

man? I think it was rather mean and cowardly. I see no joke in it at all."

His face grew more and more red.

"I don't suppose they meant any harm," he said, curtly; "but you know we can't all be squaring every word and look by the Prayer-Book. And I suppose the parson himself, if he had known, would not have been so fearfully serious but that he could have taken a joke like any one else. By the way, this is the nearest road to Trevena, isn't it? I have got to ride over there before the afternoon, Miss Rosewarne; so I shall bid you good-day."

He got on horseback again, and took off his cap to her, and rode away.

"Good-day, Mr. Trelyon," she said, meekly.

And so she walked down to the inn by herself, and was inclined to reproach herself for being so very serious, and for being unable to understand a joke like any one else. Yet she was not unhappy about it. It was a pity if Mr. Trelyon were annoyed with her; but then, she had long ago taught herself to believe that she could not easily please people, as Mabyne could; and she cheerfully accepted the fact. Sometimes, it is true, she indulged in idle dreams of what she might do if she were beautiful, and rich, and noble; but she soon laughed herself out of these foolish fancies, and they left no sting of regret behind them. At this moment, as she walked down to Eglosilyan, with the tune of "Wapping Old Stairs" rocking itself to sleep in her head, and with her face brightened by her brisk walk, there was neither disappointment, nor envy, nor ambition in her mind. Not for her, indeed, were any of those furious passions that shake and set afire the lives of men and women; her lot was the calm and placid lot of the unregarded; and with it she was well content.

CHAPTER III.

RES ANGSTA DOMI.

WHEN George Rosewarne, the father of this Miss Wenna, lived in eastern Devonshire, many folks thought him a fortunate man. He was the land-steward of a large estate,

the owner of which lived in Paris, so that Rosewarne was practically his own master; he had a young and pretty wife, desperately fond of him; he had a couple of children and a comfortable home. As for himself, he was a tall, reddish-bearded, manly-looking fellow; the country folks called him Handsome George as they saw him riding his rounds of a morning; and they thought it a pity Mrs. Rosewarne was so often poorly, for she and her husband looked well together when they walked to church.

Handsome George did not seem much troubled by his wife's various ailments; he would only give the curtest answer when asked about her health. Yet he was not in any distinct way a bad husband. He was a man vaguely unwilling to act wrongly, but weak in staving off temptation; there was a sort of indolent selfishness about him of which he was scarcely aware; and to indulge this selfishness he was capable of a good deal of petty deceit and even treachery of a sort. It was not these failings, however, that made the relations of husband and wife not very satisfactory. Mrs. Rosewarne was passionately fond of her husband, and proportionately jealous of him. She was a woman of impulsive imagination and of sympathetic nature, clever, bright and fanciful, well-read and well-taught, and altogether made of finer stuff than Handsome George. But this passion of jealousy altogether overmastered her reason. When she did try to convince herself that she was in the wrong, the result was merely that she resolved to keep silence; but this forcible repression of her suspicions was worse in its effects than the open avowal of them. When the explosion came, George Rosewarne was mostly anxious to avoid it. He did not seek to set matters straight. He would get into a peevish temper for a few minutes, and tell her she was a fool; then he would go out for the rest of the day, and come home sulky in the evening. By this time she was generally in a penitent mood; and there is nothing an indolent sulky person likes so much as to be coaxed and caressed, with tears of repentance and affectionate promises, into a good temper again. There were too many of such scenes in George Rosewarne's home.

Mrs. Rosewarne may have been wrong, but people began to talk. For there had come to live at the Grange a certain

Mrs. Shirley, who had lately returned from India, and was the sister-in-law, or some such relation, of George Rosewarne's master. She was a good-looking woman of forty, fresh-coloured and free-spoken, a little too fond of brandy-and-water, folks said, and a good deal too fond of the handsome steward, who now spent most of his time up at the big house. They said she was a grass-widow. They said there were reasons why her relations wished her to be buried down there in the country, where she received no company, and made no efforts to get acquainted with the people who had called on her and left their cards. And amid all this gossip the name of George Rosewarne too frequently turned up; and there were nods and winks when Mrs. Shirley and the steward were seen to be riding about the country from day to day, presumably not always conversing about the property.

