automatic revolver was American. But the man himself, by the cast of his features, his colouring, the texture of his skin, a certain wistfulness in the lines of his mouth, Duboff decided to be Slavic. He guessed him to be a fellow Russian; and his exile heart went out to the unconscious face on his pillow.

When at last the stranger awoke it was to an obstinate silence, apparently to no more than a semi-unconsciousness. Duboff spoke to him in English, French, German, Norwegian, Polish and lastly Russian, but obtained not so much as the flicker of an eyelid to show that he understood. From this state of collapse, so unlike the indomitable force which he had displayed on the day of the wreck, the stranger passed into a violent pneumonia, which bade fair to do what storm and surge had so signally failed to accomplish.

For days he hung between life and death, as precariously balanced there in the guarded quiet of the doctor's room, as on the reeling fragment of wreck, amid the thunder of the hurricane. But sleepless care and devotion pulled him through. There was Duboff's boy to help him in the struggle—a vigilant and thoughtful watcher by the bedside. There was Duboff's old housekeeper, Mrs. McCarrigle, to take her turn at the task. And Duboff wrestled with death for him as he himself had wrestled with the surges for the stricken sailor.

There came a morning when the sick man opened sane, inquiring eyes, and stared about the clean, homely little room with its one window wide open to the sharp sea air. They were deep-set eyes, melancholy and visionary. For some minutes they were obviously puzzled, as if their owner could not make out how he came to be in these surroundings. The unplastered walls, decorated with prints from illustrated journals, the sturdy serviceable furniture, most of it obviously home-made, the spotless coarse linen, the bright coverlet of patchwork, all were scrutinised in turn. And then the low ceiling, of light, clean spruce, traversed by sawn and planed scantlings. At last memory came back into the questioning eyes, and the man realised that he must be in some remote fishing village of the Labrador coast. Laboriously, step by step, he groped his way through the storm, the wreck, the desperate struggle, up to the moment when he had let himself drop with his burden from the sloping mast, and been grasped, in the suffocating vortex of those great surges, by some strong swimmer who had come miraculously to save him. He was very brave, that man, he thought.

The door opened. A short, broad-built old woman in blue-grey homespun stepped softly but briskly into the room and approached the bedside with a cup and spoon in her hand. Her eyes met his, and at the new look in them she gave a little exclamation of delight. He spoke to her — but it was in a tongue she could not understand; and her wrinkled, ruddy old face clouded again, as she jumped to the conclusion that his mind was wandering.

"Arrah, now," she answered crooningly, as to a baby, "be aisy wid ye, an' don't thry to talk. Take this, now, loike a little man." And seating herself on the chair by the bedside she attempted to give him something from the cup.

But the sick man pushed her hand aside—abruptly, as the sick will.

"What place is this? Where am I?" he demanded in clear English.

Mrs. McCarrigle looked surprised.

"Why, shure, ye're at Pratt's Harbour," she replied. "An' where else would ye be, if not at the bottom of the say?"

The stranger mused a moment, still motioning away the cup.

"And whose house is this?" he asked.

"The docthor's, av coarse!" came the answer.

"What doctor's?" went on the stranger.

Mrs. McCarrigle's face showed a degree of astonishment that was not far from disapproval. The idea of any human being having to ask *what* doctor's!

"Why, Docthor Peter's—whose else's could it be?—what hauled ye out o' the say."

"Ah, yes!" murmured the stranger, remembering that grip of salvation. "But who is Doctor Peter?"

Mrs. McCarrigle was grieved at such ignorance. A sudden sound of loud sizzling came from the kitchen. She jumped up, set down the cup and spoon upon the chair, and exclaimed warmly:

"Shure an' he's an angel o' light, that's wh-hat he is, an' ye'd ought to know it, sorr. An' there's the pot a-bilin' over."

She bustled from the room, closing the door behind her; and the sick man lay back with his eyes upon the ceiling, pondering. It troubled him that the man's name should be Peter.

Some five minutes later the door opened again. This time the visitor was a bright faced, slim boy, with large grey eyes and longish, tumbled, yellow-brown hair.

