

be no such fool, I can tell you. He would consider the girl, first of all. He would say to himself, 'I mean to make this girl happy; if any one interferes, let him look out!' Why, Jue, you don't suppose any man would be frightened by that sort of thing!"

Miss Juliott did not seem quite convinced by this burst of scornful oratory. She continued quietly—

"You forget something, Harry. Your heroic young man might find it easy to do something wild—to fight with that gentleman in the West Indies, or murder him, or anything like that, just as you see in a story; but perhaps Miss Rosewarne might have something to say."

"I meant if she cared for him," Trelyon said, looking down.

"Granting that also, do you think it likely your hot-headed gentleman would be able to get a young lady to disgrace herself by breaking her plighted word, and deceiving a man who went away trusting in her? You say she has a very tender conscience—that she is so anxious to consult every one's happiness before her own—and all that. Probably it is true. I say nothing against her. But to bring the matter back to yourself—for I believe you're hot-headed enough to do anything—what would you think of her if you or anybody else persuaded her to do such a treacherous thing?"

"She is not capable of treachery," he said, somewhat stiffly. "If you've got no more cheerful things to talk about, you'd better go to bed, Jue. I shall finish my cigar by myself."

"Very well, then, Harry. You know your room. Will you put out the lamp when you have lit your candle?"

So she went, and the young man was left alone, in no very enviable frame of mind. He sat and smoked, while the clock on the mantelpiece swung its gilded boy, and struck the hours and half-hours with unheeded regularity. He lit a second cigar, and a third; he forgot the wine; it seemed to him that he was looking on all the roads of life that lay before him, and they were lit up by as strange and new a light as that which was beginning to shine over the world outside. New fancies seemed to awake with the new dawn. For himself to ask Wenna Rosewarne to be his

wife?—could he but win the tender and shy regard of her eyes he would fall at her feet and bathe them with his tears! And if this wonderful thing were possible—if she could put her hand in his and trust to him for safety in all the coming years they might live together—what man of woman born would dare to interfere? There was a blue light coming in through the shutters. He went to the window—the topmost leaves of the trees were quivering in the cold air, far up there in the clearing skies, where the stars were fading out one by one. And he could hear the sound of the sea on the distant beach; and he knew that across the grey plain of waters the dawn was breaking, and that over the sleeping world another day was rising that seemed to him the first day of a new and tremulous life, full of joy, and courage, and hope.

CHAPTER XXIII.

LOVE-MAKING AT LAND'S END.

"ARE you dreaming again, child?" said Mrs. Rosewarne to her daughter. "You are not a fit companion for a sick woman, who is herself dull enough. Why do you always look so sad when you look at the sea, Wenna?"

The wan-faced, beautiful-eyed woman lay on a sofa, a book beside her. She had been chatting in a bright, rapid, desultory fashion about the book and a dozen other things—amusing herself really by a continual stream of playful talk—until she perceived that the girl's fancies were far away. Then she stopped suddenly, with this expression of petulant but good-natured disappointment.

"Oh, I beg your pardon, mother," said Wenna, who was seated at an open window fronting the bay. "What did you say? Why does the sea make one sad? I don't know. One feels less at home here than out on the rocks at Eglosilyan; perhaps that is it. Or the place is so beautiful, that it almost makes you cry. I don't know."

And, indeed, Penzance Bay, on this still, clear morning, was beautiful enough to attract wistful eyes and call up vague and distant fancies. The cloudless sky was intensely

dark in its blue ; one had a notion that the unseen sun was overhead and shining vertically down. The still plain of water—so clear that the shingle could be seen through it a long way out—had no decisive colour ; but the fishing-smacks lying out there were jet-black points in the bewildering glare. The sunlight did not seem to be in the sky, in the air, or on the sea ; but when you turned to the southern arm of the bay, where the low line of green hills runs out into the water, there you could see the strong clear light shining—shining on the green fields and on the sharp black lines of hedges, on that bit of grey old town with its cottage-gardens and its sea-wall, and on the line of dark rock that formed the point of the promontory. On the other side of the bay, the eye followed the curve of the level shore, until it caught sight of St. Michael's Mount rising palely from the water, its sunlit greys and purple shadows softened by the cool distance. Then beyond that again, on the verge of the far horizon, lay the long and narrow line of the Lizard, half lost in a silver haze. For the rest, a cool wind went this way and that through Mrs. Rosewarne's room, stirring the curtains. There was a fresh odour of the sea in the air. It was a day for dreaming, perhaps ; but not for the gloom begotten of languor and an indolent pulse.

