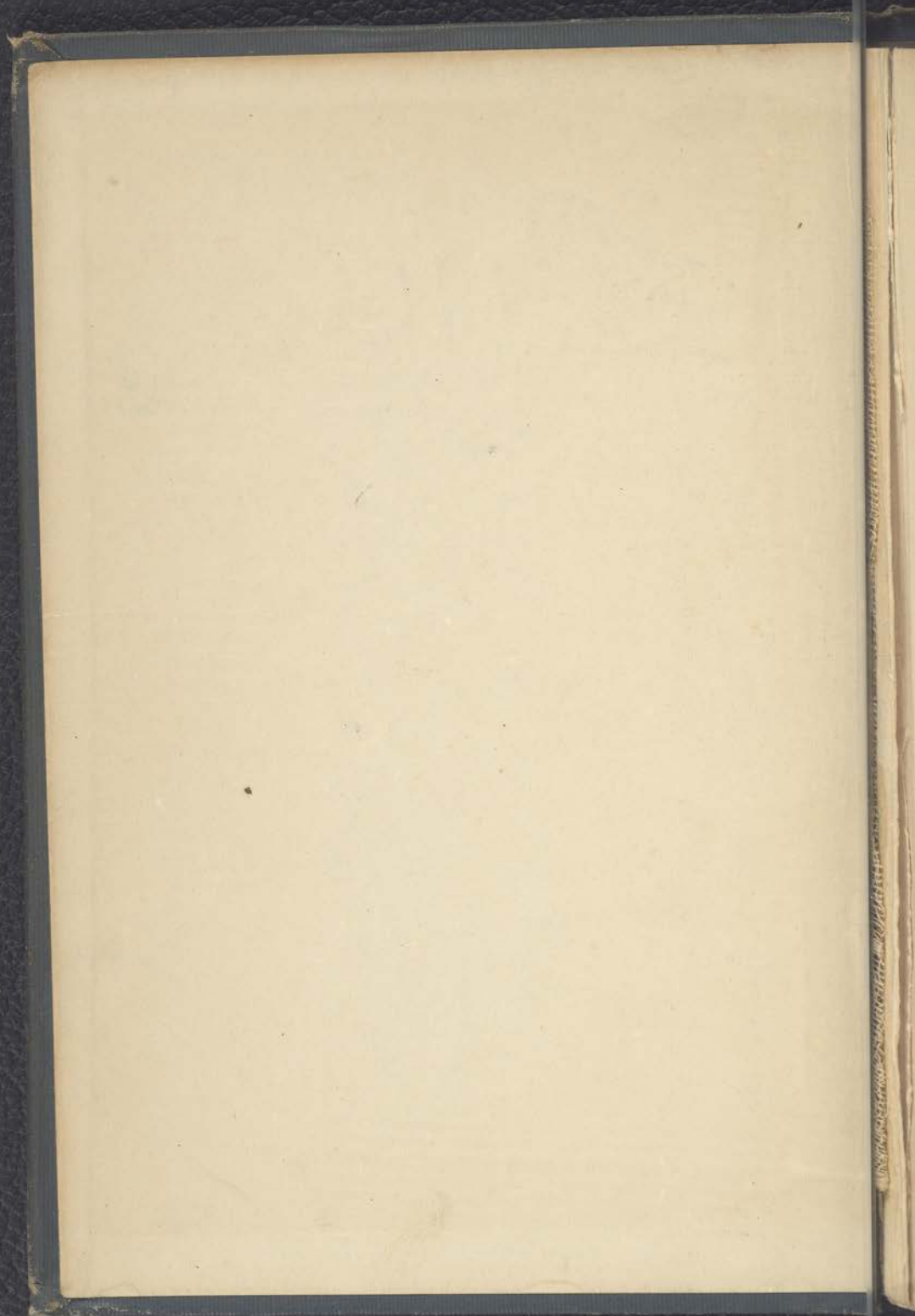


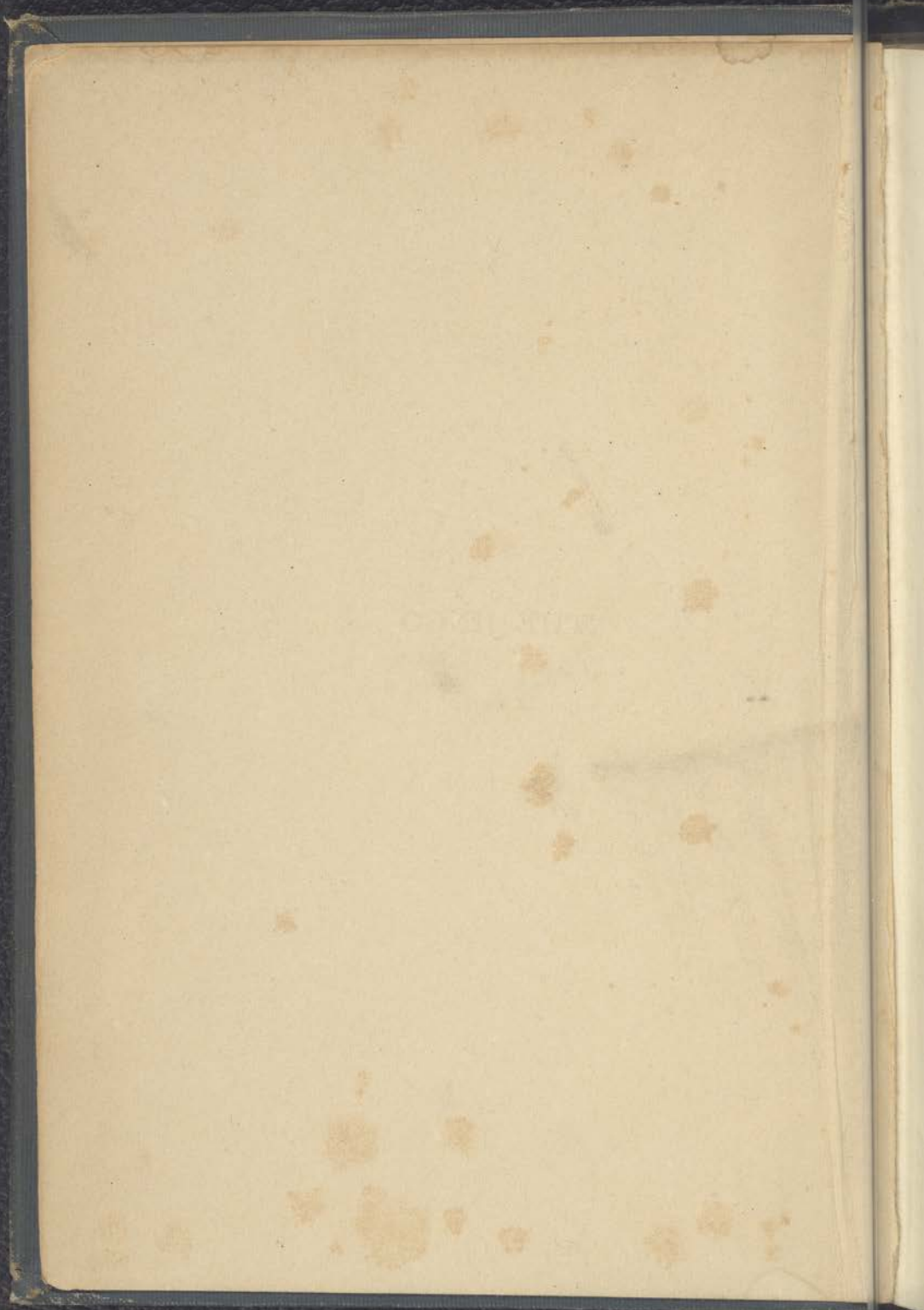
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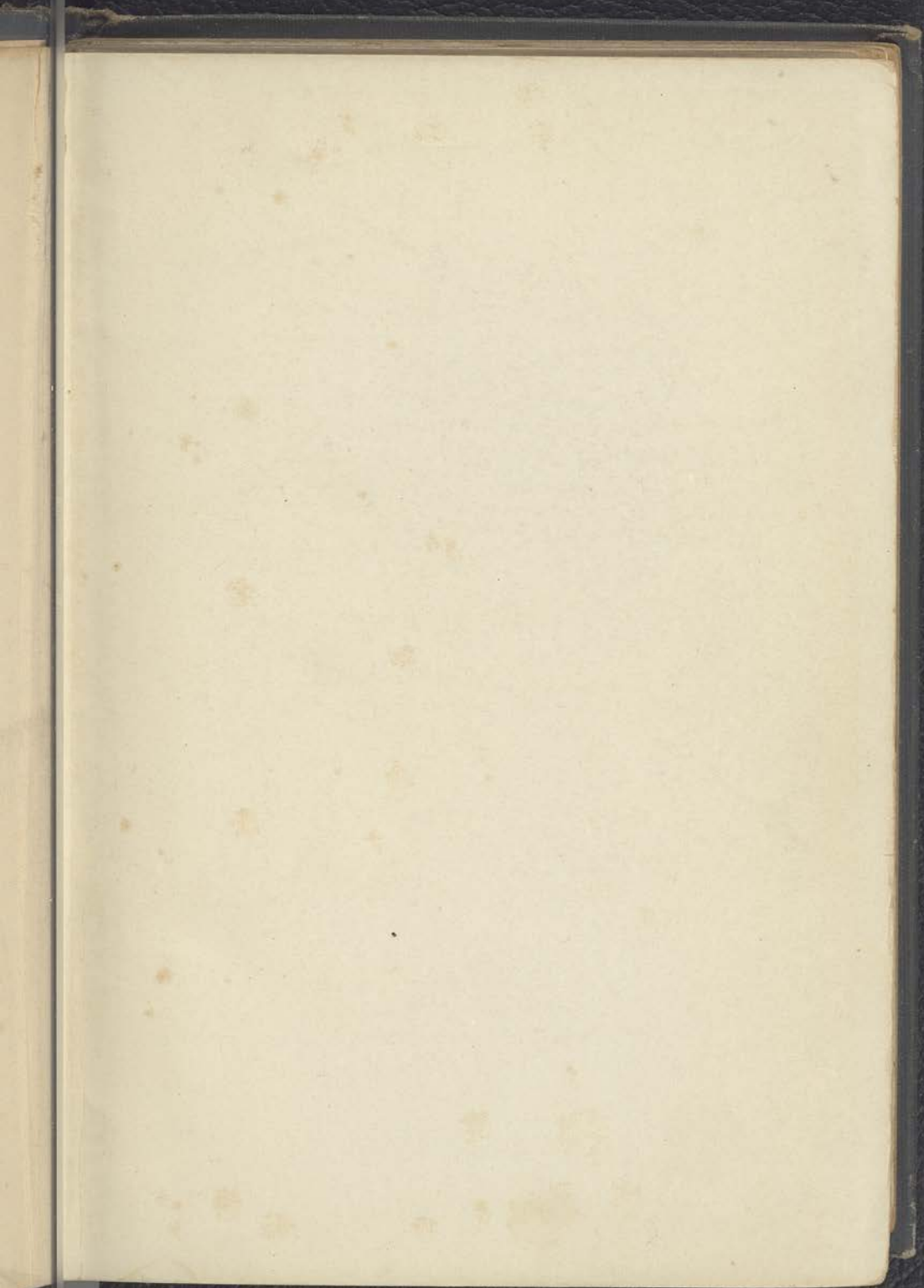


George Randolph Chester



THE JINGO







She bent her head upon the strong warm hand.

THE JINGO

BY
GEORGE RANDOLPH CHESTER

Author of
YOUNG WALLINGFORD, THE MAKING OF BOBBY BURNIT
FIVE THOUSAND AN HOUR, ETC.

With Illustrations By
F. VAUX WILSON

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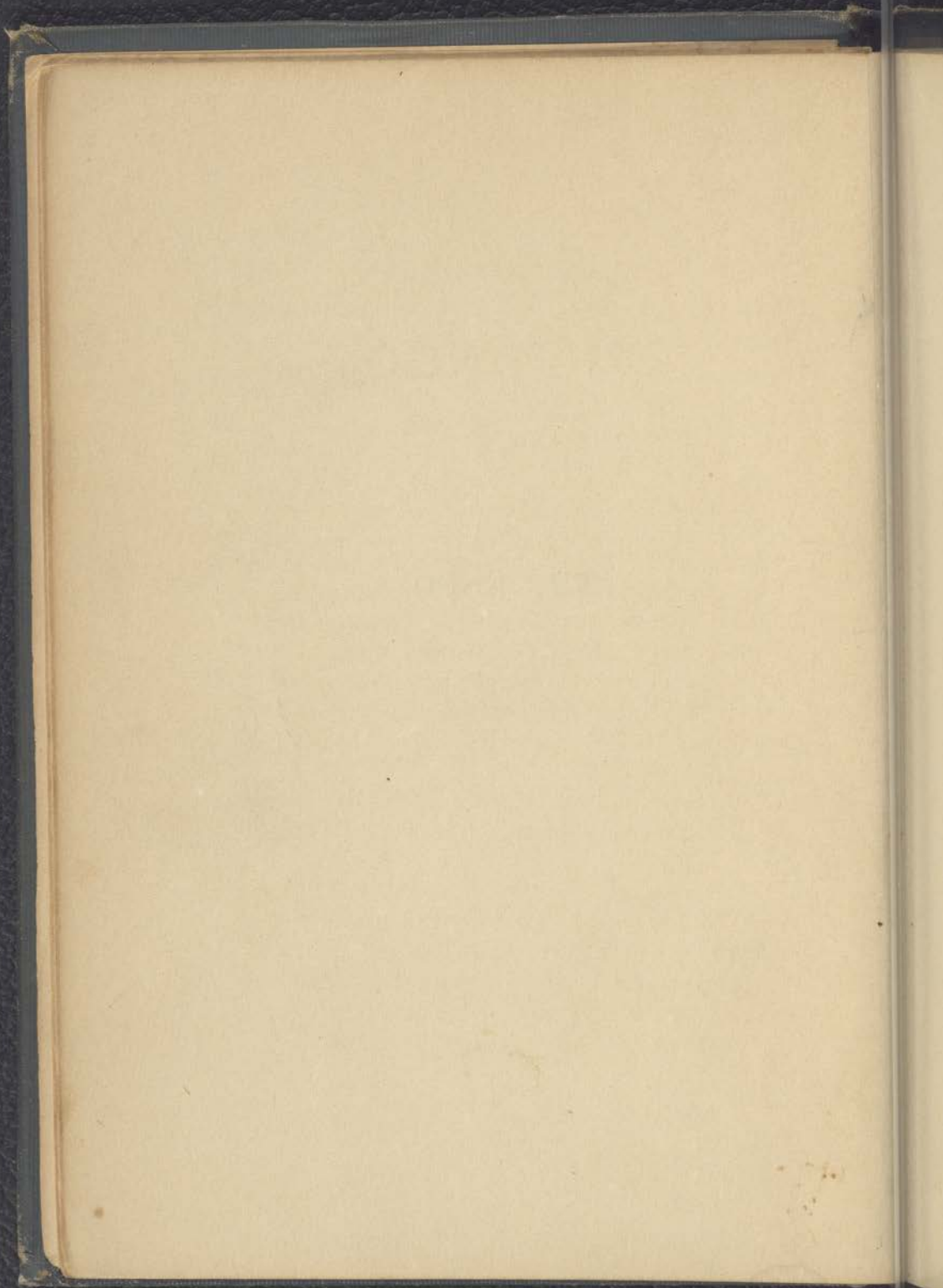
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THE JINGO



THE JINGO

CHAPTER I

THE PRINCESS BEZZANNA GOES INTO THE STORM

THE king slapped his hand to the back of his neck and jumped to his feet. Shaking the rain from his hair, he slammed and bolted the big wooden shutters just behind him. The princess, in the supple devilment of her nineteen years, leaned meekly against the shutters, but there was a suspicious spark in the wide brown eyes with which she held her brother's attention.