The blow fell at last, and that in a fashion that need not be described here. There was a wild scene between two angry women. A few days afterwards a sallow-complexioned, white-haired old gentleman arrived from Paris, and was confronted by a red-faced fury, who gloried in her infatuation and her shame, and dared him to interfere. Then there was a sort of conference of relatives held in the house which she still inhabited. The result of all this, so far as the Rosewarne were concerned, was simply that the relatives of the woman, to hush the matter up and prevent further scandal, offered to purchase for George Rosewarne the "Trelyon Arms" at Eglosilyan, on condition that he should immediately, with his family, betake himself to that remote corner of the world, and undertake to hold no further communication of any sort with the woman who still (with some flourish of rhetoric, which probably meant nothing) swore that she would follow him to the end of the earth. George Rosewarne was pleased with the offer, and eventually accepted it. He might have found some difficulty in discovering another stewardship, after the events that had just occurred. On the other hand, the "Trelyon Arms" at Eglosilyan was not a mere public-house. It was an old-fashioned, quaint, and comfortable inn, practically shut up during the winter, and in the summer made the headquarters of a few families who had discovered it, and who

went there as regularly as the warm weather came round. A few antiquarian folks, too, and a stray geologist or so, generally made up the family party that sat down to dinner every evening in the big dining-room; and who that ever made one of the odd circle meeting in this strange and out-of-the-way place, ever failed to return to it when the winter had finally cleared away and the Atlantic got blue again?

George Rosewarne went down to inquire. He found in the inn an efficient housekeeper, who was thoroughly mistress of her duties and of the servants, so that he should have no great trouble about it, even though his wife were too ill to help. As for his daughters, he resolved that they should have nothing whatsoever to do with the inn; but, on the contrary, be trained in all the ordinary accomplishments of young ladies; for he was rather a proud man. And so the Rosewarne were drafted down to the Cornish coast; and as Mrs. Rosewarne was of Cornish birth, and as she had given both her daughters Cornish names, they gradually ceased to be regarded as strangers. They made many acquaintances and friends. Mrs. Rosewarne was a bright, rapid, playful talker; a woman of considerable reading and intelligence, and a sympathetic listener. Her husband knew all about horses, and dogs, and farming, and what not; so that young Harry Trelyon, for example, was in the habit of consulting him almost daily.

They had a little parlour abutting on what once had been a bar, and here one or two friends sometimes dropped in to have a chat. There was a bar no longer. The business of the inn was conducted overhead, and was exclusively of the nature described above. The pot-house of Eglosilyan was the Napoleon Hotel, a dilapidated place, halfway up one of the steep streets.

But in leaving Devonshire for Cornwall, the Rosewarne had carried with them a fatal inheritance. They could not leave behind them the memory of the circumstances that had caused their flight; and ever and anon, as something occurred to provoke her suspicions, Mrs. Rosewarne would break out again into a passion of jealousy, and demand explanations and reassurances, which her husband half-indolently and half-sulkily refused. There was but one

hand then—one voice that could still the raging waters. Wenna Rosewarne knew nothing of that Devonshire story, any more than her sister or the neighbours did; but she saw that her mother had defects of temper, that she was irritable, unreasonable, and suspicious, and she saw that her father was inconsiderately indifferent and harsh. It was a hard task to reconcile these two; but the girl had all the patience of a born peacemaker; and patience is the more necessary to the settlement of such a dispute, in that it is generally impossible for any human being, outside the two who are quarrelling, to discover any ground for the quarrel.

"Why, what's the matter, mother?" she said on this occasion, taking off her hat and shawl as if she had heard nothing about it. "I do think you have been crying."

The pretty, pale woman, with the large black eyes and smoothly-brushed dark hair, threw a volume on to the table, and said, with a sort of half-hysterical laugh: "How stupid it is, Wenna, to cry over the misfortunes of people in books, isn't it?"

