to find another matron before we go."

Sears rose from his chair. "That's all right," he said, "that part of it. We'll try and find another outside manager at the same time. You see, you and your mother aren't the only ones who are quittin' Bayport. I'm goin', too."

She turned to look at him. "You are going?" she repeated, slowly. "Where?"

"I don't know exactly. To sea, I hope. I'm well again, or next door to it. I mean to command another ship, if such a thing's possible."

"But you are leaving the Fair Harbor. Why?"

He turned on her almost fiercely. "Why?" he cried. "Don't you know why? Because I'm a man--or I was one--and I want to be a man again. On shore, I'm--well, I'm a good deal of a failure, I guess; but on salt water I count for somethin'. I'm goin' to sea where I belong."

He strode to the window and stood there, looking out. He heard her rise, heard her step beside him. Then he felt her hand upon his.

"I'm glad for you," she said, simply. "Very, very glad. I wish I were a man and could go, too."

He did not look at her, he did not dare.

"It's a rough life," he said, "but I like it."

"I know.... So you will soon be really seeing again those things you told me about, the foreign cities and the people and those islands--and all the wonderful, wonderful places. And you won't have to fret about the grocery bills, or the mean little Fair Harbor gossip, or anything of the kind. You can just sail away and forget it all."

"I shan't forget it all. There's a lot I never want to forget."

There was an interval of silence here, an interval that, to the captain, seemed to last for ages. It must be broken, it must be or....

"I shall think of you and George often enough," he announced, briskly. "Yes, indeed. And--and if it isn't too soon--that is, if you don't mind my bein' the first one--I'd like to congratulate you and wish you a smooth passage and a long one."

She did not answer and he mustered courage to turn and look at her. She was looking at him and her expression was odd.

"A smooth passage?" she repeated. "Why, Cap'n Kendrick, I'm not going to sea. What do you mean?"

"I mean--well, I meant--er--oh, I was speakin' in parables, like a minister, you know. I was wishin' you and George a happy voyage through life, that's all."

"George! Why, I am going away with my mother. George isn't.... Why, Cap'n Kendrick, you don't think--you can't think that George and I are--are----"

"Eh? Aren't you? I thought----"

She shook her head. "I told you once," she said. "I mean it. I like George well enough--sometimes I like him better than at others. But--oh, why can't you believe me?"

He was staring at her with a gaze so intent, an expression so strange that she could not meet it. She turned away.

"Please don't say any more about it," she begged.

"But--but George is--he has counted on it. He told me----"

"Don't. I don't know what he told you. I hope nothing foolish. He and I understand each other. Last night, when he came, I told him ... There, I must go, Cap'n Kendrick. I have left mother alone too long already."

"Wait!" he shouted it. "You mean ... You aren't goin' to marry George Kent--*ever*?"

"Why, no, of course not!"

"Elizabeth--oh, my soul, I--I'm crazy, I guess--but--Elizabeth, could you---- No, you couldn't, I know.... But *am* I crazy? Could you--do you--Elizabeth, if you ... *Stop!*"

She was on her way to the door.

He sprang after her, caught her hand.

"Elizabeth," he cried, the words tumbling over each other, "I'm thirty-eight years old. I'm a sailor, that's all. I'm not much of a man, as men go maybe, sort of a failure so far. But--with you to work for and live for, I--I guess I could be--I feel as if I could be almost anything. Could you give me that chance? Could you?"

She did not answer; did not even look at him. He dropped her hand.

"Of course not," he sighed. "Just craziness was what it was. Forgive me, my girl. And--forget it, if you can."

She did not speak. Slowly, and still without looking at him, she walked out of the kitchen. The outer door closed behind her. He put his hand to his eyes, breathed deeply, and returning to the chair by the table, sat heavily down.

"A failure," he groaned aloud. "Lord Almighty, *what* a failure!"

He had not heard the door open, but he did hear her step, and felt her arms about his neck and her kiss upon his cheek.

"Don't, don't, don't!" she sobbed. "Oh, my dear, don't say that. Don't ever say it again. Oh, you mustn't."

And he did not. For the next half hour he said many other things, and so did she, and when at last she did go away, he stood in the doorway, looking after her, knowing himself to be not a failure, but the one real overwhelming success in all this gloriously successful world.

CHAPTER XX

It was April and one of those beautiful early spring days with which New England is sometimes favored. The first buds were showing on the trees, the first patches of new green were sprinkling the sheltered slopes of the little hills, and under the dead leaves by the edges of the woods boys had been rummaging for the first mayflowers.