He beamed frankly on the sick man, seated himself on the edge of the bed with a businesslike air, and announced, "You're better. I'm so glad." Then he took up the cup and spoon which Mrs. McCarrigle had abandoned, and decreed in a quaint voice of authority, "You must be good and take this at once. Father said we must be very particular about it while he was away."

The sick man smiled in his ragged beard, took the dose obediently, and tried to say "thank you," but was interrupted by the boy wiping his lips carefully with a handkerchief.

"There," said the child, with an air of official satisfaction, "now you must go to sleep. And I think you will be much better when my father gets back. If you want me just ring this little bell."

"But tell me, who is your father?" demanded the sick man eagerly.

The boy turned at the door.

"Why, don't you know?" he asked innocently. "He is Doctor Peter Duboff, who saved you. But you really must not talk, or you'll be having a temperature again, and that's very bad for you, you know." He closed the door firmly; and the sick man turned over on his pillow, with his face to the wall.

When Duboff returned that evening, from a sick visit in a neighbouring cove, he found that the stranger, though clearly convalescent, had relapsed into his old silence. Not a word could he persuade from those close, dark-bearded lips. And no more would the sick man speak with Mrs. McCarrigle or the boy, beyond an occasional "Please," or "thank you," low-toned but courteous. But Duboff, apparently unconscious of this strange reserve, was unwearied, as ever, in his administration and his thoughtful care.

A few days later, coming in late in the afternoon, when a red glory of sunset was flooding across the stranger's bed, he said, cheerfully:

"You are getting on so well, my friend, that I think you may sit up a while to-morrow."

"Thank you," said the stranger, without looking at him.

This was the first time he had opened his mouth in Duboff's hearing, and Duboff was delighted. Seating himself by the bed, he began to talk in Russian.

"Forgive me," said he, "if I speak in what I imagine to be your own tongue. I do not ask any questions. I don't want to pry into your affairs. But I am a Russian; I think that you are also, and my heart goes out to a fellow countryman. It is a great joy to me to speak once more the speech of my own people."

"I am a Russian. I was beginning to forget it—Russia seems so very far off. I must not forget I am a Russian," muttered the stranger.

"I knew it," cried Duboff warmly, appearing not to notice anything enigmatic in the sick man's reply. He half stretched forth his hand, but at once withdrew it. Then he went on to talk, as if just for the joy of feeling the old music on his lips. He told of the life of the fisher-folk in this forgotten corner of the world, of his work among them, both ashore and afloat, of the wild tempests that harried the coasts, of the wrecks, of the vast spaces of solitude in behind the hills, of the freedom, the bigness, and the blessed peace. Then he got up and said: "Good-night, my friend. I'll not see you till to-morrow, as I have an all-night case over in Sandy Cove. But my son and Mrs. McCarrigle will look after you. And to-morrow you shall feel yourself a man again."

As Duboff had prophesied, on the morrow the sick man felt himself so much stronger that he was eager to be up; but while being dressed, at times he seemed to shrink from the Doctor's touch. At length it was accomplished, and Duboff, half-carrying him, got him out into a great, padded chair on the porch, where he could drench himself in the sun, and look out upon the now smiling waters of the harbour. The grey, straggling village presided over by its white-washed church, lay outspread beneath him. The sun gleamed on the sails of half a dozen boats just entering the harbour. The stranger's eyes swept the scene with an intensity of interest that was almost ferocious. They rested at last on the figure of Duboff's boy, at some childish play at the foot of the garden. He heard Mrs. McCarrigle rattling dishes in the kitchen, and all at once he felt ridiculously hungry.

Suddenly Duboff took a revolver from his pocket, and handed it to him.

"Here's your gun, friend," said he carelessly. "It was badly rusted by the salt water; but I think I've got it into pretty good shape for you. It's a beautiful weapon."

The sick man took it, and opened the chamber.

"Where are the cartridges?" he asked, apparently forgetting to say, "Thank you."

Duboff laughed softly.

"I think they were done for. But I can let you have all you want. The gun is of the same calibre as my own."