That pretence would not have deceived Miss Wenna in any case; but now she was to receive other testimony to the truth of Mr. Trelyon's report. There was seated at the window of the room a tall and strikingly handsome young girl of sixteen, whose almost perfect profile was clearly seen against the light. Just at this moment she rose and stepped across the room to the door, and as she went by she said, with just a trace of contemptuous indifference on the proud and beautiful face: "It is only another quarrel, Wenna."

"Mother," said the girl, when her sister had gone, "tell me what it is about. What have you said to father? Where is he?"

There was an air of quiet decision about her that did not detract from the sympathy visible in her face. Mrs. Rosewarne began to cry again. Then she took her daughter's hand, and made her sit down by her, and told her all her troubles. What was the girl to make of it? It was the old story of suspicion, and challenging, and sulky denial, and then hot words and anger. She could make out, at least, that her mother had first been made anxious about something he had inadvertently said about his visit to

Plymouth on the previous two days. In reply to her questions he had grown peevishly vague, and had then spoken in bravado of the pleasant evening he had spent at the theatre. Wenna reasoned with her mother, and pleaded with her, and at last exercised a little authority over her; at the end of which she agreed that, if her husband would tell her with whom he had been to the theatre, she would be satisfied, would speak no more on the subject, and would even formally beg his forgiveness.

"Because, mother, I have something to tell you," the daughter said, "when you are all quite reconciled."

"Was it in the letter you read just now?"

"Yes, mother."

The girl still held the letter in her hand. It was lying on the table when she came in, but she had not opened it and glanced over the contents until she saw that her mother was yielding to her prayers.

"It is from Mr. Roscorla, Wenna," the mother said; and now she saw, as she might have seen before, that her daughter was a little paler than usual, and somewhat agitated.

"Yes, mother."

"What is it, then? You look frightened."

"I must settle this matter first," said the girl, calmly; and then she folded up the letter, and, still holding it in her hand, went off to find her father.

George Rosewarne, seeking calm after the storm, was seated on a large and curiously carved bench of Spanish oak placed by the door of the inn. He was smoking his pipe, and lazily looking at some pigeons that were flying about the mill and occasionally alighting on the roof. In the calm of the midsummer's day there was no sound but the incessant throbbing of the big wheel over there and the splash of the water.

"Now, don't bother me, Wenna," he said the moment he saw her approach. "I know you've come to make a fuss. You mind your own business."

"Mother is very sorry—" the girl was beginning in a meek way, when he interrupted her rudely.

"I tell you to mind your own business. I must have an end of this. I have stood it long enough. Do you hear?"

But she did not go away. She stood there, with her quiet, patient face, not heeding his angry looks.

"Father, don't be hard on her. She is very sorry. She is willing to beg your pardon if you will only tell her who went to the theatre with you at Plymouth, and relieve her from this anxiety. That is all. Father, who went to the theatre with you?"

"Oh, go away!" he said, relapsing into a sulky condition. "You're growing up to be just such another as your mother."

"I cannot wish for anything better," the girl said, mildly. "She is a good woman, and she loves you dearly."

"Why," he said, turning suddenly upon her, and speaking in an injured way, "no one went with me to the theatre at Plymouth! Did I say that anybody did? Surely a man must do something to spend the evening if he is by himself in a strange town."

Wenna put her hand on her father's shoulder, and said: "Da, why didn't you take me to Plymouth?"

"Well, I will next time. You're a good lass," he said, still in the same sulky way.

"Now come in and make it up with mother. She is anxious to make it up."

He looked at his pipe.

"In a few minutes, Wenna. When I finish my pipe."

"She is waiting now," said the girl, quietly; and with that her father burst into a loud laugh, and got up and shrugged his shoulders; and then, taking his daughter by the ear, and saying that she was a sly little cat, he walked into the house and into the room where his wife awaited him.

