

up in the north country, out of the line of newspapers, when the thing occurred. I was a good deal surprised down at the Bohemian Club, the other night at hearing Allison, who was putting in some mining machinery down in Tombstone at the time, telling a very romantic tale about your getting that bullet in an attempt at rescuing a beautiful young woman from the Apaches. How was it?"

Morrison was an imaginative man, and a close student of faces. The men who worked alongside of him said that he was going to be the most terrible of portrait painters, for he could analyse the lines of the human face to a minute degree, and translate their meaning so that all the world might see.

He saw at once that there was more than physical ill at the bottom of Adair's trouble. He had always been fond of him, he told himself, because Adair's face was the purest and simplest he had ever seen. Its flawless outlines had fascinated him as a beautiful horizon line would have delighted him. But now when he beheld these lines lost in a tragedy of suffering, saw this nature warped and torn, he felt that there were depths which, could he sound them, would give him new vistas of human life.

"There is very little to tell," Adair said. "As usual, the club story is story, pure and simple. There is only one line of the genuine narrative: I was coming into the post to take a new command and go down into the Canaanias to keep the pass from the Apaches. Miss Wentworth, the colonel's niece, had made a miscalculation and lost her party, and I escorted her over from Tombstone. The Indians attacked us, and we were saved just in the nick of time by the soldiers who were following the Indians. It was very commonplace—hardly worth a paragraph in the paper."

"It strikes me that it was a little past the nick of time from the way you are carrying that bullet wound."

"It's nothing. I suppose it's the Arizona climate. What a pretty sight San Francisco is, lighted on her hill tops."

It was evening, and the chains and tiers of lights that arose beyond the bay made a picture that was dramatic in its chance arrangement.

"It always makes me think of Edinburgh," Morrison said, turning and letting his eyes follow lovingly the beauty before him. "It prepossesses you in favour of the city to come into it like this. You always keep in your mind the thought of its possibilities, even when you go inland and blast your vision with the sand lots. But this! Wait until you see 'Old Japan!'"

Adair's spirits began to revive. The long nights on the Pacific, blown softly through the balmy atmosphere, with sky above and water beneath, were like a healing hand. The constant delight of Morrison's strong brotherhood, the diversion of his enthusiasms and plans, put new life into him.

In Japan they spent three months wandering about the country, falling in with people of all nationalities and back again into the companionship with each other, which each had grown to value more and more as days went by. When at last they said good-bye to the volcanoes and rain gods and rocks, the chrysanthemum and the azalea, it was a pair of healthy, strong men who walked the deck of the home going steamer.

On board the vessel there was a middle aged passenger who attracted the attention of both the young men by his air of melancholy—almost despair. One night when they were sitting on the deck, a bottle of champagne and a box of cigars between them, Morrison called Adair's attention to the man, who was leaning over the deck railing.

"He is a naval officer, whose dead wife is in her coffin in the hold. Now that is what I call a tragedy of life. I have never seen the woman who was a necessary part of my existence, but when I do, and find that she regards me in the same way, may it please the good God to take us together. I never have felt the need of such a—thinking, I suppose I should call it. It has always been my idea of the plan of nature, which plans all things well, that marriage is the creation of a new sense. If it is a marriage in the proper use of the term, it opens new horizons. If a man marries a wife whose nature be-

comes so much a part of his own that he can see and enjoy with her senses, he is doubled. Imagine Adair, if you can, a man being born blind, and then having the wonder of sight given him. Could anything be more terrible than to take it away again? It seems to me — they tell me I am an idealist, and so I may be — that there is no affliction like the death of a husband or wife."

"Yes, there is," Adair said, in a tone that brought Morrison's face toward him.

Adair had wanted to tell Morrison the whole story from the beginning. He had felt that he must tell him. At first his morbid sense of loyalty to Nina had prevented. Then a healthier tone had come to him from his contact with Morrison, and with the great, living, breathing, commonplace world, and from his involuntary contrasting of the weaknesses which were so essential a part of the oriental nature with the truthfulness and bravery that make the Anglo-Saxon. He had seen that he was making some sort of a mistake. He wanted the advice, the counsel, of this strong man who was his friend, and the hour was propitious to ask it.

When the story was finished, Morrison leaned over and took up his hand.

"Adair," he said, "there is only one thing in this world for you to do. Go to your wife as fast as you can. Letters will mean nothing. She must be a sweet woman, lost in some woman's logic that neither of us can understand. Go to her, and tell her that from your heart you regret the delay. Get to the bottom of the trouble, and take it away. She loves you. She must love you, there has been nothing to alienate her love. She has been waiting for you. Go!"