"Oh, mother—oh, mother!" Wenna cried, suddenly, with a flush of colour in her cheeks. "Do you know who is coming along? Can you see? It is Mr. Trelyon, and he is looking at all the houses; I know he is looking for us."

"Child, child!" said the mother. "How should Mr. Trelyon know we are here?"

"Because I told him," Wenna replied, simply and hurriedly. "Mother, may I wave a handkerchief to him? Won't you come and see him? he seems so much more manly in this strange place; and how brave and handsome he looks!"

"Wenna!" her mother said severely.

The girl did not wave a handkerchief, it is true ; although she knelt down at the open bay-window, so that he must needs see her ; and sure enough he did. Off went his hat in a minute ; a bright look of recognition leapt to his eyes, and he crossed the street. Then Wenna turned, all in a

flutter of delight, and quite unconscious of the colour in her face.

"Are you vexed, mother? Mayn't I be glad to see him? Why, when I know that he will brighten up your spirits better than a dozen doctors! One feels quite happy and hopeful whenever he comes into the room. Mother, you won't have to complain of dulness if Mr. Trelyon comes to see you. And why doesn't the girl send him up at once?"

Wenna was standing at the open door to receive him when he came up-stairs ; she had wholly forgotten the embarrassment of their last parting.

"I thought I should find you out," he said, when he came into the room, and it was clear there was little embarrassment about him ; "and I know how your mother likes to be teased and worried. You've got a nice place here, Mrs. Rosewarne ; and what splendid weather you've brought with you!"

"Yes," said Wenna, her whole face lit up with a shy gladness, "haven't we? And did you ever see the bay looking more beautiful? It is enough to make you laugh and clap your hands out of mere delight to see everything so lovely and fresh!"

"A few minutes ago I thought you were nearly crying over it," said the mother, with a smile ; but Miss Wenna took no heed of the reproof. She would have Mr. Trelyon help himself to a tumbler of claret and water. She fetched out from some mysterious lodging-house recess an ornamented tin can of biscuits. She accused herself of being the dullest companion in the world, and indirectly hinted that he might have pity on her mamma and stay to luncheon with them.

"Well, it's very odd," he said, telling a lie with great simplicity of purpose, "but I had arranged to drive to the Land's End for luncheon—to the inn there, you know. I suppose it wouldn't—do you think, Mrs. Rosewarne—would it be convenient for you to come for a drive so far?"

"Oh, it would be the very best thing in the world for her—nothing could be better," said Wenna ; and then she added meekly, "if it is not giving you too much trouble, Mr. Trelyon."

He laughed.

"Trouble! I'm glad to be of use to anybody; and in this case I shall have all the pleasure on my side. Well, I'm off now to see about the horses. If I come for you in half-an-hour, will that do?"

As soon as he had left, Mrs. Rosewarne turned to her daughter, and said to her, gravely enough—

"Wenna, one has seldom to talk to you about the proprieties; but, really, this seems just a little doubtful. Mr. Trelyon may make a friend of you; that is all very well, for you are going to marry a friend of his. But you ought not to expect him to associate with me."

"Mother," said Wenna, with hot cheeks, "I wonder how you can suspect him of thinking of such foolish and wicked things. Why, he is the very last man in all the world to do anything that was mean and unkind, or to think about it."

"My dear child, I suspect him of nothing," Mrs. Rosewarne said; "but look at the simple facts of the case. Mr. Trelyon is a very rich gentleman; his family is an old one, greatly honoured about here; and if he is so recklessly kind as to offer his acquaintanceship to persons who are altogether in a different sphere of life, we should take care not to abuse his kindness, or to let people have occasion to wonder at him. Looking at your marriage and future station, it is perhaps more permissible with you; but as regards myself, I don't very much care, Wenna, to have Mr. Trelyon coming about the house."