The sick man made as if to drop the weapon, but changed his mind, and slipped it into his pocket.

"Thank you," said he. "I shall want only one."

"One cartridge won't go far!" remarked the doctor.

"It will," contradicted the stranger. "It will carry me a long, long journey,—Peter Ivanovitch."

As he spoke the name, he turned his head, and for the first time looked Duboff straight in the eyes.

Duboff returned the gaze with kindly concern, and apparently saw nothing strange in the fact that his guest was aware of his full name.

"If you want to use it on yourself," he answered, "I'm afraid I'll have to withdraw my offer."

The sick man continued to eye him piercingly.

"My name," said he, "is Sergius Milikov—Serge Nikolaievitch—of the Central Committee, Third Division. You must have forgotten much in three years, Peter Ivanovitch, or you would know the only alternative. If that one cartridge is not for me—it is for the man who broke his oath that day in Kiev."

Duboff laughed gently. Never before had he realised how far away he had grown from his old self. At last, he was free of the very last shreds of doubt. The intensity of his guest's earnestness seemed unreal, impossible to him.

"No, Serge Nikolaievitch, I cannot agree to that either," he answered cheerfully, as if the proposition were one of the most ordinary in the world.

"It must be you, or me!" persisted the sick man, almost pleadingly now. "It cannot be you, of course. I cannot lift my hand against my benefactor, my saviour, my protector. But I can save my honour by paying the price. I shall have to go over. Give me that one cartridge, Peter Ivanovitch."

"No, of course it cannot be I," said Duboff musingly. "That's out of the question. I have too much to do here. I am needed. But neither can it be you. You are too good a man to be spared, Serge Nikolaievitch. You are needed, too." Then his voice changed, grew solemn, and rang with authority. "I gave you your life, when it was done, quite surely done. I have a claim upon it; and I commit it to your keeping."

The sick man dropped the question for the moment.

"Where is the sailor I saved?" he asked, a sudden light in his eyes.

Duboff pointed to the little churchyard.

"You did all man could," said he. "But you did not save him, except from a sea grave. He was dead when we lifted him into the boat."

An expression of the keenest disappointment swept over Milikov's face.

"Of course," he exclaimed bitterly, "I had to fail there, too. At every point I fail. I am no good. But you can keep your cartridges, Peter Ivanovitch. I will not shoot myself. That has always seemed to me cowardly. But I will go back and give myself up to the Committee, and they will execute me. I will save my honour."

"Yes," said Duboff. "In effect, for that curious rag, you will betray me! No! I think you must not do that, my friend."

The sick man wrung his gaunt fingers.

"I am hedged about on every side!" he cried. "What am I to do?"

"As you see," said Duboff very quietly, "there is much, very much, to be done for our brothers right here. Stay with me and help me to do it."

"But I have given my word. And I am a gentleman!" said Milikov.

"True," agreed Dr. Peter simply.

There was silence between them for several minutes. The boy laughed at the foot of the garden. Again came a rattle of dishes from the sanctum of Mrs. McCarrigle.

"But you also, you were a gentleman," said the sick man, pondering the words as he spoke them.

"True," agreed Duboff again. He was trying to remember how he had once felt on the subject.

"Yet, if you are a gentleman no longer," went on Milikov, "it is strange that I am unable to feel that you have deteriorated in any sense. It is possible, perhaps, that one may do as you have done, and still be a gentleman!"

"Indeed!" said Duboff doubtfully. "I wonder. I have thought about that a good deal, when I had time."

"Ah," cried the other, in a voice of sudden and strong resolution. "I have not thought about it till this moment. Yet I have felt decided. I will stay here with you." He held out his hand, and Duboff grasped it, "I perceive that it appears to me, in my own heart, nobler and better, and more useful, and at the same time far more interesting, to save life than to destroy it. I will learn to go out to the wrecks, as you do, and I will try to make up for not having succeeded in saving that poor sailor. Yes, I will stay here, and work with you. For I perceive that you and I, Peter Ivanovitch, we are not the stuff of heroes, and we are too old to change."