"I will. Thank Heaven for your advice, Morrison. It was exactly what I needed. My leave will be over, but I shall go to Colonel Marcy and tell him the story, as I ought to have told it to him in the first place, and ask for another leave to go East after my wife. I can hardly see, looking at it in the light of my understanding of the situation, how I could have lost sight of the inevitable. I suppose it was lost in the loose hold that my illness gave me upon everything. That is the only explanation that I can give to you or myself."

After this, Adair began to look at life as does the man who feels within himself the power to conquer. New fibres had been implanted in his soul with those new experiences, and the life he had led for two months had strengthened all that was within him. Taking as it were new blood from Morrison, the currents had deepened and widened until he was sufficient unto himself. His hand felt sure and steady, and instead of moping in despair, he exulted "as a strong man about to run a race."

It was crisp February when he reached Arizona again. The winds of spring had begun to send the white, swirling dust columns careering over the mesa, and the Spanish bayonet and yucca bore lofty spears hung with fragrant white bells.

He greeted his orderly to bring his horse to the station, only a few hours before his arrival. He was so impatient. He had planned out exactly how he was to come into the Fort, change his dress, go over to see the colonel, tell his story, and then, sure of the hand clasp of his gallant old friend, he would turn about and go to Nina. It was all so plain that he was ashamed to think that another man had been obliged to tell him what to do.

He looked out with pleasure upon the familiar sights that had seemed so ugly to him when he went away. The fantastic shapes of the yucca, throwing out its white bloom from grotesque limbs, looked like old friends.

The station at Benson is the meeting place of the trains from East and West, and the Guaymas train was waiting there for its little dole of passengers. Adair looked keenly about for any of the Fort people. There was nearly always somebody coming or going, and he had the zest of the home comer for a comrade's face.

He remembered with self pity his encounter here with Hecker. He did not blame that florid and gay young man for his own wrong turning when he had stood here before. He was man enough now, strong

enough to realize that it had all come out of his own weakness and indecision. He even felt a sort of liking for Hecker. Few people could resist that laughing geniality, so frankly departed from all that was straight laced.

As he walked the wooden platform, that the sun was beginning to make sticky with its own gummy juices, he felt the pride and joy of life, of young manhood. There were wrecks of men loafing about the grimy saloon opposite the waiting room; men who had come out to the West with high hopes, but who had gone down under the nervous strain and the lack of the fixed standard that public opinion supplies in older communities, and which constitutes the consciences of most men.

Coming out of one of these saloons, presently, Adair saw the uniform of a United States soldier. He looked again and saw that it was Mellish. The man saw Adair at once, and his face lighted up with a smile that made Adair want to strike him. He came over toward his officer, saluting, and said:

"It is a pleasure to have you back again, captain."

"I am very glad to get back again, Mellish. What are you doing over here?"

"I am over with the ambulance, sir. The colonel and Miss Mary and Mrs Acton drove over to meet the Eastern train."

"Where are they? Are they expecting friends?"

Adair felt the warmth of a coming meeting with what he felt were his own people. He thought of Mrs Acton's kindness to him in asking him over to stay at her house during his convalescence, and his brusque declension seemed to call for an immediate apology. He felt like apologising for many of the erratic ways of that poor, ill young man whom he had left behind in Japan.

"Lieutenant Hecker is married, sir, and is coming home with his bride. I thought maybe you had heard about it. They haven't been talking about anything else at the Fort for the last

month. He's to have the house that Captain Lawler had. Captain Lawler is going to take the rose cottage. The colonel got him to make the change. Miss Mary and Mrs Acton have been getting it ready for them for a month. It's beautiful."

It went through Adair's mind that Mellish was particularly garrulous, and he wondered if he had not been indulging in mesal to an extent that might endanger his driving. There was a rakish recklessness in the set of Mellish's broad hat, and altogether an air of triumph and bravado about him, that made Adair dislike the man more than ever.

It seemed a new state of affairs for Mrs Acton and Miss Marcy to be taking so active an interest in Hecker. But then women were always interested in a bride, especially women like Mary Marcy and Mrs Acton. Adair's mouth took on an expression of satisfied sweetness. They would have one to make much of before long, who would be entirely after their own hearts.

"Here they come now," Mellish said, still with his air of repressed excitement.

Mrs Acton and Mary came up the steps of the platform, lifting their skirts daintily from contact with the sticky wood. They looked pleasant and wholesome to Adair. He was beginning to feel toward Mary as he would to a young cousin, beginning to feel as though he had people of his own. He went forward and met them with his hand outstretched, and some of the pleasure he felt in his face. Mary's delicate cheeks flushed crimson at the sight of him, and she turned to Mrs Acton with an expression that was almost appealing. Mrs Acton did not see it. She was all smiles and maternal happiness.

"How delightful to see you," Captain Adair, just now! We came over to meet our young people and drive them home in the ambulance, through this lovely spring weather. You can go with us."

Mary gave her arm a little jerk and rushed in at once.

"How do you do, Captain Adair? Why, you do not look at all like the

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