"We only stuck our noses out!" she deceptively apologized, as her slim brown hand slid stealthily up to the bolt.

The king laughed in spite of himself as he gazed down on her, her curling brown hair gleaming wet and the raindrops glistening on her oval face; and he shook his head at his younger brother, a tall boy of seventeen, who stood laughing behind her, quite ready for any mischief the girl might suggest.

"Shutters were made to keep storms out," the king stated, with every appearance of stern wisdom.

"Jump!" suddenly cried their guest from his seat in front of the wide fireplace, where thick flaming logs did their best against the damp and chill of the spring storm.

The guest, a black-bearded young man, with the fashionable red braiding on his dark blue jacket, was too late with his warning, for the princess had at last succeeded in slyly slipping the bolt, and she and her younger brother sprang away, shrieking with laughter, as the shutters flew wide open and the storm rushed in from the night, drenching the king and the marble floor, blowing out most of the flaring candle-balls which formed a frieze about the big hall, and swirling great volumes of smoke from the fireplace.

The king, a tall and wholesome-looking fellow of about thirty-five, shook the water again from his hair and beard, and made an energetic plunge for his brother and sister.

"Head them off, Onalyon!" he called, as, eluding him, they circled the big apartment, hurdling the dignified benches which came in their way.

At that moment they had turned in the far corner of the hall, had dodged the breathless and laughing king, and had headed straight for outdoors, almost hand in hand. Prince Onalyon sprang to intercept

them. The girl, her cheeks and her eyes flaming with the joy of the romp, and the hem of her white robe cracking behind her like a whip, revealing every lithe curve of her, giggled something to her brother; and with shrieking mischief they hurled straight on, heads down.

Onalyon, watching the girl with suddenly gleaming eyes, braced himself, determined that they should not dash out upon the storm-swept terrace. Before he quite knew what had happened, however, he was himself rushed over the threshold and the big shutters bolted against him, leaving him to make his way through the rain to the main entrance.

The girl held the bolt while her younger brother stood before her, ready to grapple with the king and defend their victory at all hazards. The king, however, merely sat down and laughed.

"You may occasion the prince a severe cold," he observed with twinkling eyes.

"I hope he sneezes for the rest of his life!" giggled the princess.

"You might find that annoying in your husband," he suggested.

"She's not going to marry Onalyon!" immediately asserted her younger brother.

"I am afraid she must," insisted the king, becoming grave. "We've allowed her to be a child a long time."

"I won't!" And the girl tilted herself for a second upon the toes of her dainty sandals to come down on her heels for emphasis. "Please don't say I have to!" and, slipping down upon the arm of the king's chair, she turned her eyes appealingly to him. "You're always saying it." Seeing the collar of his tunic gaping conveniently open at the back, she dangled one of her dripping curls into the space to make him squirm. "Why must I?"

"To prevent war, for one thing."

"I wish we could have a war," she remarked; and, plucking a gray hair from his beard, she tried to twist it round his nose. "I'd rather have that than marry Onalyon."

"Is there any other among the nobles whom you would prefer?" he anxiously inquired.

"Who would it be?" she laughingly demanded. "Birrqway has a funny nose, and Calamaz talks about himself all the time, and Polecon is too fat, and Grisophal looks cross, and Huppylac squeaks, and Onalyon spends too much time on his beard. The rest are all too young or too old, and the nicest ones are all married."

"I'll speak to Onalyon about that beard," laughed the king, much relieved. "This is the first time that a marriage between the two dynasties has seemed possible since the war a hundred years ago."

The princess screamed, and hastily jumping

from the arm of the chair, stood, with distended eyes, confronting her younger brother, emitting shriek after shriek straight at him. Tedoyah, searching the apartment for something—anything—to relieve the agony of serious conversation, had found on the floor a leaf which had been blown in by the storm. Upon the leaf was the priceless gift of a cold, cold worm; and this he had, with great care and delicacy, dropped into the exact center of the warm palm of Bezzanna.

"I'll put spiders in your bed!" she hysterically cried. "I'll put snakes in your clothes! I'll put bugs in your cap! I'll fill your pockets with caterpillars!"

An extra loud clap of thunder, which seemed to shake the very building, resounded outside just as Onalyon entered from the corridor, dripping and laughing.

"I like it, since I'm wet through," he said, hurrying to the fire and snapping the water from his fingers into Bezzanna's face as he passed her. "It's a fearful storm—the worst we've had in years, I think."

"I want to see it," declared Bezzanna wistfully, going to the shutters and sliding her hand longingly to and fro upon the bolt. "I don't see why you men, who claim to have all the intelligence there is, can't invent some way to see out without letting in the wind and the rain and the cold."

Both the king and the prince laughed.

"You have a positive genius for imagining impossible things," commented Onalyon. "I suppose you want us to find some wood or marble, or some other solid substance, which you can see through."

"Of course I do," she replied. "I'm tired of having it all dark indoors on cold days when it rains. If we only had sheets of ice that would not melt!"

Naturally they could not help laughing at her. What she asked was so absurd—so entirely beyond the bounds of possibility—a miracle, in fact!

"That's as bad as your wanting us to set a slice of water on edge in your room, so you could see yourself in it," laughed the king.

"I didn't ask you to do that," she hotly denied, indignant at the misrepresentation. "I only asked you to find something to put in my room in which I could see to do up my hair as clearly as if I had a slice of water set on edge."

"It amounts to the same," insisted the prince.

"It does not," contradicted Tedoyah. "What she said was a perfectly sensible illustration. My whole crowd has been working on it for months."

"Women are queer," observed the king sagely. "They are always wanting impossible things."

"That's because women won't admit there is anything impossible," stoutly asserted Bezzanna. "And there isn't. Why, last summer I said there should

be some way for men to fly, and you told me it was impossible. Only a few days afterward a man flew straight over Isola."

Both the king and the prince looked at her sadly.

"I suppose you will never admit that what we saw was only a big bird," sighed the king, with the hopeless air of a man who knows how useless it is to combat a feminine prejudice, no matter how absurd.

"Of course she won't admit it," maintained Tedoyah. "I saw the man myself."

"You'd see anything she did," laughed the king. "But consider how foolish that idea is! A bird is twenty times stronger than a man in proportion to its size. This has been proved. Therefore, man can not fly until he becomes twenty times stronger than he now is—which is, of course, impossible."

"I saw a man up there," Bezzanna mumbled, as much to herself as to them.

"Oh, well, maybe you did," wearily gave in the king.

"You don't believe that," she charged. "You're only saying it to stop the argument. But how do you know what kind of men there are outside of here? Maybe they are twenty times stronger—and twenty times more intelligent, for that matter."

Even Tedoyah was indignant at this insulting supposition. It was going a trifle beyond the limit of mere absurdity to assert that anywhere in the

world there were male human beings of better fiber and furnishing than the stalwart and brainy sons of Isola!

"You are not very patriotic, to say the least," reproached the king, really very much hurt.

"I don't say that anybody could be nicer, or better, or more lovable," hastily defended Bezzanna, filled with remorse. "They're very probably hideous monsters and I should hate them; but I do know they must be very wise. They build big ships and sail the water in them. Sometimes I watch for hours, from the top of our tower, to see them go sailing by, away yonder on the edge of the ocean; and sometimes I fancy that if they could only pass through the many miles of reefs which shut off Isola from the rest of the world, wherever it is, they would bring me some great unknown happiness; so I call and call and call to those far-off ships; but, of course, they never hear me! Are these things all foolish dreams, brother? Say no!"

"Certainly not," accommodated the king, laughing; then, more seriously: "Really, though, we can not know what vast progress may have been made in the world since the ignorant age when, many hundreds of years ago, the original founders of Isola were cast ashore here in a convulsion of the sea; and, bound in by the impassable reefs that sprang up

on the one side, and by unscalable mountains on the other, were forced to stay."

"They couldn't have found a better place," declared Bezzanna, with intense conviction. "Isola is the prettiest country in the world. Listen! My, how it storms! Brother, I simply must go out and see it!"

"I suppose you'll have to go," consented the king, with an indulgent smile. "It never seems to hurt you, and you do thoroughly enjoy it."

"She mustn't go this time," interposed the prince, as the two youngsters started hurriedly for their wraps. "It's really too severe for her."

"You don't need to come," she kindly told him. "You'd better go up to your rooms and take a hot bath and put on some dry clothes—and have Aunt Gee-gee order you some tea!"

This reference to the motherly ministrations of Aunt Gee-gee—which was the baby name Bezzanna still retained for the spinster Princess Zheneezha—touched the prince's pride. Aunt Gee-gee would much rather have them all weakly than strong—so she could nurse them!

"Why wait for wraps?" observed the prince as calmly as he could under his white anger; and once more he threw open the shutters and, bareheaded, stepped outside into the storm, the fury of which, however, was now somewhat abated.

"Please put these on!" cried Bezzanna, running to him with his cap and cape. "I'm sorry; truly—I didn't mean it."

"Thank you," accepted the prince happily, and put them on. "What is there about a storm that attracts you so, Bezzanna?" he asked, as he caught her arm to brace her against the rushing wind. He was glad of that excuse to touch and hold her. "Is it the wildness of it?"

"Not altogether that," she answered. "I think it's the mystery of it more than the wildness or the beauty. I have always had a queer impression that sometime the storm would bring me something very wonderful."

"What strange thoughts you have!" he commented a trifle sadly. "They come from discontent, I think. Why is Isola so unsatisfactory?"

"Because I want impossible things, I guess," she laughed.

"I hope the storm brings them to you," the prince was gallant enough to say. "What do you suppose it will be?"

"Who knows?" she returned, as Tedoyah grasped her arms to drag her away. "Perhaps"—and she laughed mischievously—"perhaps a truly lover!"

CHAPTER II

BEZZANNA'S GIFT COMES OUT OF THE SEA

"MY SHIP!" wailed Bezzanna. "I said that the next one that came by was mine; and now it is all breaking up!"

"Where?" asked the king, gaining the top of the tower with the prince and clutching at the railing.

"Wait for the next lightning flash!" directed the girl excitedly. "Don't look straight out at the open space, but over between the tops of the two big trees on the cliff. Stand just here—at this corner."

Her soft warm hand clutched her brother's. Below them they could hear the thrashing of the trees in the park, and they held tightly to each other and to the rail to avoid being blown away by the fitful gusts of wind into darkness so dense that it seemed almost palpable. Suddenly the world opened with a great blue flare and closed again in inky blackness, and for minutes afterward they were looking, dazed, upon the vivid visual image which that flash had revealed. Even in the darkness they could still see the wildly tossing trees, with the white sides of their leaves flaunted uppermost; the long, winding stone

steps which led up to the palace; the town, with its modest little terrace-topped houses, cut sharp and clean into the vision, as if they had been made from fresh white cardboard; the wind-swept river, with its tossing small craft and clumsy barges; the little bay hidden in its sheltering and concealing arms of solid rock; and, far to the right of that, the miles upon miles of seething frothing reefs, fretted and churned into boiling foam—always the same, yet always changing—and so incessant in that illusion that they dizzied the eye and made it sick.

Upon the outer reefs broke the big waves with the sharp crash of pealing thunder; and, at the mercy of these irresistible battering-rams, which had gathered their strength from the racing width of a wide sea, lay a long, low, black hull, with two smoke-stacks, which, in the lightning's glare, still sent forth thin streams of smoke, red-brown against the velvet of the sky.

Another flash, and in that instant the ship slowly turned on its side and crushed down in an awful silence upon the jagged points. Breathless, the four spectators upon the tower awaited the next blue-white cleavage of the heavens; but, before it came, a red glow appeared at the point on which their strained eyes were focused. It grew and spread until, suddenly bursting into vivid flame, it lighted its own scene of destruction. Dense clouds of smoke

rolled up into the reddened sky, while, forming its own silhouette by his own flame, the ship stood out, distinct and clean-cut, with every rod and every rail like a tracery of jet upon cloth of gold; and as the foaming waves rushed in toward the shore, they were wreathed with crimson froth.

"It is wonderful!" gasped Bezzanna. "Wonderful and awful!"

That fierce far flame lighted dimly even the faces of the watchers on the tower, and Bezzanna, looking up at her older brother, saw tears in his eyes and pressed his arm closer.

"Men are dying out there!" he said simply.

There came another broad flash of lightning, one that raced its way in forking brilliance across the heavens, and seemed to come back again and again to perform the same mad journey; and, in the light of this parting struggle of the storm to retain its destructive clutch upon the universe, there was more opportunity to study detail.

"Oh, look!" suddenly cried Bezzanna. "Down there, just over Pointed Rock, something is coming ashore!"

The something which she indicated seemed to be a huge box, and, by an almost miraculous accident of passage between the haphazard openings in the successive reefs, it had worked its clumsy way far in to the less troubled and less violent waters.

"Perhaps it is your gift from the sea!" suggested the prince.

She unconsciously drew a little away from him. She had thought she had been holding the arm of Tedoyah on that side. She looked round for her younger brother. He was just starting to descend the inside stairway of the tower.

"Where are you going?" she called to him.

"Down the ravine to the foot of the cliff," he replied. "That thing is going to miss the opening into the bay."

"It's mine, whatever it is," she hastily warned him. "I discovered it!"

"Wait!" called the prince, and hurried after her, for she had already started down the steps. "Does that girl know there is such a thing as danger?" he demanded as they reached the splashing shelter of the stairway.

"Yes; for other people," laughed the king, and hurried, for he knew that the feet of the lively pair were winged.