"Why, mother, I—I am surprised at you!" Wenna said, warmly. "You judge of him by the contemptible things that other people might say of him. Do you think he would care for that? Mr. Trelyon is a man, and like a man he has the courage to choose such friends as he likes; and it is no more to him what money they have, or what their position is, than the—than the shape of their pocket-handkerchiefs is! Perhaps that is his folly—recklessness—the recklessness of a young man. Perhaps it is. I am not old enough to know how people alter; but I hope I shall never see Mr. Trelyon alter in this respect—never, if he were to live for a hundred years. And—and I am surprised to hear you, of all people, mother, suggest such things of him. What has he done that you should think so meanly of him?"

Wenna was very indignant and hurt. She would have continued further, but that a tremulous movement of her under lip caused her to turn away her head.

"Well, Wenna, you needn't cry about it," her mother said gently. "It is of no great consequence. Of course every one must please himself in choosing his friends; and I quite admit that Mr. Trelyon is not likely to be hindered by anything that anybody may say. Don't take it so much to heart, child; go and get on your things, and get back some of the cheerfulness you had while he was here. I will say that for the young man—that he has an extraordinary power of raising your spirits."

"You are a good mother after all," said Wenna, penitently; "and if you come and let me dress you prettily, I shall promise not to scold you again—not till the next time you deserve it."

By the time they drove away from Penzance, the forenoon had softened into more beautiful colours. There was a paler blue in the sky and on the sea, and millions of yellow stars twinkled on the ripples. A faint haze had fallen over the bright green hills lying on the south of the bay.

"Life looks worth having on such a day as this," Trelyon said; "doesn't it, Miss Wenna?"

She certainly seemed pleased enough. She drank in the sweet fresh air; she called attention to the pure rare colours of the sea and the green uplands; the coolness of the woods through which they drove, the profuse abundance of wild flowers along the banks—all things around her seemed to have conspired to yield her delight; and a great happiness shone in her eyes. Mr. Trelyon talked mostly to Mrs. Rosewarne; but his eyes rarely wandered away for long from Wenna's pleased and radiant face; and again he said to himself, "*And if a simple drive on a spring morning can give this child so great a delight, it is not the last that she and I shall have together.*"

"Mrs. Rosewarne," said he, "I think your daughter has as much need of a holiday as anybody. I don't believe there's a woman or girl in the county works as hard as she does."

"I don't know whether she needs it," said Miss Wenna, of herself, "but I know that she enjoys it."

"I know what you'd enjoy a good deal better than merely getting out of sight of your own door, for a week or two," said he. "Wouldn't you like to get clear away from England for six months, and go wandering about all sorts of fine places? Why, I could take you such a trip in that time! I should like to see what you'd say to some of the old Dutch towns, and their churches, and all that; then Cologne, you know, and a sail up the Rhine to Mainz; then you'd go on to Basle and Geneva, and we'd get you a fine big carriage, with the horses decorated with foxes' and pheasants' tails, to drive you to Chamounix. Then, when you had gone tremulously over the Mer de Glace, and kept your wits about you going down the Mauvais Pas, I don't think you could do better than go on to the Italian lakes—you never saw anything like them, I'll be bound—and Naples, and Florence. Would you come back by the Tyrol, and have a turn at Zurich and Lucerne, with a ramble through the Black Forest in a trap resembling a ramshackle landau?"

"Thank you," said Wenna, very cheerfully. "The sketch is delightful; but I am pretty comfortable where I am."

"But this can't last," said he.

"And neither can my holidays," she answered.

"Oh, but they ought to," he retorted vehemently. "You have not half enough amusement in your life—that's my opinion. You slave too much, for all those folks about Eglosilyan and their dozens of children. Why, you don't get anything out of life as you ought to. What have you to look forward to? Only the same ceaseless round of working for other people. Don't you think you might let some one else have a turn at that useful but monotonous occupation?"

"But Wenna has something else to look forward to now," her mother reminded him gently; and after that he did not speak for some time.