Meanwhile, Wenna Rosewarne had stolen off to her own little room, and there she sat down at the window, and with trembling fingers took out her letter and began to read it. It was certainly a document of some length, consisting, indeed, of four large pages of blue paper, covered with a small, neat, and precise handwriting. She had not got on very far with it, when the door of the room was opened, and Mrs. Rosewarne appeared, the pale face and large dark eyes being now filled with a radiant pleasure. Her husband had said something friendly to her; and the quick, imaginative

nature had leapt to the conclusion that all was right again, and that there were to be no more needless quarrels.

"And now, Wenna," she said, sitting down by the girl, "what is it all about?—and why did you look so frightened a few minutes ago?"

"Oh, mother," the girl said, "this is a letter from Mr. Roscorla, and he wants me to marry him."

"Mr. Roscorla!" cried the mother, in blank astonishment. "Who ever dreamed of such a thing? And what do you say, Wenna? What do you think? What answer will you send him? Dear me, to think of Mr. Roscorla taking a wife, and wanting to have our Wenna, too!"

She began to tell her mother something of the letter, reading it carefully to herself, and then repeating aloud some brief condensation, to let her mother know what were the arguments that Mr. Roscorla employed. And it was, on the whole, an argumentative letter, and much more calm, and lucid, and reasonable than most letters are which contain offers of marriage. Mr. Roscorla wrote thus:—

"BASSET COTTAGE, EGLOSILYAN, July 18, 18—.

"MY DEAR MISS WENNA,—I fear that this letter may surprise you, but I hope you will read it through without alarm or indignation, and deal fairly and kindly with what it has to say. Perhaps you will think, when you have read it, that I ought to have come to you and said the things that it says. But I wish to put these things before you in as simple a manner as I can, which is best done by writing; and a letter will have this advantage, that you can recur to it at any moment, if there is some point on which you are in doubt.

"The object, then, of this letter is to ask you to become my wife, and to put before you a few considerations which I hope will have some little influence in determining your answer. You will be surprised, no doubt: for though you must be well aware that I could perceive the graces of your character—the gentleness and charity of heart, and modesty of demeanour, that have endeared you to the whole of the people among whom you live—you may fairly say that I never betrayed my admiration of you in word or deed; and that is true. I cannot precisely tell you why I should be

more distant in manner towards her whom I preferred to all the world than to her immediate friends and associates for whom I cared much less ; but such is the fact. I could talk, and joke, and spend a pleasant afternoon in the society of your sister Maby, for example ; I could ask her to accept a present from me ; I could write letters to her when I was in London ; but with you all that was different. Perhaps it is because you are so fine and shy, because there is so much sensitiveness in your look, that I have almost been afraid to go near you, lest you should shrink from some rude intimation of that which I now endeavour to break to you gently—my wish and earnest hope that you may become my wife. I trust I have so far explained what perhaps you may have considered coldness on my part.

“I am a good deal older than you are ; and I cannot pretend to offer you that fervid passion which, to the imagination of the young, seems the only thing worth living for, and one of the necessary conditions of marriage. On the other hand, I cannot expect the manifestation of any such passion on your side, even if I had any wish for it. But on this point I should like to make a few observations which I hope will convince you that my proposal is not so unreasonable as it may have seemed at first sight. When I look over the list of all my friends who have married, whom do I find to be living the happiest life ? Not they who as boy and girl were carried away by a romantic idealism which seldom lasts beyond a few weeks after marriage, but those who had wisely chosen partners fitted to become their constant and affectionate friends. It is this possibility of friendship, indeed, which is the very basis of a happy marriage. The romance and passion of love soon depart ; then the man and woman find themselves living in the same house, dependent on each other's character, intelligence, and disposition, and bound by inexorable ties. If, in these circumstances, they can be good friends, it is well with them. If they admire each other's thoughts and feelings, if they are generously considerate towards each other's weaknesses, if they have pleasure in each other's society—if, in short, they find themselves bound to each other by the ties of a true and disinterested friendship, the world has been good to them. I say nothing against that