Down the winding steps the youngsters dashed to the big main hall, where the flames still leaped and roared in happy comfort and cast their fitful reflections upon the great hewn logs in the beamed ceiling; then out upon the leaf-strewn terrace and down the wide stone steps into the park, where branches from the distressed trees lay thickly upon the paths.

Through the flooded gardens they raced, and down through the winding, twisting, wet ravine, in the bed of which a miniature torrent of rainfall rushed to the sea.

There were slips and tumbles without number in that mad scramble, but the miracle that attends fleet youth happened for them at every footstep; for a loose stone upon which a careful adult might not place his foot with impunity, only stirred gently under their flying touch.

Above, through the interlacing leaves, the sky was pink, and they knew that the ship was still burning, a realization which, each time they looked upward, heightened the fever of their eagerness. A final turn and a steep descent brought them at last, by a ticklish path against the face of the bare cliff, to the rocky beach, which shelved sharply into the sea.

They stopped, backed against the towering wall, for a disappointed survey of the surf. Their prize was nowhere to be seen!

"All right; it's yours!" said Tedoyah. "I'll give you my share."

"That's because you think it's lost," charged Bezanna; "but I want you to remember that you've let go all claims to it."

The boy laughed.

"I'll remember," he promised. "You'll never see it again, though."

"I will," she insisted. "It's round the point there, or it has come ashore among the rocks somewhere. I'll find it if I have to stay down here all night."

Tedoyah tried to restrain her, for the footing was insecure at its best and there were dangerous little pools, some of them quite deep; but, all wet as her garments were, she eluded his grasp like an eel and hurried on toward the point, beyond which was a tiny cove, invisible from any place on the beach and accessible only with the greatest difficulty, even in good weather.

She put out her foot to place it on the first of the series of irregular natural steps around the point, but, at the moment, the flames of the ship died suddenly down, leaving but an infinitesimal spark, which served only to accentuate the painful darkness. In that same instant there was a shriek from Bezzanna, and her brother heard a tumbling of rocks and a splash.

The agonized voices of the king and the prince from the lower reaches of the ravine called her name; but there was no answer.

Tedoyah had run to the point, but he stood there helpless in the darkness, calling to her and to the men who were coming; and with his eyes fixed on that flickering point of light on the ship, he prayed for it to flame up again. His prayer was answered in a different manner from that he had

asked; for all at once a giant ring of fire shot straight up into the heavens, and then there was a mighty roar as if the earth and sea had split asunder—then darkness again!

The darkness was not for long, however; for, as if in answer to the tremendous explosion, or as if a direct result of it, the clouds near the horizon parted, and the round red moon shone through, casting its peaceful rays down on a sea that still sullenly tossed and tumbled, but upon which there was no vestige of a ship.

The prince and the king had gained the beach by now, just in time to see Tedoyah, stripped of his cap and cape and tunic, gripping his way round the point.

"Tedoyah!" called the king in fright.

Tedoyah paused, astride the very ridge of the point.

"If I don't find Bezzanna I won't come back," he declared, and edged round another step.

The king and the prince came plunging toward him, the king limping sorely—both with sublime disregard of their own safety.

"Is she lost?" demanded the king.

"I don't know!" cried the boy. "Bezzanna!"

"I'm here," called a cheerful voice, not twenty feet from him; and there, on the ledge of an opening in the cliff, sat Bezzanna, swinging her feet.

Tedoyah nearly fell off the ridge.

"You miserable wretch!" he gasped; and then to the men: "She's all right."

He had to say that over three times to make it distinguishable, and then he leaned his face against the rock and clasped the rugged granite with his arms to keep from falling off, and sobbed.

"Please don't!" wailed Bezzanna. "Don't you see I'm here?"

"Why didn't you answer us?" demanded the boy, now furious.

"I just got my breath," she calmly explained. "I fell in the deep pool and had to dive under the arch and climb up here. Our old cave is still high and deep and warm and dry, Tedoyah; and my prize came ashore, just as I said! It's a beautiful big box and I get the first touch! It's mine, remember! I was just going down to look at it."

"There's something else with it, I think," hesitated her brother, examining the prize from his vantage-point at the side of it.

"That's mine, too!" she immediately reminded him.

"I wouldn't claim it," soberly advised Tedoyah, still with that curious hesitation; "for I think that the something else with it is a man—and he's dead!"

"Oh!" cried Bezzanna.

She had clambered half-way down the rock, but

now she turned to it with her arms upstretched against it, as if for protection from the uncanniness which she had not yet seen. Tedoyah, on the contrary, hurried on round the point, closely followed by the prince, and leaped to the beach. As the king, with a badly hurt ankle, crept his more painful way round, the prince and Tedoyah bent down toward a sprawled something which lay against the side of the box next to the sea. The prince knelt to feel for a possible heart-beat that should distinguish the something as a man; but he rose, shaking his head.

Conquering her repugnance, Bezzanna clambered down again from her perch and approached timidly.

It was not much of a something to look at, but it had been once, when it was a man. It had been tall and muscular and well-formed, and the smoothly shaven face had been that of a young fellow not over thirty, whose countenance, now in repose, betrayed no telltale trace of bad living or evil thought. The full lips were firm and the broad jaws were tight, and his brow, upturned to the moonlight, was both high and white. His sinewy hands still gripped the rope with which the box was stoutly bound, and he was clad only in bathing trunks; but his poor body, buffeted and bruised from head to foot, was cross-marked with red cuts, flowing afresh since they had been bathed by the mocking sea.

Looking up from it with a shudder, Bezzanna's

eyes met those of the prince fixed on her in hopeful speculation that perhaps this might, after all, end the restless dreaming.

"Out of the storm," he said softly and even pityingly.

A thrill of something antagonistic stirred in Bezzanna as she thought that she detected a faint note of triumph in Onalyon's voice.

"I don't believe he's dead!" she wilfully declared; and, stooping down, she laid her hand firmly and yet gently over the heart of the sprawling figure.

As if in answer to that touch, the man made a startling convulsive effort to rise upon his hands and knees, then moaned and fell back!

It was under Bezzanna's energetic direction that they removed the stranger to the cave, where she and the king bound up his wounds with strips of their clothing, while Tedoyah and the prince hurried to the palace and brought dry garments, and blankets and ointment and water, and hot broth and a pot of fire.

He was very good-looking, indeed, Bezzanna thought during the long time in which they worked so anxiously to resuscitate him, and she was bending over him when at last, after an hour of stupor, he slowly opened his eyes. They were blue!

For a moment he gazed, bewildered, into the sparkling and delighted brown orbs of Bezzanna;

and then, in a language which no one in Isola could be expected to understand, because it was the choicest Broadway, he inquired:

"Where is the nearest cable office?"

The king and the prince bent over him immediately, and he repeated his question, with a shade of insistence. They did not understand; and, observing their beards, he tried them in Italian, French, Spanish and German—then scraped his memory for some fragments of Esperanto, all the time making motions with the fingers of his right hand like a telegraph key.

Finally, as the matter was urgent and he realized the necessity of finding an interpreter, he struggled painfully to his elbow and looked about him searchingly.

"Where are my pants?" he demanded.

CHAPTER III

JIMMY SMITH EXPRESSES A FEW THOUGHTS ON AMERICA

IN THE three days that passed before the fine-looking stranger could be removed to the palace, he became very well acquainted with the five people, who, in their perfect hospitality, undertook to nurse him in relays. He smiled quizzically every time Bezzanna and the king and plump Aunt Gee-gee came on watch, and made unceasing attempts to get into verbal communication with them. He mended less rapidly when Tedoyah and the prince were with him, for the boy was a restless youngster, and his clumsy attempts to move quietly were worse than if he had turned handspings, which were his natural mode of locomotion. The prince was even more disquieting, for he was too polite, too courteously ready to render assistance.

At such times the stalwart patient, looking out over the blue sea and waiting for his other nurses to come, had much time between healing naps for the consideration of his interrupted business journey,

and also for speculation concerning his present environment. These did not seem to be poor people—they seemed, on the contrary, to be persons of quality and breeding and social standing; and yet, why did they have dinky little candles in the shape of a grooved ball and set in a silver cup made expressly for the purpose? If it was too much trouble to drop down a wire for an electric light why didn't they at least bring a lantern or an auto lamp? He didn't like that silver candle-cup. It looked too permanent, as if they were used to that and nothing else. If they didn't have electric lights it looked bad for his chances of reaching a cable—and his firm would be worried about him.

Another thing! Why, when the fire went out, did they bring some more in an earthen pot? Why didn't they use matches? He noticed that everybody went out to look at the sun or the moon when they wanted to see how the time was passing. None of the men smoked. Nobody brought a magazine or a newspaper along. Why didn't the girl slip into a corner now and then and dab a chamois skin on her face with the aid of a mirror? Not that her face needed any fixing, because it was right in every particular—but just because!

About one thing, however, he had firmly made up his mind. When he got well he did not intend to

wear those ridiculous strips of cloth wound round his legs. He intended to have pants!

On the day he was raised by ropes to the top of the cliff and carried into the palace he made up his mind just as firmly to another thing which he had as carefully thought out, and he told the princess about it as soon as he woke up from the four-hour sleep which the fatigue of that trip had given him.

"Betsy Ann," he cheerfully observed to the bright-eyed young person who sat quietly watching him. She was working a sapphire-blue scalloped edge on an endless strip of dark red cloth, which looked suspiciously as if it were intended to adorn the legs of the new guest. "I've decided not to learn your language, because I haven't room for any more purely ornamental knowledge." He told her this as earnestly as if she knew a word of what he was saying, but with a twinkle in his eye which made amends for a lack of language. "So you have to learn American."

"All right!" she gaily agreed, having picked up that phrase for a starter during the last three days, and she rose to bring him what he wanted—as soon as she could find out what it was.

He gleefully shook hands with her on that; and, having no better means of communication for the present, they laughed at each other in quite a

friendly fashion, keeping it up much longer than was really necessary.

"We're going to start right now," he assured her. "I have to bounce out of this and locate the real city, so I can get off a cablegram, as soon as I'm patched up enough to travel; but before I go I want to have a few heart-to-heart conversations with you and Black Whiskers—Onion, I think you call him—and the kid, and Lady Gee-gee and Old Scout."

"Thanks Old Scout?" she inquired eagerly, happy that he had asked for the king.

"No," he laughed, and brought her back with emphatic waves of his hand. "Thanks Old Scout looks like a regular fellow to me, but I don't want him just now. I'd rather give you your first lesson in American. I'd like a drink of water, please."

She looked at him inquiringly, her unruly brown tresses dangling as she cocked her head on one side, and her red lips parted in a quizzical half smile.

"All right," she said pleasantly, after thinking the matter over.

"Fine work!" he complimented her, and they both laughed again. "A drink of water, please."

He so evidently wanted something that she confidently fixed his pillows. They needed fixing, anyhow, and she thumped and punched and patted about them the way a woman does, and helped him lift his head so that she could thump and pat some

more where the head had been lying; and she fluttered delightfully round him until she had made him quite comfortable indeed—except that his face was flushed. That may have been, however, because her own dark red cheek had brushed so close to his.

"All right, Betsy Ann," he thanked her when she had stepped back and surveyed her work with admiration. "Water, please. Water!" And this time he illustrated the word.

"Water," she repeated, with a gleeful nod of understanding, and hurried away.

His eyes followed the swing of her graceful figure to the door, where she turned and, meeting his gaze, gave him a parting glance of great friendliness, which left him very comfortable indeed.

While she was gone he took his first good survey of his room. It was a cheerful apartment, with blue cloth on the floor and upon the walls, the tops and the bottoms of the wall panels ornamented with scrolls of gold. There was a big fireplace, with a huge vase of dark red flowers on its shelf, and richly quaint furniture stood about in the agreeable confusion of articles that have been recently and logically used.

It was all very nice and comfortable, and even impressive; but there was something he missed tremendously. Was it wires? There wasn't a wire about the room—electric light, telephone, push-but-

ton—or any hint of the use or need of a wire; and he had come from the most extensively wired city in the most extensively wired country in the world! The two big windows were wide open to the pleasant spring breeze; and he could see, from where he lay, down over the green hill and the smiling valley to the town; but in all that pretty landscape there was no trace of a wire, no gaunt and warped poles, no uncompromising cluster of straight black lines to break the monotony of the graceful view. No wires anywhere! Great Scott! How lonesome their absence did make the landscape! He would have given much to have seen again just one blue trolley spark!

His gaze came back into the room, but again the unrest returned to him. It was something besides wires he missed—something very important! Bezanna bustled in and triumphantly presented him with a bowl of broth!

“Water!” she joyously informed him, pointing to it.

He ate it gratefully, for he was beginning to know hunger; and when he had finished he wiped his lips contentedly with the napkin she had brought him, and said quite calmly:

“Water, please.”

“Water!” she repeated, happy in his increasing appetite, and pointed to the bowl.

"No; water!" he insisted, smiling and shaking his head; and again he made the gesture of drinking.

She understood him perfectly now, and, after they had sufficiently laughed their friendliness and good humor to each other, she hurried away to bring it for him, while he fell to wondering again what the deuce it was he missed so dreadfully.

They were both pleased that she had the word water fastened into her vocabulary forever, and he spent the next hour in solid instruction. She learned an immense number of words that day—chair, and table, and bed, and the American names, in fact, of nearly everything in the room. She was both an apt and an eager pupil, with a good memory, a quick ear and a glib tongue; and she kept his mental faculties on the jump by pointing first to one object and then to another in anxious inquiry of its name. Finally, with a laugh, she pointed to him.

"Jimmy Smith," he informed her, with his finger vertical to his breast.

"Jimmysmith," she repeated, and changed her laugh to a giggle. Apparently the sound amused her.

"No; Jimmy!—Smith!" he corrected.

"Jimmysmith," she painstakingly repeated, but still giggled.

"Oh, just say Jimmy, then!" he compromised, half vexed. "I don't see why the name Smith

should be a grand giggle all over the world. Jimmy!"

"Jimmy," she echoed, apparently much relieved. She seemed to like that name better, for she said it over and over musingly, listening to it critically; and her eyes softened.

It was the Smith part of it she had thought funny—confound it! As if in comment upon his very thought, her eyes suddenly snapped and pointing to him, she said:

"Smith!"

He could have choked her for that devilish trick, stunningly pretty as she was; but he did not dare show his annoyance, for he was quite sure that then she would keep it up, since the nearer convalescent he became the less sympathetic she grew.

She presently stopped her malicious dimpling over his discomfiture to point at him and wave her hand in a comprehensive sweep toward the horizon. By the time she had gone through this graceful performance two or three times, he recovered from the pleasure of watching her do it enough to comprehend that she wished to know where he came from; and he told her with great promptness and vigor:

"America!"