It was supper time at the Fair Harbor and the "guests"--quoting Mrs. Susannah Brackett--or the "inmates"--quoting Mr. Judah Cahoon--were seated about the table. There were some notable vacancies in the roster. At the head, where Mrs. Cordelia Berry had so graciously and for so long presided, there was now an empty chair. That chair would soon be filled, however; the new matron of the Harbor was at that moment in the office discussing business matters with Mr. Bradley, the new "outside manager." She had told the others not to wait for her; she would come to supper as soon as she could. So Mrs. Brackett, who had moved up to the seat once glorified by the dignity of Miss Elvira Snowden, was serving the cold corned beef, while opposite her, in the chair where Elizabeth Berry used to sit, Mrs. Aurora Chase was ladling forth the preserved pears. And, in the absence of the matron, it was of course natural that conversation should turn to subjects which could not be discussed as freely or pointedly in her presence.

Miss Desire Peasley began the discussion. She looked at the ancient clock on the mantel. The time was a quarter to six.

"H'm," sniffed Miss Peasley, with a one-sided smile. "I suppose likely the great event's took place long afore this. They're married and off on their honeymoon by now.... If you can call a cruise on board a ship bound to an outlandish place like Singapore a honeymoon. I took one voyage to Bombay with my brother, and 'twan't the honeymoon trip I'd pick out. *Such* a place! And such folks! The clothes those poor heathens wore--or didn't wear! Shameful! Don't talk!"

The order not to talk was plainly not considered binding, for every one immediately began to talk.

"I should like to have seen the weddin'," proclaimed Mrs. Hattis Thomas, with a giggle. "Must have looked more like an adoptin' ceremony than a marryin'. I've always been thankful for one thing, I married a man somewheres nigh my own age, anyhow."

"Wonder how Cordelia likes bein' left alone?" observed Mrs. Constance Cahoon. "She's been used to havin' a daughter to wait on her hand and foot. Now she'll have to wait on herself for a spell. But I presume likely she won't mind that. Livin' up to Boston, with the interest of twenty-five thousand dollars to live on, will suit her down to the ground. She'll be airy enough now. Won't speak to common folks, I suppose. Well, she won't have to put herself out to speak to *me*. I shan't go a-visitin' her, even if she begs me to."

There was no immediate symptom of Mrs. Berry's begging for visitors, at least none present had so far received an invitation. But all nodded, indicating that they, too, would scorn the plea when it came.

"That poor man!" sighed Mrs. Brackett, pityingly. "How those two, mother and daughter, did pull the wool over his eyes. I suppose he thinks we all believe he wouldn't take a cent of Elizabeth's money. Humph! Good reason why Jack wouldn't eat his supper--he didn't have a chance. Ha, ha! I call'te he'd taken it if he could have got it. But his wife knew a trick worth two of that. She'll keep him afloat and hard at work earnin' more for her to spend. Well, I hope his poor lame legs won't give out on him. If he has to give up goin' to sea *again*, I pity him, that's all I've got to say."

Mrs. Chase, her jet black locks a trifle askew as usual, was listening, the hand holding the preserve spoon cupped behind her ear and the spoon itself sticking out like a Fiji Islander's head ornament. As usual she had heard next to nothing.

"That's what *I* say!" she declared. "Why, Mr. Bradley, or whoever was responsible, let Sears Kendrick put a woman with six children in as matron of this place, I can't understand. Of course it's plain enough why Cap'n Sears wanted her to have the job. Joel Macomber's wages ain't more than twelve dollars a week and the salary here'll give 'em all the luxuries and doodads they want. Fust thing you know that Sary-Mary of hers'll be goin' to the Middleboro Academy to school. I wouldn't put it past her.... Hey? What did you say, Susanna?"

Mrs. Brackett had not said anything. She and some of the others were glancing uneasily in the direction of the hall door. All agreed that the appointment of Sarah Macomber as matron of the Fair Harbor was an outrage, but no one cared to have Mrs. Macomber know of that agreement. It was an experiment, that appointment, and Sarah herself was by no means confident of its success, although she had at last agreed to give it three months' trial. Half of that time was over and so far all was well. Bradley expressed huge satisfaction. Mrs. Macomber came to the Harbor early each morning and went home again after supper. Sarah-Mary and a hired girl, wages three dollars a week, were doing the Macomber housework.

"Hey?" shouted Aurora once more. "What did you say, Susanna?"

Mrs. Brackett, after another uneasy glance at the hall door, nodded and smiled. Mrs. Cahoon spoke quickly, in order to change the subject.