period of passion which, in some rare and fortunate instances, precedes this infinitely longer period of friendship. You would accuse me of the envy of an elderly man if I denied that it has its romantic aspects. But how very temporary these are ! How dangerous they are too ! The passion of a young man as I have seen it displayed in a thousand instances, is not a thing to be desired. It is cruel in its jealousy, exacting in its demands, heedless in its impetuosity ; and when it has burned itself out—when nothing remains but ashes and an empty fireplace—who is to say that the capacity for a firm and lasting friendship will survive ? But perhaps you fancy that this passionate love may last for ever. Will you forgive me, dear Miss Wenna, if I say that that is the dream of a girl ? In such rare cases as I have seen, this perpetual ardour of love was anything but a happiness to those concerned. The freaks of jealousy on the part of a boy and girl who think of getting married are but occasions for the making of quarrels and the delight of reconciliation ; but a life-long jealousy involves a torture to both husband and wife to which death would be preferable.”

At this point Wenna's cheeks burned red ; she was silent for a time, and her mother wondered why she skipped so long a passage without saying a word.

“I have used all the opportunities within my reach,” the letter continued, “to form a judgment of your character ; I know something of my own ; and I sincerely believe that we could live a happy and pleasant life together. It is a great sacrifice I ask of you, I admit ; but you would not find me slow to repay you in gratitude. I am almost alone in the world ; the few relatives I have I never see ; I have scarcely a friend or acquaintance except those I meet under your father's hospitable roof. I cannot conceal from myself that I should be by far the greater gainer by such a marriage : I should secure for myself a pleasant, intelligent, and amiable companion, who would brighten my home, and in time, I doubt not, soften and sweeten those views of the world that are naturally formed by a middle-aged man living alone and in privacy. What can I offer you in return ? Not much—except the opportunity of adding one more to the many good deeds that seem to be the chief occupation of your life.

And I should be glad if you would let me help you in that way, and give you the aid of advice which might, perhaps, temper your generosity and apply it to its best uses. You are aware that I have no occupation—and scarcely a hobby; I should make it my occupation, my constant endeavour and pleasure, to win and secure your affection—to make the ordinary little cares and duties of life, in which you take so great an interest, smooth and pleasant to you. In short, I should try to make you happy; not in any frantic and wild way, but by the exercise of a care, and affection, and guardianship by which I hope we should both profit. May I point out, also, that, as a married woman, you would have much more influence among the poorer families in the village who take up so much of your attention; and you would be removed, too, if I may mention such a thing, from certain unhappy circumstances which I fear trouble you greatly at times. But perhaps I should not have referred to this; I would rather seek to press my claim on the ground of the happiness you would thereby confer on others, which I know to be your chief object in life.

“I have not said half what I intended to say; but I must not fatigue you. Perhaps you will give me an opportunity of telling you personally what I think of yourself, for I cannot bring myself to write it in bald words; and if you should be in doubt, give me the benefit of the doubt, and let me explain. I do not ask you for a hurried answer; but I should be glad if, out of the kindness of all your ways, you would send me one line soon, merely to say that I have not offended you.

“I am, my dear Miss Rosewarne,

“Yours most sincerely,

“RICHARD ROSCORLA.”

“Oh! what must I do, mother?” the girl cried. “Is it all true that he says?”

“My dear child, there is a great deal of common sense in the letter,” the mother replied, calmly. “But you needn’t decide all at once. Take plenty of time. I suppose you don’t dislike Mr. Roscorla?”

“Oh, not at all—not at all! But then, to marry him——!”

“If you don’t wish to marry him, no harm is done,” Mrs. Rosewarne said. “I cannot advise you, Wenna. Your own feelings must settle the question. But you ought to be very proud of the offer, any way; and you must thank him properly; for Mr. Roscorla is a gentleman, although he is not as rich as some of his relatives; and it is a great honour he has done you. Of course, Wenna, if you were in love with any one—if there was any young man about here whom you would like to marry—there would be no need for you to be frightened about what Mr. Roscorla says of young folks being in love. It is a trying time, to be sure. It has many troubles. Perhaps, after all, a quiet and peaceful life is better; especially for you, Wenna, for you were always quiet and peaceful; and if any trouble came over you it would break your heart. I think it would be better for you if you were never tried in that way, Wenna.”

The girl rose, with a sigh.