Fair and blue was the sea that shone all around the land when they got out on the rough moorland near the coast. They drove to the solitary little inn perched over the steep cliffs; and here the horses were put up and luncheon ordered. Would Mrs. Rosewarne venture down to the great

rocks at the promontory! No, she would rather stay indoors till the young people returned; and so these two went along the grassy path by themselves.

They clambered down the slopes, and went out among the huge blocks of weather-worn granite, many of which were brilliant with grey, green, and orange lichens. There was a low and thunderous noise in the air; far below them, calm and fine as the day was, the summer sea dashed and roared into gigantic caverns, while the white foam floated out again on the troubled waves. Could anything have been more magical than the colours of the sea—its luminous greens, its rich purples, its brilliant blues, lying in long swathes on the apparently motionless surface? It was only the seething white beneath their feet, and the hoarse thunder along the coast, that told of the force of this summer-like sea; for the rest the picture was light, and calm, and beautiful. Out there the black rocks basked in the sunlight, the big skarts standing on their ledges, not moving a feather. A small steamer was slowly making for the island further out, where a lighthouse stood. And far away beyond these, on the remote horizon, the Scilly Isles lay like a low bank of yellow fog, under the pale blue skies.

They were very much by themselves, out here at the end of the world; and yet they did not seem inclined to talk much. Wenna sat down on the warm grass; her companion perched himself on one of the blocks of granite; they watched the great undulations of the blue water come rolling on to the black rocks, and then fall backward seething in foam.

"And what are you thinking about?" said Trelyon to her gently, so that she should not be startled.

"Of nothing at all—I am quite happy," Wenna said frankly. Then she added, "I suppose the worst of a day like this is, that a long time after you look back upon it, and it seems so beautiful and far away that it makes you miserable. You think how happy you were once. That is the unfortunate side of being happy."

"Well," said he, "I must say you don't look forward to the future with any great hope, if you think the recollection of one bright day will make you wretched."

He came down from his perch and stood beside her.

"Why, Wenna," said he, "do you know what you really need? Some one to take you in hand thoroughly, and give you such an abundance of cheerful and pleasant days that you would never think of singling out any one of them. Why shouldn't you have weeks and months of happy idling, in bright weather, such as lots of people have who don't deserve them a bit? There's something wrong in your position. You want some one to become your master, and compel you to make yourself happy. You won't of yourself study your own comfort; some one else ought to make you."

"And who do you think would care to take so much trouble about me?" she said, with a smile; for she attached no serious meaning to this random talk.

Her companion's face flushed somewhat, not with embarrassment, but with the courage of what he was going to say.

"I would," he said, boldly. "You will say it is none of my business; but I tell you I would give twenty thousand pounds to-morrow, if I were allowed to—to get you a whole summer of pleasant holidays."

There was something about the plain-spoken honesty of this avowal that touched her keenly. Wild and impossible as the suggestion was, it told her at least what one person in the world thought of her. She said to him, with her eyes cast down:

"I like to hear you speak like that—not for my own sake—but I know there is nothing generous and kindly that you wouldn't do at a mere moment's impulse. But I hope you don't think I have been grumbling over my lot, on such a day as this? Oh no; I see too much of other people's ways of living to complain of my own. I have every reason to be contented and happy."

"Yes, you're a deal too contented and happy," said he, with an impatient shrug. "You want somebody to alter all that, and see that you get more to be contented and happy about."

She rose; he gave her his hand to help her up. But he did not surrender her hand then, for the path up the slopes was a steep and difficult one; and she could fairly rely on his strength and sureness of foot.

"But you are not content, Mr. Trelyon," she said. "I always notice that, whenever you get to a dangerous place, you are never satisfied unless you are putting your life in peril. Wouldn't you like to ride your black horse down the face of this precipice? Or wouldn't you like to clamber down blindfold? Why does a man generally seem to be anxious to get rid of his life?"

"Perhaps it isn't of much use to him," he said coolly.

"You ought not to say that," she answered, in a low voice.