"What do you suppose I heard to-day?" she answered. "I met Josiah Ellis down to 'Liphalet's store and he told me he see Mr. Phillips yesterday. Josiah drove one of the livery hoss-'n'-teams over to Denboro--had a Boston notion drummer to cart over there, he did--and who should come drivin' along but Mr. Phillips. Josiah said he was dressed just as elegant as ever was, and the hoss-'n'-team he was drivin' was styled-up to match. Josiah hailed him and Mr. Phillips stopped and talked for a few minutes. Nice as always, not a bit of airs. No, Elviry wan't with him. Mr. Phillips said she was to home gettin' him ready to go away for a little vacation. Seems he's call'latin' to go to New York for a fortn't. Mr. Phillips told Josiah that Elviry was kind of tired out, they'd done so much entertainin' this winter, and he was goin' away so's she could have a little rest. Ain't that just like him? Self-sacrificin'--my sakes! Elviry's a lucky woman, that's all I've got to say. I don't say so much about *his* luck; but when she got him she done well."

There was a general buzz of agreement about the table. Then from the kitchen, where she had gone to get a fresh supply of cream-of-tartar biscuit, came little Mrs. Tidditt. She put the plate of biscuits on the table and sat down.

"What's that, Constance?" she demanded.

Mrs. Cahoon repeated the news of the Phillips family. Aurora put in a word.

"There's one thing I've always been sorry for," she said. "Of course I wouldn't take anything away from Elviry, she and I have always been good friends. But she's got enough as 'tis, and I *do* wish--I do wish that Sears Kendrick had stayed away from this place until we'd had a chance to buy them lovely lawn statues. We'll never have another chance like that again."

Esther Tidditt smiled. "Yes, you will, Aurora," she snapped. "Yes, you will. Give him time and about two or three more New York trips, and those images will be up at auction again. Thirty thousand don't last some folks long, and Elviry and her Eg will be needin' money to pay grocery bills. You can't eat an iron lion. Just wait, Aurora. We may have that menagerie in the yard here yet. Possess your soul in patience."

There was another buzz about the table, this time of scornful disapproval. Mrs. Chase leaned forward.

"What's she sayin', Susanna?" she demanded, querulously. "Susanna Brackett, why don't you or the rest tell me what she's sayin'?"

At that moment the ship *Gold Finder*, of Boston, Winthrop and Hunniwell, owners, Sears Kendrick, master, was sailing out over the waters of Massachusetts Bay. Astern, a diamond point against the darkening sky, Minot's Light shone.

The vessel was heeling slightly in the crisp evening wind, her full, rounded sails rustling overhead, her cordage creaking, foam at her forefoot and her wake stretching backward toward the land she was leaving. Her skipper stood aft by the binnacle, feeling, with a joy quite indescribable, the lift of the deck beneath him and the rush of the breeze across his face.

From the open door of the galley lamplight streamed. Within Judah Cahoon sang as he worked over the stove. Judah had had a glorious afternoon. His chanteys had cast off the hawsers, had walked away with the ropes, had hoisted the sails, had bade the tug good-by. Now his voice was a thought frayed, but he sang on.

Elizabeth--now Elizabeth Berry no more forever--came up the companion ladder. She joined her husband by the after rail. The sea air was chill and she was wearing one of the captain's pea jackets, the collar turned up; a feathery strand of her brown hair blew out to leeward. She stood beside him. The man at the wheel was looking down into the binnacle and Sears took her hand.

"Well?" he said, after a moment.

She looked up at him. "Well?" she said.

Neither spoke immediately. Then Kendrick breathed a sigh, a sigh expressive of many things.

She understood. As always she knew what he was thinking.

"Yes," she said, "it is glorious. Glorious for me; but for you, Sears----"

"Yes. It's pretty fine. I really never expected to make sail out of Boston harbor again. And if anybody had told me that I was to--" with another look at the helmsman, and lowering his voice--"to leave port this way--with you----"

He laughed aloud.

She laughed, too. "And just think," she said; "no more little worries or pettinesses, no more whispers, or faultfinding, or----"

"Or Fair Harbors. You're right, my girl. We're off, clean away from it all, bound out."

From the galley Judah's voice came, beginning the second verse of his song,

"'Aloft! Aloft! our jolly bos'n cries.

Blow high! blow low! and so sailed we.

'Look ahead, look astern, look a-weather and a-lee,

Look along down the coast of the High Bar-ba-ree.'

"'There's none upon the starn, there's none upon the lee.'

Blow high! blow low! and so sailed we.

'There's a lofty ship to wind'ard a-sailin' fast and free,

Sailin' down along the coast of the High Bar-ba-ree.'"

THE END

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