"America!" she said, and he watched her narrowly. If she had giggled that time he would have been through with her forever. Since she had taken

it with sufficiently grave intelligence, however, he condescended to explain his attitude in the matter.

"You see, I'm ready to fight for the respect due that name, Betsy Ann," and observing that he was about to make a speech, Bezzanna sat comfortably by his bedside and made ready to listen. She liked to hear him talk, for his voice was deep and mellow in spite of its present weakness, and she enjoyed its many inflections. They were very musical. "I used to stand by and hear travelers state that other countries had it over the good old United States of America in this particular, and that one, and the other, until, at one time in my pup age, I was actually almost ashamed of my country. I really believed—and I hope I may be forgiven for it—that Americans were crude, impolite, money-chasing creatures, with no soul for art, music or any of the finer things in life. When the Eureka Machinery Company, of Brooklyn and New York, took me in as a junior partner, they put me in charge of the foreign sales department. I've been traveling three years, Betsy Ann; and I'm so violent for the United States of America that I have to carry a strait-jacket in my handiest luggage. If anybody tells me that any nation or any person under the sun has anything on America or Americans I make him take me right to the spot and show me; and they've never proved it yet! As a strictly unprejudiced observer, I am

bound to say, in mere candor and justice, that America is the only country on the globe worth claiming as a birthplace. Its men are the bravest, the brainiest, the healthiest, the most wholesome, the most chivalrous and the most honest—its women are the prettiest, the brightest, the gamest, the most charming, the most lovable and the most companionable of any in the universe; and, as a nation, we have the rest of creation skinned as bare as a Mexican dog in all the arts, sciences, manufactures, commercial enterprises, finer feelings, courtesy, courtship, justice, squareness and patriotism.

"Now look me squarely in the eye, Betsy Ann!" And he held up an impressive forefinger. "I want you to see that I'm giving this to you straight and honest, out of the depths of a surcharged heart. It isn't because I get so homesick that I could sob every time I see a stray dollar bill, but because I'm a man of mature sober deliberation, that I relieve myself of these burning facts! You just take it from your Uncle Jimmy that God-bless-America is some country! And don't you forget it! With these few words, I thank you for your kind attention," and he sank back exhausted, but satisfied.

"All right!" agreed Bezzanna, with a long breath. "All right, Smith!" and, laughing, she rose to examine the weather. Like a well-regulated spring day anywhere in the world, this one had tired of being

sunshiny and had now decided to rain a while. The rain was sweeping up the valley at a merry gait, turning the blue of the sky and the green of the meadows alike into misty gray. Already the trees in the park were beginning to rustle their welcome to the shower; and in about three minutes, if it were not prevented, the water would be streaming in on the pretty blue carpet.

In graceful haste, Bezzanna, as a preparation for shutting out the storm, hurried into another room, returned with a pot of fire in a silver basket, and lighted the candle-balls on the mantel; then she crossed swiftly to the wide-open windows and closed them with the heavy wooden shutters that had been concealed behind the long blue draperies.

For a moment Jimmy Smith, of Brooklyn and New York, United States of America, gasped at this abrupt transition from day to night, and then suddenly he had the solution to the puzzle of what he had missed so poignantly.

"Glass!" he exclaimed. "By George, there isn't an ounce of glass in the place."

He looked hastily about him to make sure. There were no windows, no mirrors, no globes or shades for the lights—not one of the thousand odd little trinkets that are made of crystal; and he remembered that during his illness he had never been given anything out of a bottle or drinking-glass!

Into what sort of place had he fallen? He remembered now that the queer thing he had felt but had not been able to analyze when he looked down at the town, and which made it so dull and soft and dead, was the entire absence of sparkling reflection from glazed objects.

It was an appalling discovery for him to make! Why, if none of these people used glass or matches—to say nothing of electricity—there wasn't one chance in a million that he would find a cable or a wireless station in the whole dead country! What on earth would the Eureka Machinery Company do about that hurry-up Antwerp contract which he had been sent to nail down? He turned his face to the wall and groaned!

CHAPTER IV

WHERE BEZZANNA ACQUIRED THE WORD "BLUSH"

THE Princess Betsy Ann made marvelous progress in the American language. The king being much occupied with the spring sowing, and Prince Onalyon with the oversight of the public granaries, and Tedoyah with helping bubbling little neighbor, Toopy Polecon, to break in her new pet donkey, the care of Jimmy Smith in his brightest waking hours was left to the princess; and she came from his apartments every evening, tauntingly proud with an overflow of strange new words, which even Onalyon was bound to admit were forceful and expressive.

On the first evening she produced, at the dinner-table, "water" and "bowl" and "bed" and "chair," and an entire first-aid-to-the-injured list. On the second day she was in lofty possession of "rain" and "wind" and "sun" and "cloud" and "sky" and "trees" and "flowers," and such abstract matters of interest. On the third day she was the sparkling bearer of "cheeks" and "eyes" and "lips" and "hair"

and "chin" and "wrist" and "hand" and "fingers," and such intimate words that had a bearing on concrete appreciation. When, however, on the fourth day, she somewhat pinkly introduced and explained the word "blush", Prince Onalyon thought it time to interfere; and even the king, considering the matter very gravely and sensibly, decided that he would take lessons in American at the same time Bezzanna did.

"Oh, will you?" she cried, delighted with the suggestion. "Really, Jimmy will be glad of it. He likes you. He calls you every day by the name he first gave you: Thanks Old Scout; but he can't seem to remember Onalyon's name at all. He calls him Onion!" And she was very gleeful about it. "I wonder what Onion means."

"Nothing in particular, I suppose," guessed the prince, displeased without quite knowing why. "No doubt it's mere dullness of comprehension on his part."

"Nothing doing!" promptly denied Bezzanna, in excellent American. "He's the most intelligent man in the world, I guess. That's why I'm so crazy to talk American—so he can tell me all he knows."

"It seems that he has been telling you a great deal already," suggested the prince jealously. "How did you come to learn the word 'blush'?"

Bezzanna illustrated the word immediately.

"It is none of your particular business!" she flamed, testing the temperature of her carmine cheeks with the back of her hand. There was no reason that she should not have told the innocent circumstance by which she came into possession of "blush," but she utterly denied the prince's right to inquire into the matter; besides, her refusal drove him distracted, and she liked to see him mentally wriggle. It was very curious.

"I'm going to put off breaking in that donkey until Jimmy is well," announced Tedoyah enviously. "I want to learn American, too; and you'll have to make room for Toopy. I think Jimmy knows a whole lot about games. I had a ball in his room last night and he took it in his hand as if it belonged there. His eyes just snapped. He has fine eyes!"

"Blue," murmured Bezzanna dreamily, in American.

The prince looked at her savagely.

"It seems that all Isola is to take lessons from this stranger," he criticized. "I wonder what I could learn from him?"

"Almost everything," suggested Bezzanna slyly. "He's going to make glass for me as soon as he is well."

"Glass!" repeated the king inquiringly.

"Glass!" she reiterated in a triumphant treble. "I told you there was such a thing, and you said that I

was silly for wanting impossible things. Glass is the substance you can see through. It's like sheets of clear ice that won't melt. You use it for windows to see out of without letting the rain in, and for cups to drink out of, and to put round the candles so they won't blow out but will still give light, and in place of water or a gold plate to see how pretty you are."

She caught her lip and her face flushed when she said that. Tedoyah burst into sudden boisterous laughter and pointed an accusing finger at her.

"That's when you got the word 'blush,'" he charged, rocking with laughter and clapping his hands.

She tried to make an indignant retort upon that, but for the first time in her life her tongue was attacked with the paralysis of confusion; and, feeling her face turning more and more scarlet, and burning as if it were aflame, she jumped from her chair and hurried from the table and the room.

The prince was naturally outraged.

"I don't see how you can make such a mistake," he protested to the king. "There are no friendships so dangerous as those that spring up in a sick-room."

"Prince!" warned Aunt Gee-gee, bristling.

The king had been laughing almost as heartily as Tedoyah, but now he turned on Onalyon a frowning brow.

"I don't understand you!" he sternly reproved. "Leaving out of the question Bezzanna, who is not to be criticized by any person outside of her immediate family, I estimate this stranger to be a gentleman. If he is not we know what to do with him; but, meantime, I can not find it in my heart to blame him for intimating that Bezzanna is pretty. She is."

"She is to be my wife!" asserted Onalyon stiffly.

The king studied that statement cautiously before he made a reply, while Aunt Gee-gee watched him anxiously.

"We all hope so," he admitted at last; "but at the same time we must bear in mind that the Princess Bezzanna has never agreed to it."

"It does not seem to me that she receives much encouragement in that matter except from myself," retorted the prince.

"You are both hasty and unjust," responded the king. "I have urged her many times and recently, pointing out not only the political need of such a union, but your personal desirability. I must warn you, however, that if she does not choose to make this alliance I shall do nothing to force her inclinations."

Onalyon frowned.

"And I must warn you," he returned, "that if she makes any other choice the politics of Isola may not be so placid as at present."

"You mean that you might contest the throne?" asked the king quietly.

"I dare him to try it!" declared Tedoyah, suddenly injecting himself into an argument that had too much fascination for him to resist. "We'll give you the most excitement you ever had in your life!"

Both the king and the prince laughed heartily; but Aunt Gee-gee bent on him a kindly glance.

"I don't want you to laugh at me," protested Tedoyah, now half angry with both of them. "I am a boy in most things, I guess; but when you talk of war I am a man!"

"You may remain a boy a few years longer then," laughed the king, "for we do not anticipate any immediate war. Frankly, however, Onalyon, I do not see why any one should wish to become king of Isola. It is a tedious position, bringing no great reward, filled with the settlement of petty disputes and with the accounting of petty affairs, and paid only by the self-approval which results from a duty passably done."

"That is your own fault," chided Onalyon, betraying a grievance which he had held secret for a long time. "There was a period when the court of Isola was conducted with sufficient magnificence to make it the pride of her people; when to be king meant more than to be a mere public accountant and domestic adviser."

"And you would bring back that period of reckless magnificence?" queried the king, studying him.

"Absolutely; but on the more brilliant scale made possible by our advance in the arts and sciences."

The king pondered carefully and selected his words with great caution.

"Do you realize the cost of what you suggest?" he wanted to know. "You are aware that, in the reign of Xantobah, starvation and war followed his ten years of waste!"

"Xantobah was a bad manager, I will admit," acknowledged the prince. "What I would propose would be not only an era of magnificence, but one of prosperity also. I would have a hundred servants in the palace to-morrow if I were king, and start every artisan in Isola laboring on luxuries for the consumption and use of the court. The stagnation would cease in an hour. I think I shall try it myself."

"Then I should dislike to see you on the throne," announced the king gravely, and arose.

The prince, also rising, looked at him in frowning calculation, but checked the speech that was on his lips.

"I suppose that, as long as there are men, there will be radical differences of opinions," he observed instead, and laughed lightly. "I wonder if I shall be able to find Bezzanna."

"Nobody ever knows," laughed the king. "Will you come in with us to visit the stranger?"

"No, thank you," declined Onalyon. "I want to find Bezzanna; and then I want to pack up a few of my more portable possessions and take Aunt Zhe-neezha with me—if she'll come."

"You're not going home?" protested the king hospitably.

"I think I really should become acquainted with my own people," laughed the prince, and lounged away.

"Do you suppose he will fight us?" inquired Tedoyah eagerly.

"Nonsense!" reproved the king, as they walked into the hall and turned up the winding stone stairway.

"I believe he will," persisted the boy. "I wish he would!"

"It's a poor form of excitement," stated the king.

"It isn't because of the excitement exactly, though I should enjoy that," replied Tedoyah; "but I truly think it's the only way to settle the argument. If we don't have it out now they will in fifty years from now—or maybe less; and, as long as it's bound to come, we might as well have the fun of it as anybody."

"I'm afraid men go to war with no better reason than that," smiled the king. "Frankly, Tedoyah"—

and pausing, with one hand at Jimmy Smith's door, he laid the other affectionately upon his brother's shoulder—"frankly, I am dying of inaction myself, and am as eager for activity and excitement as you could possibly be. Since the death of the queen, whom I shall never replace, leaves me without heirs and without heart, I am frantic for some legitimate outlet for my strength; but, merely to provide that outlet, I do not care to destroy our homes and devastate our fields, and kill our best men!"

CHAPTER V

JIMMY SMITH IS IMPORED TO DON HIS NATIONAL COSTUME

THE class in American worked six hours a day by schedule and the remainder of the time by choice; and, laughing its way roughshod over all such stupid obstacles as grammar and spelling, it made tremendous headway. The king was perhaps the most diligent student of all, if not the quickest learner, his acute interest dating from the moment he knew that Jimmy proposed to make glass.

The instructor, owing to a severe wound in his hip, was confined to his room several solid weeks, and by the end of that time he could converse very freely. If the others did not quite understand every word he said it was their fault; it was their business to catch up, for he had a very decided intuition that he would be busy when he got outside.

"If there's no way out of these all too peaceful surroundings I figure that I'll be about the most active person in the world, outside of the owner of a first automobile," he confided to the king on the

day it was decided that he might venture outdoors. "What we want to do first is to take up this glass question. I understand that I came ashore with no valuables but my finger nails. If that's the case, and I can't get away from here, I'll have to earn a living; and when I see what you need my only worry is that I'll become too rich."

"Go to it," laughed the king. "By the way, Jimmy, how do you make glass?"

"I don't know," confessed Jimmy promptly; "but we'll get right together and organize a glass company, and, while we're issuing the prospectus and filling up the subscription list, and holding the preliminary meetings and locating the plant, I'll experiment until I find out. I know you use sand and, I think, some sort of soda."

The king looked pained.

"I thought you knew," he faltered.

"Now, King, just you let me do the worrying," kindly admonished Jimmy. "I may have to spoil a lot of chemicals and have an explosion or two, but I'll get you glass; and it will be good glass, too, after the first dozen or so failures. I promised Betsy Ann a mirror."

"We'll have our glass," said the king, much relieved. "Betsy Ann will make you make good."

"Make good!" repeated Jimmy fondly. "Do you know, King, you've secured a rattling good Nelson

hold on American for so short a training? Make good! I don't think there's any finer expression in any language than that. It's the whole essence and spirit of America. It ought to be the national motto, in place of *E Pluribus Go Bragh*—Oie! Oie! Make good! There's nothing in English like it."

"English?" hesitated the king. "What is that?"

"English," explained Jimmy patiently, "is the dead language upon which American was more or less patterned."

"I see," mused the king. "American, then, is a live language."