“Not that it is my advice, Wenna,” said the mother, anxiously. “But you are of that nature, you see. If you were in love with a young man, you would be his slave. If he ceased to care for you, or were cruel to you, it would kill you, my dear. Well, you see, here is a man who would be able to take care of you, and of your sister Maby, too, if anything happened to your father or me; and he would make much of you, I have no doubt, and be very kind to you. You are not like other girls, Wenna——”

“I know that, mother,” she said, with a strange sort of smile that just trembled on the verge of tears. “They can’t all be as plain as I am.”

“Oh, I don’t mean that! You make a great mistake, if you think that men only care for doll-faces: as Mr. Roscorla says, that fancy does not last long after marriage; and then men begin to ask whether their wives are clever, and amusing, and well-informed, and so on. What I meant was, that most girls could run the gauntlet of that sort of love that Mr. Roscorla describes, and suffer little if they made a mistake. But there’s no shell about you, Wenna. You are quite undefended, sensitive, and timid. People are deceived by your quick wit, and your cheerfulness, and your singing. I know better. I know that a careless word may cut you deeply. And dear, dear me, what a terrible time

that is when all your life seems to hang on the way a word is spoken !”

The girl crossed over to a small side-table, on which there was a writing-desk.

“But mind, Wenna,” said her mother, with a return of anxiety, “mind, I don’t say that to influence your decision. Don’t be influenced by me. Consult your own feelings, dear. You know I fancy sometimes you undervalue yourself, and think that no one cares about you, and that you have no claim to be thought much of. Well, that is a great mistake, Wenna. You must not throw yourself away through that notion. I wish all the girls about were as clever and good-natured as you. But at the same time, you know, there are few girls I know, and certainly none about here, who would consider it throwing themselves away to marry Mr. Roscorla.”

“*Marry Mr. Roscorla!*” a third voice exclaimed; and at the same moment Mabyn Rosewarne entered the room.

She looked at her mother and her sister with astonishment. She saw that Wenna was writing, and that she was very pale. She saw a blue-coloured letter lying beside her. Then the proud young beauty understood the situation; and with her to perceive a thing was to act on its suggestion there and then.

“Our Wenna! Marry that old man? Mother! how can you let her think of such a thing?”

She walked right over to the small table, with a glow of indignation in her face, with her lips set firm, and her eyes full of fire; and then she caught up the letter, that had scarcely been begun, and tore it in a thousand pieces, and flung the pieces on the floor.

“Oh, mother! how could you let her do it! Mr. Roscorla marry our Wenna!”

She took two or three steps up and down the room, in a pretty passion of indignation, and yet trying to keep her proud eyes free from tears.

“Mother, if you do I’ll go into a convent! I’ll go to sea, and never come back again! I won’t stop in the house—not one minute—if Wenna goes away!”

“My dear child,” said the mother, patiently, “it is not my doing. You must not be so headstrong. Mr. Roscorla

is not an old man—nothing of the sort; and, if he does offer to marry Wenna, it is a great honour done to her, I think. She ought to be very grateful, as I hope you will be, Mabyn, when any one offers to marry you—”

Miss Mabyn drew herself up; and her pretty mouth lost none of its scorn.

“And as for Wenna,” the mother said, “she must judge for herself—”

“Oh, but she’s not fit to judge for herself!” broke in the younger sister impetuously. “She will do anything that anybody wants. She would make herself the slave of anybody. She is always being imposed on. Just wait a moment, and I will answer Mr. Roscorla’s letter!”

She walked over to the table again, twisted round the writing-desk, and quickly pulled in a chair. You would have thought that the pale, dark-eyed little girl on the other side of the table had no will of her own—that she was in the habit of obeying this beautiful young termagant of a sister of hers; but Miss Mabyn’s bursts of impetuosity were no match for the gentle firmness and patience that were invariably opposed to them. In this instance Mr. Roscorla was not to be the recipient of a letter which doubtless would have astonished him.

“Mabyn,” said her sister Wenna, quietly, “don’t be foolish. I must write to Mr. Roscorla—but only to tell him that I have received his letter. Give me the pen. And will you go and ask Mrs. Borlase if she can spare me Jennifer for a quarter of an hour, to go up to Basset Cottage?”