"Well," he said, "I don't mean to break my neck yet awhile; but if I did, who would miss me? I suppose my mother would play half-a-dozen a day more operas or oratorios, or stuff of that sort, and there would be twenty parsons in the house for one there is at present. And some of the brats about the place would miss an occasional sixpence—which would be better for their health. And Dick—I suppose they'd sell him to some fool of a Londoner, who would pound his knees out in the Park—he would miss me too."

"And these are all," she said, "who would miss you? You are kind to your friends."

"Why, would you?" he said, with a stare of surprise; and then, seeing she would not speak, he continued, with a laugh, "I like the notion of my making an object of general compassion of myself. Did the poor dear tumble off a rock into the sea? And where was its mother's apron-string? I'm not going to break my neck yet awhile, Miss Wenna; so don't you think I'm going to let you off your promise to pay me back for those sewing-machines."

"I have told you, Mr. Trelyon," she said, with some dignity, "that we shall pay you back every farthing of the price of them."

He began to whistle in an impertinent manner. He clearly placed no great faith in the financial prospects of that Sewing Club.

They had some light luncheon in the remote little inn, and Mrs. Rosewarne was pleased to see her ordinarily demure and preoccupied daughter in such high and careless spirits. It was not a splendid banquet. Nor was the chamber a gorgeous one, for the absence of ornament and the enormous

thickness of the walls told of the house being shut up in the winter months and abandoned to the fury of the western gales, when the wild sea came hurling up the face of these steep cliffs and blowing over the land. But they paid little attention to any lack of luxury. There was a beautiful blue sea shining in the distance: the sunlight was falling hotly on the greensward of the rocks outside: and a fresh, cool breeze came blowing in at the open window. They let the time pass easily, with pleasant talk and laughter.

Then they drove leisurely back in the afternoon. They passed along the moorland ways, through rude little villages built of stone, and by the outskirts of level and cheerless farms, until they got into the beautiful woods and avenues lying around Penzance. When they came in sight of the broad bay, they found that the world had changed its colours since the morning. The sea was of a cold purplish grey; but all around it, on the eastern horizon, there was a band of pale pink in the sky. On the west again, behind Penzance, the warm hues of the sunset were shining behind the black stems of the trees. The broad thoroughfare was mostly in shadow; and the sea was so still that one could hear the footsteps and the voices of the people walking up and down the Parade.

"I suppose I must go now," said the young gentleman, when he had seen them safely seated in the small parlour overlooking the bay. But he did not seem anxious to go.

"But why go?" Wenna said, rather timidly. "You have no engagement, Mr. Trelyon. Would you care to stay and have dinner with us—such a dinner as we can give you?"

"Well, to tell you the truth, I should like it very much," he said.

Mrs. Rosewarne, a little surprised, and yet glad to see Wenna enjoying herself, regarded the whole affair with a gentle resignation. Wenna had the gas lit, and the blinds let down; then, as the evening was rather cold, she had soon a bright fire burning in the grate. She helped to lay the table. She produced such wines as they had. She made sundry visits to the kitchen; and at length the banquet was ready.

What ailed the young man? He seemed beside himself with careless and audacious mirth; and he made Mrs. Rose-

warne laugh as she had not laughed for years. It was in vain that Wenna assumed airs to rebuke his rudeness. Nothing was sacred from his impertinence—not even the offended majesty of her face. And at last she gave in too, and could only revenge herself by saying things of him which, the more severe they were, the more he seemed to enjoy. But after dinner she went to the small piano, while her mother took a big easy-chair near the fire; and he sat by the table, apparently looking over some books. There was no more reckless laughter then.