"It's so live it can't hold still!" responded Jimmy with enthusiasm. "American is the only live language the world has known for more than a thousand years. It's the verbal symbol of a nation that has ideas so fast it has to invent new words every day to express them. By the way, King," and here he lowered his voice and looked cautiously at all the doors, "do you know where I could get some pants?"

"I do not know that word," admitted the king, regretfully, as Jimmy cast an uncomfortable glance at his shapely legs, each of which was wound spirally in dark red cloth, scalloped in sapphire-blue.

"I'll have to make you working drawings, I guess," decided Jimmy miserably. "You know, King, I don't like to seem rude and ungrateful—let alone fussy; but, honest, I can't wear these things."

To begin with, these darn spirals make my legs look crooked; moreover, they seem more or less indecent; and, aside from all that, I'm so used to pants that I don't think I could work well in anything else. I just must have pants!"

"I understand," laughed the king, with intuitive sympathy for Jimmy's feelings in the matter; and excusing himself, he hurried away, leaving Jimmy joyfully surprised and hopeful. He returned in a moment or two with a pair of blue-and-white striped bathing trunks, fresh from the laundry. "We thought that it would be too cold for you to wear them just yet," he apologized.

"Excuse me!" laughed Jimmy. "I suppose you thought this the national costume of America, and it is for two weeks every summer."

"Well, we did think it"—the king hesitated for a word—"rather—rather piffling."

"Piffling is the exact American phrase," approved Jimmy, holding out the trunks with a grin. "I think there's some class to the way I happened to have these on. When it looked like a mortal cinch—you'll have to get that word 'cinch'; it's handy—that the good ship *Kaisertania* was going on the rocks, most of the passengers who were not praying for the first time in years broke into their state-rooms and loaded their pockets with jewelry and

souvenirs; but I'm an egotist, and I never figured that I needed anything but me—so I opened my trunk with my key, in place of breaking the lock, and did a lightning change act into this trapeze outfit. Lying right on top of it was Jones' *Handbook of Modern Shop Practise and Revised-to-the-Minute Formulas*, thirteenth annual edition, just off the press, and the best reading you ever saw. I grabbed that; and, just before we hit the reef, I jumped overboard."

"There was class to the way you came through those reefs," admired the king. "There have been many wrecks on those rocks; but you were the first person, I believe, to come ashore alive since the founding of Isola."

"I never would have done so if they hadn't been tossing out ballast for half an hour before we hit," asserted Jimmy gratefully. "I grabbed a big stout-looking box, bound with ropes, which rode so high it looked as if it might be air-tight, and I tried to wedge Jones' *Handbook* under one of the ropes. Did I bring that box with me?"

"It brought you," laughed the king. "Betsy Ann has it in charge. She had it brought up from the cave this morning."

"It's Betsy Ann's," acknowledged Jimmy promptly. "I only borrowed it to come ashore, but I owe it

a vote of thanks and I'd like to balance my account. Where is it?"

"In Bezzanna's sitting-room," replied the king. "Let me help you."

"Can't afford it," refused Jimmy, gritting his teeth. "When I'm out of bed I have to be well."

"What is a Jones' *Handbook*?" asked the king, as they stalked back through the long passage.

"Was it under the rope?" demanded Jimmy, so excited that he forgot to limp. "If that *Handbook* came ashore I'll make you the wealthiest king who ever dodged a bomb! Was it about this long, and this wide, and this thick?"

The king delightedly acknowledged that it was.

"Then I'll tell you how to make glass and gunpowder and shaving soap and Babbitt metal in about five minutes. Of course, you don't know what the most of those things are; but, as president of the corporations, you'll find out soon enough. By the way, King, what is your last name? I've heard it three or four times, but I needed another ear to get it all."

The king chuckled, and obliged with his name, syllable by syllable—all seven of them. Jimmy listened intently, but after the second repetition he gave it up.

"It's no use, Thanks Old Scout," he commented; "we'll keep that name for Sundays. It's too fussy to be exposed to the weather all through the week."

Meantime, you're such a good sport that I know you won't mind if I just call you 'plain king'."

"Go to it," agreed the king in excellent American. "What is Sunday?"

"Holy Moses!" groaned Jimmy. "Now I suppose I have to hand you Sunday; and it's a cinch the formula isn't in the *Handbook*. I've been missing Sunday already, but I wouldn't undertake to explain what it means until we can take a solid day for it, and cross our fingers and promise not to quarrel. It's too dangerous a subject to start in a casual walk like this. More people have killed one another because of the peaceful and charitable and humanitarian things that Sunday means than for all the other causes of dispute put together. Wait a minute. Is this Bez-zanna's room?"

"We're here," laughed the king.

"I feel like a twisted doughnut!" bewailed Jimmy, looking down at his spirally incased legs. "Gee! I wish I'd saved my safety-razor!"

"Cheer up," encouraged the king, and knocked on the door.

Jimmy gave a downward tug at the skirts of his tunic. The door was opened by a mischievous-eyed vision in a delicate pink Grecian robe, who held open in her hand Jones' *Handbook of Modern Shop Practice and Revised-to-the-Minute Formulas!*

"Hello, Jimmy!" she cheerily hailed her unex-

pected caller. "Come right in. You've surprised your own surprise party."

Jimmy, followed by the king, advanced into a pale pink room and batted his eyes, for several bewildering things confronted him. Among these were Agilita Haplee, who was tall and slender and had large soulful eyes; and Lulea Birrquay, who was short and dumpy and wore bright red; and Toopy Polecon, of his American class, who was little and lively and was mostly a movement and a flash of white teeth; and Marsoe Grangro, who was big and stately, but tittered; and a colorless girl, with an unpronounceable name, who hid as much as possible!

Never had Jimmy Smith wished for anything so much as at that moment he wished for trousers and a shave. Meantime he waded through the ceremonies of introduction as best he could, and eventually he might have gained his self-possession and have forgotten—at least in part—his barber poles; but the suddenly discovered presence of another bewildering object in the room saved him the perspiring trouble. That astonishing object was nothing less than a shiny, new, nickel-trimmed, drop-head, mahogany cabinet, roller-bearing, exhibition sample, Warbler sewing-machine! He almost hugged it—it seemed so like a face from home.

"Is this yours?" Bezzanna wanted to know. "I just had it opened for you."

"I never saw it before; so it's yours," he assured her, having already clutched Jones' *Handbook*. "It looks like cabled money to me though. We make all the machinery that the Warbler Sewing Machine Company uses in the manufacture of this machine, in the Eureka Machine Works."

"Fine business!" the princess gleefully rejoined. "Then you're right there with the goods."

He had already seated himself eagerly before the exhibition sample, with the king a quiveringlly interested spectator on the opposite side of him; but now he turned shocked eyes on Bezzanna.

"Look here, kiddy," he protested, with a sidelong glance at the girls who could not understand, "you've picked up an awful line of slang."

"Slang?" she repeated. "I don't get you."

"Slang," he carefully explained—"well, slang is the poetry of a man in a hurry; but it's considered rather rough work for ladies in our set."

"I don't know yet why I'm in Dutch," retorted the princess, puzzled; "but I do know that you handed me all the American I use."

"All right—rub it in!" he returned, properly defeated. "I might know I'd get the worst of it; but just the same I see I shall have to give you some advanced lessons in plain and fancy parlor conversation. Meantime I'm going to be polite. I'm going to thank you for not having fussed up with this until

you knew whether it was mine or not." He grinned into the shuttle groove, where there was a knotted tangle of oiled thread.

"All right—get back," she permitted him. "I'll admit that I couldn't work it. I know what it's for though. It's to make clothes. I saw that from the pictures." And she spread before him the much-thumbed pages of the *Warbler Instruction Book*, printed in five languages, but not in Isolian. "But none of them shows me how to fix it so all the thread doesn't curl up down in that little hole."

"I never saw this particular shuttle movement myself; but give me just a minute and I'll pass you a demonstration."

He bent over the machine and extracted the shuttle from its tangle. The brown-bearded countenance of the king came within microscopical range. The air round him grew stuffy, but still Jimmy Smith, blissful in having a piece of accurate mechanism in his hand once more, worked on in profound concentration.

"There!" he exclaimed at last. "I guess that's tied with a pink ribbon and ready to go out on the next delivery. Where's some cloth?" And he looked up to find himself hemmed tightly in by fluffy pink and blue and red and yellow and white robes, and surrounded by six flushed-cheeked, sparkling-eyed and eager girlish faces, with the hand of Bez-

zanna on the back of his chair, the crook of her arm touching his shoulder, and her head bent so close to his that her curls tickled his hair. He caught his breath rather sharply at that last, but he smiled up at her with a frank friendliness that won the king's instant approval and confidence.

"Some cloth for the professor," Jimmy pompously demanded; and, laughing, Bezzanna ran and brought it—some queerly shaped pieces, the edges of which he placed together and slipped under the needle-foot. He ran the seam half-way down, amid the "Ohs!" and "Ahs!" of the admiring feminine circle; then he broke the needle. He put another one in and threaded it, but Bezzanna drove him away from the machine.

"You don't know how to sew!" she chided him. "I want to do it."

She finished that seam with grace and ease; and as she bent over her work, in a pose most effective for the display of the beautiful curve from the base of her ear to her smooth shoulder, Jimmy Smith wondered what it was that made her so much prettier than all these other girls—or, in fact, than any girl he had ever seen. She was a corker! He hated to admit it; but never, even at home, in the land that produces more beautiful and attractive and delightful women than all the rest of the world put together, had he seen such an amazing collection of beauty

selfishly appropriated by one person. Bright as a dollar, too! He was worried about it, until at last he found the right explanation, and then he was satisfied. The original castaways who had founded Isola must have been Americans!

Bezzanna removed the delicate pink satin-finished cloth from the machine, studied the seam with a little frown and an adorable pucker of her rosy lips, and bit off the ends of the thread with her glistening white teeth. She seized a third piece of cloth, put the edges together and inserted them in the machine with an intense interest that showed that she would prefer to do nothing but this for the remainder of the day.

An imploring clamor rose from the bevy of excited girls. It was evident they were begging to sew!

"You see!" triumphed Jimmy to the king. "You and I can't escape from a business opportunity every hour from now on. To-morrow you get me a likely bunch of boys for instruction, and we'll put out sub-agents right away for the Warbler sewing-machine. You see how the women will eat it up, don't you? We can put one in every family in Isola, even if the lady of the house has to mortgage the plush album to make the first payment. You and I will handle the general agency, the sole labor of which consists in pocketing half the commission; and it won't inter-

fere for a minute with the glass company and the soap factory, or any other of our corporations."

"I get you," responded the king, with equal enthusiasm. "I'm aching so to get busy that my arm hurts."

"Gee! Old Scout, you're a hummer in picking up American!" complimented Jimmy.

Bezzanna finished the second seam, removed her work and held it out proudly for inspection. Jimmy Smith had a queer sinking sensation in the pit of his stomach. That delicately tinted, shiny pink garment was a pair of bathing trunks of about his size.

"Now I'm next!" she exclaimed, turning to him brightly. "I couldn't understand how they made such cute little even stitches in your clothes."

She turned animatedly to the girls and began to explain something; then they all chattered excitedly at once. Suddenly she sprang up from the machine and ran out of the room.

"Betsy Ann!" called Jimmy in agony—but she was gone. He sprang to follow her; but his hip was in no present condition for speed, as it reminded him with a sharp pang. "Stop her, King!" he begged. "If she brings those darn trunks up here I'll cave in!"

"I don't get you," puzzled the king; but he went. The room being cleared of the proprietor, the rest of the girls pounced on that Warbler sewing-machine;

and, demanding of Jimmy singly and in groups to be shown, they put it to the extreme speed test, gurgling over it so much that Jimmy fully expected them to send home for their things and stay right there.

The king was the first to return.

"I got away with it," he reassuringly laughed to Jimmy. "I hid them in an empty vase—but I don't see why."

Bezzanna returned by another door.

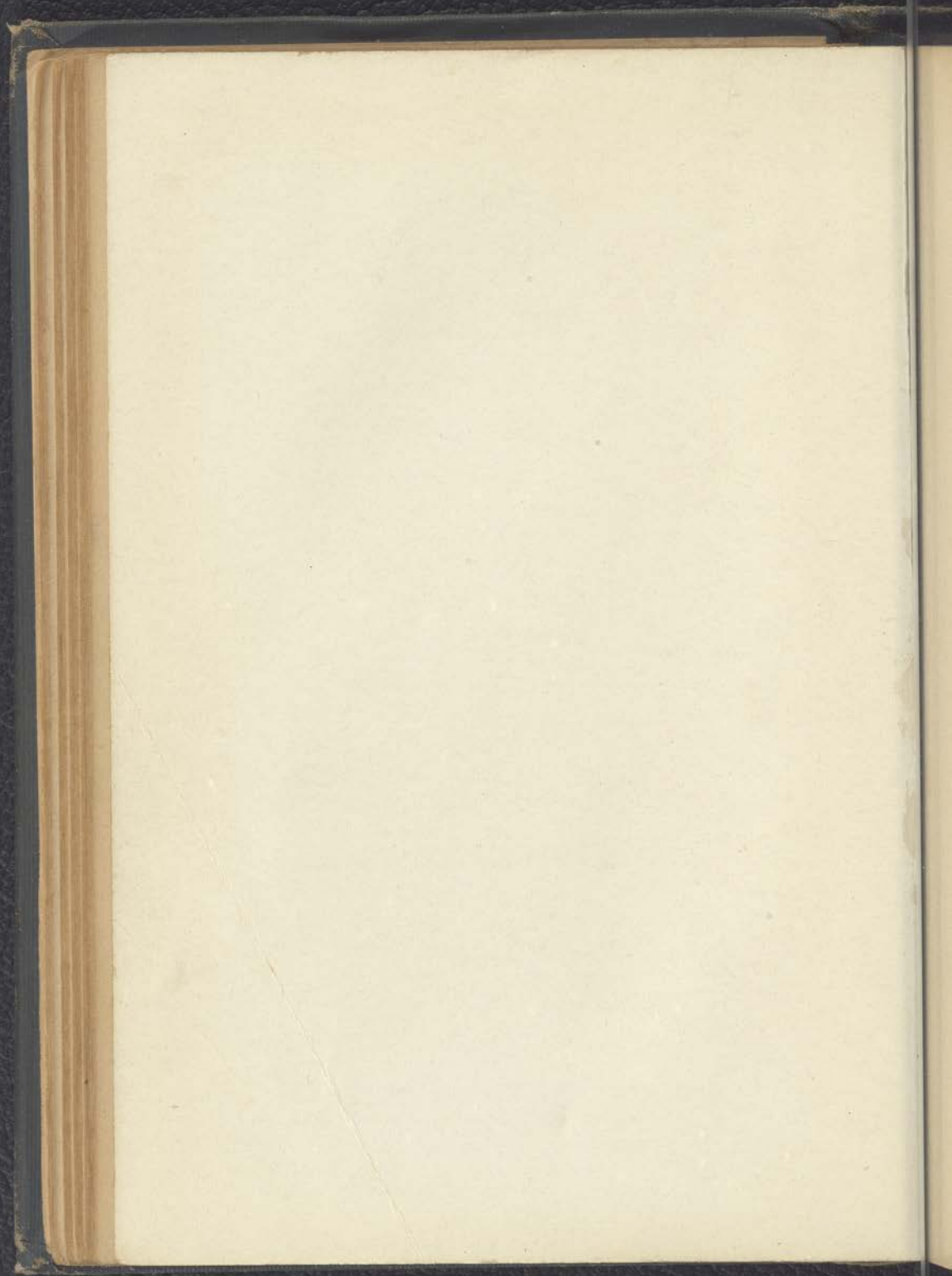
"Here they are!" she said, glowing with the happy certainty of approbation. "I made them myself, intending to spring them on you the first warm day," and she held out, for his delighted inspection and approval, a pair of light blue bathing trunks, trimmed with pink ribbons and embroidered with dainty butterflies. "Your national costume is so cute!" she bubbled, and turned, with charming effervescence, to the eager girls to show them the creation and to discuss with them the immense superiority of the neat, swift and handy machine-stitch over tedious hand-work.