Mabyn rose, silent, disappointed, and obedient, but not subdued. She went off to execute the errand; but as she went she said to herself, with her head very erect: “Before Mr. Roscorla marries our Wenna, I will have a word to say to him.”

Meanwhile Wenna Rosewarne, apparently quite calm, but with her hand trembling so that she could hardly hold the pen, wrote her first love-letter; and it ran thus:—

“TRELYON ARMS, *Tuesday Afternoon.*

“DEAR MR. ROSCORLA,—I have received your letter, and you must not think me offended. I will try to send

you an answer to-morrow ; or perhaps the day after, or perhaps on Friday ; I will try to send you an answer to your letter.

“ I am yours sincerely,
“ WENNA ROSEWARNE.”

She took it timidly to her mother, who smiled, and said it was a little incoherent.

“ But I cannot write it again, mother,” the girl said. “ Will you give it to Jennifer when she comes ? ”

Little heed did Miss Wenna pay to the beautiful golden afternoon that was shining over Eglosilyan as she left the inn and stole away out to the rocks at the mouth of the little harbour. She spoke to her many acquaintances as she passed, and could not have told a minute thereafter that she had seen them. She said a word or two to the coastguardsman out at the point—an old friend of hers ; and then she went round to the seaward side of the rocks, and sat down to think the whole matter over. The sea was as still as a sea in a dream. There was but one ship visible, away down in the south, a brown speck in a flood of saffron haze.

When the first startled feeling was over—when she had recovered from the absolute fright that so sudden a proposal had caused her—something of pride and pleasure crept into her heart to know that she was not quite the insignificant person she had fancied herself to be. Was it true, then, what he had said about her being of some use to the people around her ? Did they really care for her ? Had she really won the respect and approval of a man who had hitherto seemed to her suspicious and censorious ?

There flashed upon her some faint picture of herself as a matron ; and she found herself blushing to think of herself going round the cottages as Mrs. Roscorla. If marriage meant no more than that, she was not afraid of it ; on the contrary, the prospect rather pleased her. These were duties she could understand. Marriage, in those idle day-dreams of hers, had seemed to her some vague, and distant, and awful thing ; all the romance, and worship, and noble self-surrender of it being far away from a poor little plain person, not capable of inspiring idealism in anybody. But

this, on the other hand, seemed easily within her reach. She became rather amused with the picture of herself which she drew as Mrs. Roscorla. Her quick fancy put in humorous touches here and there, until she found herself pretty nearly laughing at herself as a tiny married woman. For what did the frank-spoken heroine of that sailor-ballad say to her lover ? If he would be faithful and kind,

“ Nor your Molly forsake,
Still your trousers I'll wash, and your grog, too, I'll make.”

As for his grog, would she mix the proper quantities, as they sat together of an evening, by themselves, in that little parlour at Basset Cottage ? And would she have to take his arm as they walked of a Sunday morning to church, up the main street of Eglosilyan, where all her old friends, the children, would be looking at her ? And would she some day, with the serious airs and counsels of a married woman, have to receive Mabyn's hushed confidences, and bid her have courage, and listen to all the story of the new and strange love that had come into the younger sister's heart ? And would she ask Mabyn to describe her lover ; and would she act the ordinary part of an experienced adviser, and bid her be cautious, and ask her to wait until the young man had made a position in the world, and had proved himself prudent and sensible, and of steady mind ? Or would she not rather fling her arms round her sister's neck, and bid her go down on her knees and thank God for having made her so beautiful, and bid her cherish as the one good thing in all the world the strong and yearning love and admiration and worship of a young and wondering soul ?

Wenna Rosewarne had been amusing herself with these pictures of herself as a married woman ; but she was crying all the same ; and becoming a little impatient with herself, and perhaps a trifle hysterical, she rose from the rocks and thought she would go home again. She had scarcely turned, however, when she met Mr. Roscorla himself, who had seen her at a distance, and followed her.