In ancient times—that is to say, in the half-forgotten days of our youth—a species of song existed which exists no more. It was not as the mournful ballads of these days, which seem to record the gloomy utterances of a strange young woman who has apparently wandered into the magic scene in "Der Freischütz," and who mixes up the moanings of her passion with descriptions of the sights and sounds she there finds around her. It was of quite another stamp. It dealt with a phraseology of sentiment peculiar to itself—a "patter," as it were, which came to be universally recognized in drawing-rooms. It spoke of maidens plighting their troth, of Phyllis enchanting her lover with her varied moods, of marble halls in which true love still remained the same. It apostrophized the shells of ocean; it tenderly described the three great crises of a particular heroine's life by mentioning successive head-dresses; it told of how the lover of pretty Jane would have her meet him in the evening. Well, all the world was content to accept this conventional phraseology; and, behind the paraphernalia of "enchanted moonbeams," and "fondest glances," and "adoring sighs," perceived and loved the sentiment that could find no simpler utterance. Some of us, hearing the half-forgotten songs again, suddenly forget the odd language, and the old pathos springs up again, as fresh as in the days when our first love had just come home from her boarding-school; while others, who have no old-standing acquaintance with these memorable songs, have somehow got attracted to them by the mere quaintness of their speech and the simplicity of their airs. Master Harry Trelyon was no great critic of music. When Wenna Rosewarne sang that night "She wore a wreath of roses," he fancied he had never listened to

anything so pathetic. When she sang "Meet me by moonlight alone," he was delighted with the spirit and half-humorous, half-tender grace of the composition. As she sang "When other lips and other hearts," it seemed to him that there were no songs like the old-fashioned songs, and that the people who wrote those ballads were more frank, and simple, and touching in their speech than writers now-a-days. Somehow, he began to think of the drawing-rooms of a former generation; and of the pictures of herself his grandmother had drawn for him many a time. Had she a high waist to that white silk dress in which she ran away to Gretna; and did she have ostrich feathers on her head? Anyhow, he entirely believed what she had told him of the men of that generation. They were capable of doing daring things for the sake of a sweetheart. Of course his grandfather had done boldly and well in whirling the girl off to the Scottish borders; for who could tell what might have befallen her among ill-natured relatives and persecuted suitors?

Wenna Rosewarne was singing "We met; 'twas in a crowd; and I thought he would shun me." It is the song of a girl (must one explain so much in these later days?) who is in love with one man, and has been induced to marry another: she meets the former, and her heart is filled with shame, and anguish, and remorse. As Wenna sang the song, it seemed to this young man that there was an unusual pathos in her voice; and he was so carried away by the earnestness of her singing, that his heart swelled and rose up within him, and he felt himself ready to declare that such should not be her fate. This man who was coming back to marry her—was there no one ready to meet him and challenge his atrocious claim? Then the song ended; and, with a sudden disappointment, Trelyon recollected that he at least had no business to interfere. What right had he to think of saving her?

He had been idly turning over some volumes on the table. At last he came to a Prayer-book, of considerable size and elegance of binding. Carelessly looking at the fly-leaf, he saw that it was a present to Wenna Rosewarne, "with the very dearest love of her sister Mabyn." He passed his hand over the leaves, not noticing what he was

doing: suddenly he saw something which did effectually startle him into attention.

It was a sheet of paper with two slits cut into it at top and bottom. In these a carefully-pressed piece of None-so-pretty had been placed, and just underneath the flower was written in pencil "From H. T. to W. R., May 2nd, 18—." He shut the book quickly, as if his fingers had been burned; and then he sate quite silent, with his heart beating fast.

So she had kept the flower he had put in the basket of primroses. It had carried its message; and she still remained his friend.

CHAPTER XXIV.

THE CUT DIRECT.

"WELL, mother," Miss Wenna said deliberately, after he had gone, "I never did see you so thoroughly enjoy a whole day."

"I was thinking the same about you, Wenna," the mother answered, with an amused look.

"That is true enough, mother," the girl confessed, in her simple way. "He is so good-natured, so full of spirits, and careless, that one gets quite as careless and happy as himself. It is a great comfort, mother, to be with anybody who doesn't watch the meaning of every word you say—don't you think so? And I hope I wasn't rude—do you think I was rude?"

"Why, child, I don't think you could be rude to a fox that was eating your chickens. You would ask him to take a chair and not hurry himself."

"Well, I must write to Mabyn now," Wenna said, with a business-like air, "and thank her for posting me this Prayer-book. I suppose she didn't know I had my small one with me."

She took up the book, for she was sitting on the chair that Harry Trelyon had just vacated. She had no sooner done so than she caught sight of the sheet of paper with the dried flower and the inscription in Mabyn's handwriting. She stared, with something of a look of fear on her face.