"That settles it!" hissed Jimmy fiercely to the king as he limped to the door. "I have to have pants!"

"Oh, Jimmy!" called Bezzanna, hurrying to him and holding forth the dainty garment. She looked up at him with clear eyes, so full of pleading that they could have compelled him to crack a safe. "Do go and put them on—won't you? I'm dippy to know



Bezzanna held it out proudly for inspection.



if they fit, and the girls want to see how you look in them. Why, how red your face is! The room is too warm. Oh, you're all in!" And her tone became so sympathetic that it removed Jimmy's last prop.

"I'm afraid I'll have to lie down again," he miserably lied; and, taking the infernal trunks with such mumbled thanks as he could command, he crawled feebly from the torture chamber and made the king help him get ready to retire. "I hate this confounded bed, but I have to make good!" he groaned as he thumped in to the accompaniment of the king's aggravating laughter. "There's one thing certain!" he savagely exclaimed, as with vigor he propped himself on one elbow. "I want that machine and some plain dark cloth down here to-night, for I'm not going to leave this room again until I figure me out some pants."

"I'll see if I can borrow it from Betsy Ann," chuckled the king. "By the way, Jimmy, if we sell a lot of those machines where are we to get them?"

"By George, I hadn't thought of that!" exclaimed Jimmy, sitting straight up in bed. "Why, that's a cinch!" he added cheerfully after a moment of thought. "We'll organize a company and manufacture them!"

CHAPTER VI

JIMMY SMITH PARADES HIS NEW PANTS

TOOPLY POLECON and Tedoyah, whom Jimmy Smith had rechristened Teddy because of his expansive teeth, came racing up the terrace to where Bezzanna sat against one of the prancing stone goats which ornamented the approach to the big stone palace, and they jerked her unceremoniously to the ground.

With silent scorn for the extreme silliness of children of the absurdly young ages of seventeen and sixteen, she quietly climbed up again and leaned her waving and curling brown hair against the golden yellow of the goat. Not finding the exact comfortable spot which she had previously enjoyed, she shifted her head until she found it, and noting that her russet-brown robe trailed gracefully against the yellow of the stone, she folded her hands upon her lap, and cast her gloomy gaze down across the valley, at nothing in particular.

With the vivid green of the spring-time waving beside her, and a dash of scarlet at her throat, she

was far too richly colored to be the extreme picture of melancholy she had meant to appear, and after a moment of puzzling over her present pose, Toopy and Teddy jerked her down again.

"Come on, Betsy Ann," begged Teddy. "We've had a violent quarrel about a hole in the ground. I say it's a snake-hole—"

"It isn't. It was made with a stick," interrupted Toopy with much vim.

"Bring the hole here and I'll tell you what it is," offered Betsy Ann without a trace of a smile, and started to climb back on her perch.

"I'm afraid we'd break it," retorted Teddy, and was angry because nobody snickered.

"Come on, please!" begged Toopy, regarding her friend with wistful eyes. "Tedoyah's dreadfully dull when you're not with us. What's the matter?"

"I want to think," replied Bezzanna gloomily.

"What about?"

"Nothing."

"I know," blurted the exasperated Teddy. "She's angry with Jimmy."

"It isn't true," denied Bezzanna coldly. "People have to be worth while for one to be angry with them."

"Then why did you burn up the two extra costumes you had started to make for him?" demanded Tedoyah.

"I didn't feel like finishing them," was the lofty reply.

Toopy's black eyes snapped, but she was a wise little lady and she kept her tongue behind her teeth; however, she slyly nudged Tedoyah, and that reckless person walked straight into the fire.

"It's because he didn't wear the butterfly suit," he gleefully accused her, "It's because he borrowed your sewing-machine to make some for himself. It's because he has shut himself up for two days now, and won't see anybody but brother and me. It's because—"

Bezzanna jumped down to the steps and started with frigid determination toward the front door.

"Wait!" called Teddy, intuitively scared. "Where are you going?"

"To feed the goats."

Toopy was surprised to see the intrepid Tedoyah turn pale.

"My cherry cakes!" he gasped, and started after his sister. "Don't, Bezzanna! You only baked them for me this morning, and I haven't tasted one of them yet."

Hearing Tedoyah coming after her, Bezzanna broke immediately into a run, dashed through the little door at the side of the big ones, slammed it after her and tried to bolt it, relinquished that idea when she felt Tedoyah's resistless weight on the

outside, flew up the stairs and back toward her own sitting-room, where she had her own strictly personal and private amateur oven built into the side of her own fireplace.

Tedoyah, with Toopy a close third, caught up with her just in front of Jimmy's door, which the king had, at that moment, abruptly opened, and all three of the young people stopped aghast, all other interests forgotten in the amazing sight which met their eyes! Jimmy Smith, squatted on the floor at his open window and looking intently into a basin of water, had his face covered with some white substance streaked with red, and was scraping it off with a remarkably bright knife.

"What's he doing?" asked Toopy in breathless horror, as the king closed the door from the outside.

"Shaving," answered the king solemnly. "It means removing the hair from the face. Jimmy is a remarkable man. He tells me that, from a close study of the bearded nations, he has discovered that their virility all runs to whiskers." The king looked about his audience gravely, immature as they were; for he had a serious matter on his mind. "Jimmy strongly urges me to remove my beard, but it seems to be a very painful and dangerous process, for he has already cut himself three times, and has used several American words which I do not yet understand. I think that I shall learn them, however, for

they seem to be very useful, and to give him a great deal of satisfaction."

"How does he do it?" inquired the awestricken Toopy, to the great gratification of Bezzanna, who was dying to ask the same question, but would not.

They had, all of them, by this time, descended the stairs, and now they walked out on the big stone terrace, Teddy reflecting, with a guilty grin, that this lucky interruption had probably saved his cherry cakes.

"Shaving requires, first of all, a very sharp knife," explained the king, pondering on the mysteries to which he had been a recent witness. "Jimmy refused both the gold and the silver ones I offered him, and took instead coarse iron which before my own eyes he turned into steel. After he was through with all his heating and cooling operations the knife was so hard that, when he dropped it, a corner of it broke off!"

"I don't see anything so remarkable in that," commented Bezzanna disdainfully.

"Nothing remarkable?" reproached the king. "You don't understand. Steel is now the most valuable metal in the kingdom. I tremble lest something might sometime happen to Jimmy."

"Please, how does he shave?" pleaded Toopy, whose patience was well-nigh exhausted.

"That part of it was simple enough, when he once

had a knife which would cut a hair," replied the king. "He merely boiled one of the roots which we rub on our hands when we wash, and rubbed the suds well on his face, to soften the hair, and sliced it off. I presume one gets used to it. He says that he will get a better edge on the next knife, and make me what he calls a safety-razor."

"I hope you are not thinking of shaving," instantly objected Bezzanna.

"I don't know," mused the king. "There seems something so clean about it."

"If you do I'll never kiss you again," declared Bezzanna. "Do you want to look like a boy?"

"You don't approve of it, then?" guessed the king in surprise. "Why I thought you liked Jimmy's beardless face."

"I like a man to look like a man," she stonily maintained.

"Don't you get the bug that friend Jimmy isn't all man!" promptly defended Tedoyah. "He's some Jimmy, if you'll leave it to me!"

"Can no one talk of anything but Jimmy?" demanded Bezzanna. "I hear nothing else but Jimmy, Jimmy, Jimmy, from morning till night! By the way, brother, how—how do they look?"

The king looked at her puzzled for a moment, and then he laughed.

"You mean his trousers?"

"Pants," corrected Teddy.

"No, he assures me that trousers is the correct indoor word," insisted the king.

Bezzanna waited for him to say more. Toopy also waited, and glanced at her friend. The princess was starting to walk away, with much dignity.

"How do they look?" asked Toopy.

The king checked a chuckle.

"He is coming down as soon as he washes his face, and you may judge for yourselves."

The door opened and Jimmy Smith came among them, a fine-featured gentleman—except for the recent scars which were now four—erect and clear-eyed and ruddy-faced, and clad in the cap and tunic of a fastidious Isolian to well below the waist; but from there down fastidiousness ceased.

The girls gave one awestricken glance, then giggled, then ran, and, long after the flash of brown and the flash of red had disappeared amid the shrubbery, they could be heard shrieking!

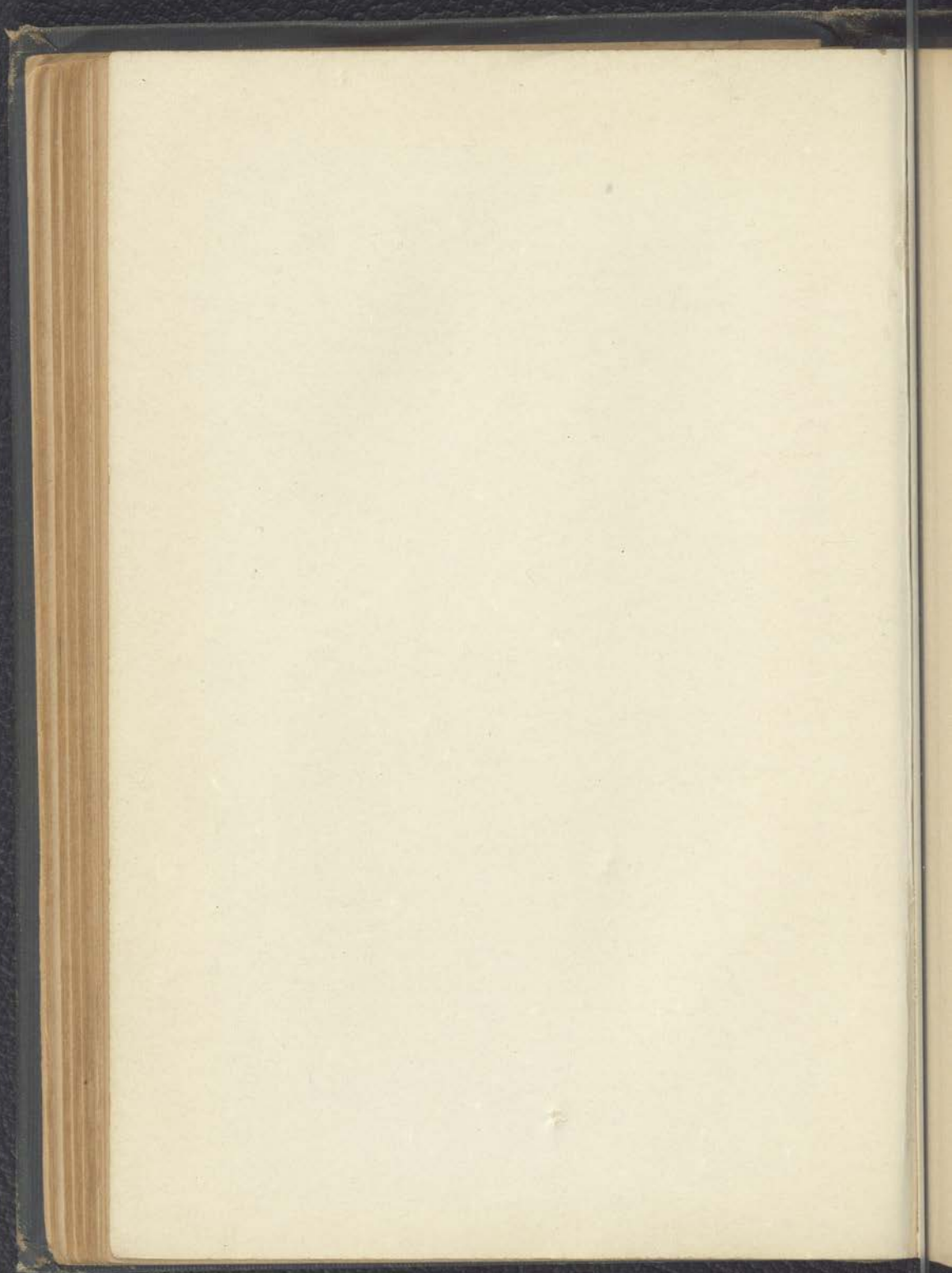
Jimmy looked down at his own sartorial creation with extreme disfavor.

"I know they're rotten," he disconsolately observed. "They're as bad as if they had been made by an exclusive London tailor; but I never had a hope that they would create this much sensation."

"They're not as cute as I expected them to be,"



"I know they're rotten."



criticized Teddy with much interest. "Ought they to bulge in front that way?"

"It isn't exactly Fifth Avenue," admitted Jimmy ruefully. "I carved them out by guesswork, and sewed them up by instinct, and they turned out with the going part where the coming part ought to be. Do they look better when I walk backward?" and he tried it.

"They look worse when you move in any direction," decided the king.

"Just the same, I'm going to stick with them," announced Jimmy firmly. "They at least keep me from feeling like a pair of five-cent-counter corkscrews."

"They have one thing in their favor," admitted the king judiciously, having in mind his duties as a host; "they can be put on or removed much more quickly than our garments."

"They are the crowning invention of civilization," stoutly maintained Jimmy. "Let's get busy, boys. You promised to show me the workshop, and then to take me out for a squint at your natural resources. Do you know that, before we start manufacturing, or even organizing companies, I may have to invent a currency system for you? I haven't seen any money since I'm here, nor heard anybody talk about it, and I'm lonesome."

"I had intended to speak about that," hesitated the king with a worried air, as they walked back toward the stables. "Of course we have a medium of exchange, as you called it the other night, but I have almost none of it, and I do not see how I can invest in all the business enterprises you have suggested."

"Invest!" exclaimed Jimmy, both shocked and pained. "Why, how did you get the idea that you and I were to invest anything? That isn't the American way. We're the promoters, and it's a promoter's business to get other people to put up all the money in exchange for forty-nine per cent. of the stock. The promoter's share is fifty-one per cent. of the profits, most of the credit, and all the fun."

"Is that quite fair to the investor?" wondered the king.

"Certainly," Jimmy promptly assured him. "The investor isn't entitled to more, for he only furnishes the money."

"I think I get you," replied the king slowly. "A man who only has money is not held in very high esteem in America."

"Well, pro rata," amended Jimmy cautiously. "The real principle is that, if a man is entitled to more, in America, he gets it; and if he doesn't get it he isn't entitled to it."

They paused before the door of a long, one-story, stone building with frequent wide windows, but the king was too deeply interested in this startlingly new code of ethics to go in for a moment.

"Isn't there danger of selfishness behind that system?" he objected.

"The same that there is in a foot race," explained Jimmy earnestly. "Somebody's bound to get left. That's the blessing of every competitive system. If you don't keep on running you might as well not start."

The king looked at him in smiling speculation as he threw open the door.

"If Americans are all like you it can't be such an entirely selfish nation," he decided at last cordially.

"I'm only a moderate specimen," loyally affirmed Jimmy. "I wouldn't, for a glimpse of Broadway—and that's being extravagant if you only knew it—have you collect the idea that Americans are a race of sordid dollar chasers. I let them make me believe that when I was a kid, but when I got abroad and saw the things that men would do for a lira or a franc or a shilling, I was tickled stiff to come home where the price was at least a dollar. Dollar chasers? Why, there's no land in the world where they care so little for money, and have so many principles and ideals they won't sell, as in the good old U. S. A.!"

"You seem to think America's some country," laughed the king.

"I'm so strong for it I'm a voluntary nuisance!" emphatically declared Jimmy.

"Strong?" puzzled the king. "That means muscular, doesn't it?"

"That's it exactly," corrected Jimmy earnestly; "muscular. This looks like a handy shack," and he stepped inside the big dark building. "Throw open a window or so, Teddy, and let's pick out a place for the main shafting."

When the flood of light came in, he looked around him with joy.

"This was formerly King Xantobah's main stable," said the king. "He kept the hundred best donkeys in Isola here."

"We'll make it the nursery for a hundred infant industries," promised Jimmy, inspecting with approval the well-packed earthen floor, the heavy stone walls, the numerous windows and the solid rafters.

"Well, look who's here!" exclaimed Tedoyah at the end window.

Up the beautiful winding road from the valley to the park there came, with a jangle of bells, a glittering procession that made the rest of the world seem drab. Ahead, on a tall donkey with golden tassels on its ears, rode a man in a scarlet cloak with a golden helmet, from which flaunted a brilliant

bunch of pheasants' tails, and in each hand he carried, its lower end resting upon his stirrup, a long spear, to the point of which was attached an orange banner embellished with a goat. Behind this human flame came six smaller men on smaller donkeys, but all black-bearded, all scarlet-coated, carrying smaller spears and smaller banners, and flaunting a single pheasant's tail. Following these came eight donkeys caparisoned in scarlet, and drawing a coach of scarlet and gold, embellished with silver goats' heads. On the driver's seat were a gorgeously liveried coachman and footman, and on the scarlet cushions, in stiff state, sat a black-bearded man, attired in modest gold-filigreed gray, with ruffles of soft white lace at his neck and wrists. In the rear of this carriage were four outriders still in the scarlet, but without spears.

"Why didn't you tell me there was a circus in town?" demanded Jimmy; "or is it a street show, or maybe a lodge parade?"

No one answered him.

"Against my express wishes," observed the king to Teddy, in Isolian, as both the brothers stood together at the window, Teddy, with his hand on the king's shoulder, looking with much concern on the gaudy procession which swept nimbly into the park and up the main driveway to the palace.

"It's bully, though," admired Teddy warmly.

"It is a defiance," corrected the king in Isolian. "Do you realize," and he turned to Teddy with a frown, "that this flaunting display has come by the main road, through the city and the chief villages, across the entire width of Isola; and that these trappings and that coach will be recognized as those of the deposed Xantobah? Do you realize that this passage has stirred up restless speculation throughout the kingdom? Do you realize that it was a daring and an insolent thing to use that goat on those banners?"

"He's of the royal family," argued Tedoyah, also relapsing into Isolian; "and the goat is not prancing."

"No," admitted the king; "but look! It is of a new design. Its forefeet are just rising from the ground."

Teddy gazed blankly out of the window for a moment, then he flushed with anger and started for the door.

"Where are you going?" demanded the king.

"To tear those banners down!"

"Not yet," and the king, smiling affectionately at his brother, restrained him with a firm grasp.

The Princess Bezzanna, looking more charming in her straight and slender symphony of brown and yellow and scarlet than he had ever seen her, Jimmy thought, came out upon the terrace just as the gay

cavalcade drew up at the steps, and clapped her pretty hands in delight. The man in the gray and the gold and the frills of white lace sprang out of the coach, and, bearing in his hands a brilliant nosegay, bowed, with the grace of a dancing-master, before the princess, and held up his gift for acceptance.

She took it with equal grace, and then burst into merry laughter. The gallant arose and offered his arm. She rested her hand in it, and looking up into his face and chatting gaily, walked into the palace.

Jimmy Smith, viewing that pretty tableau, was aware of an uncomfortable tightening under his ribs, and unconsciously he looked down in dismay at his amateur trousers. He was suddenly aware of the fact that he wanted this girl himself; wanted her hard, wanted her fiercely, wanted her more than he had ever wanted anything in his life, or had ever expected to, and he realized, moreover, that, in this affair of the nobility, he had not the chance of a yellow rabbit in a dog pound.

"And, by jinks, it's Prince Onion!" he ejaculated to himself, and his brow took on as worried an expression as those of the king and Tedoyah.

CHAPTER VII

PRINCE ONALYON POINTS OUT A SENSIBLE COURSE TO BEZZANNA

"I 'VE come to take you home with me," announced Onalyon cheerily, as the princess led him into the red reception-room dating from Xantobah, where ferns, cunningly wrought in green metal, formed frieze and dado and panels, and supported every candle bracket, and embellished, in greater or lesser degree, every essential article of use or adornment.

"Is that the reason for all the red?" she laughed, sitting opposite to him and clasping her hands adorably about her knee.

"That's one of the reasons, and the greatest one," he assured her. "The other one is that I have determined to restore some of the gaiety which once made life worth living in Isola."

"That's glorious news," she told him, sincerely delighted. "Life has been so dull as to be almost unbearable of late, and in the last two or three days I have been nearly mad for something to interest

me." It had been two days since she had presented Jimmy Smith with his pale blue trunks.

"You have an interesting guest," he suggested, awaiting her reply with well-concealed anxiety.

"He is a very valuable addition to Isola, I believe," she answered with a coldness that was most reassuring to the prince. "He and my brother expect to be absorbed so in business affairs that the rest of us are scarcely likely to see them for weeks to come."

"That in itself is interesting," admitted Onalyon with a smile. "Do you know what sort of business they have on hand?"

"Nearly everything, I think," she laughed. "They expect to use half the men in Isola in manufacturing glass, and steel, and soap, and sewing-machines, and telephones, and electricity, and, oh, everything!"

"Those are all American words," puzzled the prince.

"You bet they are," she told him in admiring American, whereupon she immediately apologized. "I am compelled to use American names for these things," she explained, "because we have no words in Isolian which would tell you what they are. They are all very wonderful, and my brother says that their introduction will bring such activity and luxury and prosperity to Isola as it has never known. Jimmy is a marvelous man!"

The prince did not like the manner in which her eyes sparkled when she said this.

"You seem to admire him tremendously," he jealously charged.

She had it on the tip of her tongue to suggest rather bitterly the difference between a man's attainments and his personality, for she had by no means forgiven Jimmy's rude failure to wear the pale blue, national costume, adorned with ribbons and embroidered with butterflies; nor his shutting himself up for two days; nor his making and wearing crude clothing of his own manufacture; nor, last and worst of all, his absurd appearance when he had it on. She reflected, however, that, while she thought these things, she did not care to say them to the prince, nor, in fact, to any enemy or friend of Jimmy's; moreover, there was no need to put the prince too much in conceit with himself.

"No one can help admiring Jimmy," she primly observed.

"I quite agree with you," lied the prince feebly, and hastened to change the uncomfortable subject. "I must look into these strange articles he is going to manufacture. Nothing would please me better than to have him bring activity and prosperity to Isola. It fits in exactly with my own plans. While the older and more sedate men are engaged in commercial enterprise, it should be the duty of the

younger set to make their endeavors worth while, by restoring social life and activity."

"I'm for that!" impulsively announced Bezzanna, and then, remembering, translated the remark. "It sounds good to sister Betsy Ann."

The prince frowned at the foreign phrase, but thought best to ignore it.

"I'm glad you approve of it," he returned. "In the three weeks since I went home, I have been preparing to start the social revival, and to-morrow night will be the beginning. Every person in Isola who is entitled to attend such a function will be at the opening ball, which will start a two weeks' session of gaieties at my palace, and, following that, Birrquay will have the pleasure of entertaining."

"Why are we the last to hear about it?" she demanded, offended at the seeming slight.

"Because it was a surprise for you," glowed the prince, drawing closer. "You are the only motive I have, Bezzanna."

She paled a trifle, with the frightened uneasiness brought by her intuitive knowledge of what more he was about to say.

"I want to marry you. You have been told, since you were a child, of the political need of this marriage, until you are offended with the bare mention of it; and you are not to be blamed, for that is putting marriage on as sordid a basis as in one of our

mountain mining villages. We, both you and I, know that there has been grave danger for two hundred years, that your family and mine, of equal royal descent, might engage in a war for the throne, which, if it were waged fiercely enough, might well-nigh sweep Isola out of existence; and we are both willing to admit, I believe, that our marriage would be the most commendable, the most wise, the most humane, and the most sensible thing which could occur."

"I realize that," she admitted, with a readiness and frankness which both surprised and pleased him.

"We are fortunate even to have such an opportunity," the prince went on, greatly encouraged. "Frankly, your brother's failure, through the death of the queen, to present heirs to Isola, has simplified the situation very much, since heirs for him would have meant war."

"The descendants of Xantobah have been threatening war for a hundred years," she coolly reminded him.

"Those threats are to cease in my generation," the prince replied with so little bombast that she viewed him with renewed interest. Perhaps he really meant it. "We do not need to discuss war, however. You are the next successor to your brother, and our marriage will place the line of Xantobah again on

the throne, without bloodshed. You see that clearly, don't you?"

"Quite," she dryly acknowledged.

"Thank you," he gratefully returned. "Let us now set political considerations entirely aside, Bezzanna. I come to you to-day, not as a politician, but as a lover. The death of Aleesa and the king's refusal to take another wife have made the palace dull, and so have deadened the kingdom. He himself regrets this, and we can help him by infusing life and energy here. You know that your brother does not object to balls, and parties, and gaiety."

"Of course not," agreed Bezzanna almost indignantly.

"And you like them," eagerly supplemented the prince. "That is why I have rejuvenated my palace from foundation to roof. I've brought out the sumptuous old trappings and liveries which were the personal property of my ancestor Xantobah. That is why I have prepared to entertain the nobles, with you and your brothers as our chief guests, on a scale of magnificence—I am not immodest to say it because it is so painfully true—unknown in Isola since many generations. That is why I coaxed your Aunt Gee-gee to visit us when I went over to my home on the south mountain three weeks ago. That is why everything, Bezzanna!" He took her warm hand. His own was hot and dry, and his dark eyes

swept her with a sudden burning fury of desire. She shrank as she had always done, with an instinctive fear of some vague cruelty in him; and yet, something within him thrilled her, for the first time in their lives, and she was more afraid of him than ever. She could not understand him—nor herself. She did not know it, but in the last three weeks she had undergone a slight crystallization, and the time was hastening when she would be ripe for love; nor was it the prince who had wrought this great miracle!

“Bezzanna, I love you!” he went on. “Do you understand what that means? I love you so that my heart throbs when I look at you, or hear you, or think of you! I love you so that I never have a thought, by night or by day, which is not connected with you and your welfare; and I want to take you out of your uneventful life and give you the brightness which belongs to you. I want to surround you with life and light and color, with gaiety and laughter and happiness, all your days and mine! The start that I have made is but feeble to what I would do if you and I were to reign. Think of it, Bezzanna! We would fill this palace with servants and with guests, and with one gay gathering after another. We would make it a warm and bright and cheerful place, glowing with color and movement, instead of a succession of long dark corridors and

tenantless rooms, and every moment should be one that would be filled to overflowing with delight!"

"It's a glorious picture you paint," she admitted with a sigh and with heightened color, as her active imagination carried her through all the brilliant scenes which he had suggested.

"Glorious?" he questioned. "It is dull and gray, Bezzanna, compared with the glory of you! It is only an attempt of what feeble art I have to set suitably the gem which nature has made of you!" He drew still nearer, clasping again the hand which still burned from his touch. "No scene of color and of life and of light can compare with the glow of your cheeks and the charm of your smile and the brilliance of your eyes!"

He was so close now that he put his hand upon the back of her chair, and his eyes seemed burning into hers. She felt oppressed, and yet—

She trembled with the dawning of a fancied knowledge that he had some acute physical influence upon her. She could not know that, aside from the ardor of his wooing and the actual material warmth which she became aware was emanating from him, this stirring was within herself, and had come into existence only since she had known Jimmy Smith.

"You frighten me," she faltered, and withdrew her hands.

"I did not mean to," he humbly assured her, drawing back. He was trembling, and held command of his voice with an effort. "I love you, Bezanna! I can't seem to say that often enough, nor in striking enough ways to make you appreciate it. I do not wish to cause you any uneasiness, not even for a moment, but I want you!" His hands were half raised, as if, against his will and of their own great physical longing, they would clasp her in his arms, crush her to his breast, and hold and hold, and hold her there, despite her piteous struggles; but he forced them down. "Tell me," he halted; "tell me!" His tone was compelling and it impressed her. "Tell me that you love me!"

"I—I don't know," she hesitated. "You must let me alone, Onalyon! I want to think! No, don't talk to me any more just now."

He arose and went to the window, but he came back immediately.

"The king is coming!" he informed her, in a panic because he did not wish his agitation to be seen.

"Good!" she cried, with an abrupt transition into her usual self-possession which amazed him. She was amazed no less herself when she realized that the disquieting influence he had exerted upon her was so quickly gone.

"Jimmy and Tedoyah and myself are just start-

ing for a trip to the mines," said the king, "but I ran in to bid you a welcome. I trust that we shall find you here when we return?"

"Indeed, no," Bezzanna gaily assured him. "We are all going over to Onalyon's to a tremendous session of gaiety, which is to begin to-morrow night, and I am to start immediately in the magnificent scream which the prince brought over to carry me away."

"I'm glad to hear it," responded the king, smiling at the use of her American word. "I have regretted that we have not been having enough gaiety for you. I'll be over to-morrow night, with pleasure, Onalyon. I can not promise to be with you much during the following two or three weeks, but you shall be officially my host during the entire time. Of course, your invitation includes our guest?"

"I submit that to you," answered Onalyon diplomatically. "I hesitated to decide in the matter since I understand that there is no nobility whatever in America."

"I should like to hear Jimmy's answer to that," mused the king with a laugh. "However, since you leave that matter to me, I will take care of it. I scarcely need to remind you that if he can be the guest of the king, he can be the guest of any one in Isola. Have a good time, dear," he urged his sister, and, walking over, he took her very, very

tenderly in his arms and kissed her good-by. "Will you come out, Onalyon?"

"With pleasure," replied Onalyon wonderingly, and followed him on the terrace.

Outside, the king turned on him abruptly. He was taller than Onalyon, and, taking instinctive advantage of that fact, he came so close that he looked down into the eyes of the prince.

"I wish to thank you for the delicate compliment you have paid us," he observed, very quietly indeed. "Since you were to escort the Princess Bezzanna to your home, it was appropriate that you should carry banners so nearly approaching the insignia of the reigning family. If I were to criticize the graceful act at all, I would say that you were slightly in error in displaying them without the princess or myself or my brother actually in your coach, but I am sure that, having the matter once brought to your attention, you will be thoughtful enough to avoid that error in the future."

The prince tried hard not to blink as he comprehended the import of that masterfully clever speech; but he did not lose his head.

"I am glad that you are pleased," he replied, with every appearance of joy.

A neat little cart, with its queer solid wheels pierced by carved tracery, and drawn by two donkeys, came around one corner of the palace, and

around the other corner came Tedoyah and Jimmy Smith. The latter gentleman shook hands with the prince, and looked longingly toward the door of the palace.

"All right!" yelled Teddy imperatively, springing into the cart.

The king, head erect, shoulders squared, blazing eyes softened by the dawning of lines of humor at the corners, and curling brown beard stuck out at an angle of forty-five degrees, already had his hand on the seat-arm of the cart. Jimmy Smith, with another longing look at the palace, turned and strode down the path.

The Princess Bezzanna, hidden in the darkness just beyond the window in the red room, giggled right out! She could not help it. His trousers bagged so funny in front, and pulled so queerly behind, and were in such a general condition of warp and sag and twist and pucker that a stone goat would have laughed; but Jimmy Smith, driving away with the echo of that bell-like giggle in his ears, had a heart that was as heavy and dull as a cold apple dumpling!

CHAPTER VIII

JIMMY SMITH DISCOVERS WHY HE CAN NEVER LOVE THE PRINCESS BEZZANNA

"YOUR ancestors were good pickers when they selected Isola for a shipwreck port," complimented Jimmy Smith, as he surveyed the fruitful country that evening at sunset, from the mines at the far inland extremity.

"It is almost richer than we need," the king responded, glancing with affection over his splendid domain. "Even with our steadily growing population, not over a fifth of our fertile soil is under tillage; more would be waste."

"You don't have to eat everything you grow," Jimmy sagely informed him. "You have cotton and flax. We'll increase their production, and devote more grazing land to the cultivation of sheep for their wool."

The king looked grieved. He had deified Jimmy so much that he did not like to find him in error. It was rather presumptuous of him to gage the ratio of production to consumption by merely taking a bird's-eye view of the land.

"We have already a slight overproduction of fabric materials," he informed Jimmy, with the slightest perceptible trace of loftiness. After all, he knew the natural resources of his own kingdom better than this stranger, even if he was an American. He had to insist on it.

"I know; but I haven't handed you the fashions yet," Jimmy enlightened him. "A country which has a national costume is always poor. I notice that all your women, commoners and nobles, dress exactly alike. Those who work in the fields wear coarser and cheaper garments, so they will not tear or wear out so quickly, nor do they ornament them so much, but I can see that the style never changes. Why, Betsy Ann had on one of those pretty simple Grecian robes that she said was four years old, a delicate violet, embroidered, around the hem and the neck and sleeves and up the fold, with rosebuds, and she had the girl of anybody's dreams lashed to the mast and shrieking for help! Cross my heart, when I turned around and saw her in that fragrant spring-blossom make-up, I lost six heart-beats, and haven't caught up yet."

The king looked a trifle worried, but he thought best to ignore, for the time, the enthusiastic reference to Bezzanna's beauty, and Jimmy, being intuitive, realized that in his frankness he had been crude. Other people would have thought the same thing,

but would have talked about the weather; and that is diplomacy.

"The Princess Bezzanna," stiffly observed the king, who usually called her Betsy Ann to Jimmy, "is very careful of her dainty things, and has them for a long time."

"That's the trouble," protested Jimmy. "She was having a new robe just like that one, except for a difference in the embroidery. Don't you see the commercial strangulation in that? If the crown princess can wear a last year's frock, what do you expect the rest of the women to do, and how do you expect to stimulate the weaving industry?"

"I don't see why she shouldn't wear it," puzzled the king; "if it is pretty, and in good condition."

"Of course, there's no reason she shouldn't, when there's no difference between a new one and an old one. Why, great Scott, man, don't you see how badly you need a change of fashions four times a year? The fashions are the backbone of America's national prosperity. No nation is prosperous until the women are allowed to put into immediate circulation all the money the men can make. America is the richest country in the world because it is a voluntary slave to its wives and daughters. American women see to it that the money never stays in one place long enough to grow decrepit and useless. There is no curse to a nation like idle wealth.

Everybody in America is always on the edge of being broke, but they're going to have plenty more money to-morrow, and they know it; so who gives a hang for expenses, anyhow?"

"I don't quite get you," returned the king in some perplexity; "but I do gather that America must be very extravagant."

"America's extravagance is her most valuable possession," boasted Jimmy proudly. "She has made the rest of the world look like a piker hunting a five-cent share in a bet on a dollar book. A frugal nation hides every coin it gets, and, after a while, with all its money out of circulation, it has to be frugal."

"I tumble," acknowledged the king, his eyes brightening with an awakened perception. "As long as people keep trading their commodities rapidly with one another, they all enjoy more and are no worse off."

"You get that so quick that it's a cinch your ancestors were Americans," admired Jimmy. "Now, I'm a tailor, and you're a shoemaker, and Teddy is a cabinet-maker. You wear your clothes till they won't hold together, and Teddy wears his shoes till they drop off, and I sit on the same old chair till it breaks down under me. Then we all three stop looking at the pig hunting an acorn and get up reluctantly, because we've been inactive so long we're

lazy, and start to work. I make you a suit of clothes, and you make Teddy's family some shoes, and Teddy makes me a new chair, and we're richer than we were before, by the possession of things we enjoy; but we all go to sleep again, because nobody wants anything we have in exchange for anything we might want. All at once, King, you get an extravagant streak. Maybe you've seen a girl; but anyhow, you take a fool notion that you want two suits of clothes, and you want to trade me shoes for them. I'm stocked on shoes, but I tell you that if you trade shoes with Teddy for another chair for me, I'll make the clothes. In order to get Teddy to take more shoes, you have to show him something fancy, which is extravagance on his part, so we all get busy again. Then I get extravagant. My wife sees Teddy's wife's fancy shoes, and wants some like them. Then I make an extra fancy suit for Teddy, and the first thing you know, we're all at it, hammer and tongs, improving our product and rolling in luxury, which consists in having a lot of things that make you happy because you don't need them; and we're hunting for a market on the outside that will enable us to obtain more luxuries and widen our scope of enjoyment. We're extravagant, and alive, from head to foot, and happy, because we're keyed up to the top notch of appreciation."

"Fine business!" declared the king enthusiastically, then a shade of distress crossed his face; "but we're all working very hard," he objected.

"Now you're getting it," applauded Jimmy. "Work is the healthiest and most fascinating amusement in the world. America's greatest gift to civilization was the art of hustling. We hustle so hard that we jerk every red corpuscle in our veins through our systems at about the speed of wireless, and, as a result, we can run faster, jump farther, lift more, court a girl quicker, and stay young longer than any other people on earth, black, white, red or yellow. I guess I brag a lot, but an American just can't help it. He has so much to brag about, and, besides that, he's a good fellow, and generous, and he wants the rest of the world to enjoy what he does. The only way he can do that is to tell them about it."

"They should be grateful," acknowledged the king seriously. "I can not tell you how thankful I am that the gentleman whom we were fortunate enough to have saved from the reefs to be our guest is an American."

To give him just credit, Jimmy blushed, and he looked at the king hard for a minute.

"No, you're not stringing me," he decided. "I guess I deserve a kidding, but I've spent three years

in foreign lands, and every time anybody says America, I look around for a gate-post. I want to fly up there, and clap my wings and crow."

The king put his hand on Jimmy's shoulder in friendly fashion.

"I hope that we shall keep you hustling enough that you won't be homesick," he suggested.

"Don't!" begged Jimmy. "When you say homesick I have a pale green and yellow feeling under my jaws. Let's get down to business."

"All right," agreed the king, always eager for that topic. "I suppose we'll organize a fashions company immediately."

"Not on your life," said Jimmy. "I'll give Betsy Ann a little hint, and, if I know that girl as I think I do, the work's done. All she needs is a start, and if she doesn't have from six to twelve new outfits every spring, summer, fall and winter, so different that everything she ever wore before would be a disgrace to wear again, I miss my guess."

"But that would be a terrible waste," protested the king, unable so quickly to dissociate himself from the old ideas.

"You get it," responded Jimmy, much pleased. "Why, man, we can't get the women to wasting money soon enough to make a market for all our new products. We're going at it the right way, though, because we have a cracker-jack fashion

leader. A pretty girl like Betsy Ann, with a new set of fashions every ninety days, can make all the women in the kingdom think they could look as pretty as she does if they only had the same kind of clothes. What we want to do is to organize the weaving industries."

"I know; and grab off fifty-one per cent. of the stock," supplemented the king. "I don't understand quite what you mean by that, but I know it's the proper thing to do."

"Grabbing off fifty-one per cent. of the stock is the very foundation and backbone of American commerce," announced Jimmy with the positiveness of a schoolmaster. "That is what has made us great."

Teddy came back with a disappointed air from a yawning new opening in the base of the mountain.

"They've found a rich deposit of metal all right," he stated wearily; "but it's only gold."

"Rough lines," commented the king. "I had hoped that we would find iron."

"You have plenty of iron right over there, but you don't know how to extract it," remarked Jimmy. "You don't mean to say that gold is a nuisance in Isola, do you?"

"We have more of it than of anything else," complained the king. "It isn't hard enough, however, to be of much value except for ornaments. Do you know of any other use for it?"

"Not unless I could get it back home," replied Jimmy wistfully. "It's the exact color of the lights on Broadway, and why they are kept burning. I'm sorry if you have too much of it, however, and the only way I see for us to protect ourselves is for you and me to organize a gold-extracting company, drain every last ton out of these mountains, and file it away for future reference."

"All right, if you say that's the ticket," agreed the king. "We keep fifty-one per cent. of the stock, of course."

"Nothing like it," corrected Jimmy hastily. "We keep a hundred and one per cent. of it, and offer premiums for high speed. That gold's mighty dangerous until it's dug out and locked up some place where we can sit over it."

"I don't see why it's dangerous," objected the king.

"Just because somebody's going to drop in here to tinker his air-ship some day, and he'll go away and tell the news. If the rest of the world finds out you have gold, they'll get in here if they have to work through those mountains with toothpicks, or pull up your reefs by the roots. Then your pretty little kingdom of Isola will be gone, and all the civilized nations, with the exception of greedy and money-mad America, will go to war over Isola's tatters."

The king took some time for study over that prop-

osition, and, as the restless Teddy was chasing a scrawny little mountain-goat up among the rocks, Jimmy sat silently by the king and looked down over the valley of Isola, in the speculative mood of a general planning his campaign.

Isola was a beautiful little niche cut into the side of creation, and shut off from the rest of the world by an almost semicircular range of mountains, through which no man had, as yet, found a passage. It was about fifty miles long on the ocean front, but that side, too, was shut in by vertical cliffs except for a narrow concealed passage which led into a clear little bay. From the bay to the mines at the western extremity of Isola, a distance of about thirty-five miles, wound a river, fed by strong mountain springs, and navigable for barges for almost its entire length. At the confluence of the river with the bay was the principal town, of about five thousand inhabitants, and, dotted here and there, were small villages which were little more than farming centers. To the north, so high up on the mountain side that the top of its tower commanded a distant view of the ocean over the tops of the cliffs, stood the rambling, big, stone palace of the king. To the south, and at the other extremity of the main north and south highway, was the palace of Onalyon, the chief representative, in this age, of the long ago deposed half of the royal family.

Jimmy Smith, from his vantage-point on the slope of the western mountains, studied most carefully the geography of the new home to which he seemed bound for life. Here was to be his new battleground, and it looked to be full enough of opportunities to satisfy even a live American. He had come into Isola positively naked, but his only worry about making a new start in life was lest he might be tempted to be greedy. He felt that he ought to leave something for the Isolians, but it was going to be difficult. He would have to force it on them.

He totaled his materials, as far as he had been able to learn of them. There were metals in these mountains, mineral wealth in endless variety. There was lime, and coal, he had made sure, and he had no doubt that he would find already in crude use, or easily obtainable, all the commercial chemicals. In Jones' *Handbook of Modern Shop Practise*—seven hundred and sixty pages, bible paper, limp morocco—he looked beside him to make certain that the positive priceless volume was still there—was a chapter on tests for the purity of chemicals. He patted the book affectionately. It was all the library he needed, although he would have liked a copy of the constitution of the United States. He had a vague idea of inducing the king to give his people a parliament and a constitution, as other monarchies had done. It might amuse them and

awaken them to a sense of national responsibility, which was good for commerce. Naturally, if they were to have a constitution, there was only one model worth while, and he did his best to remember fragments of it.

It was a fair land, and full of glorious opportunity, and there was no use in his wasting his time, nor eating his heart out, with whining homesickness for that other fair land of opportunity—home!

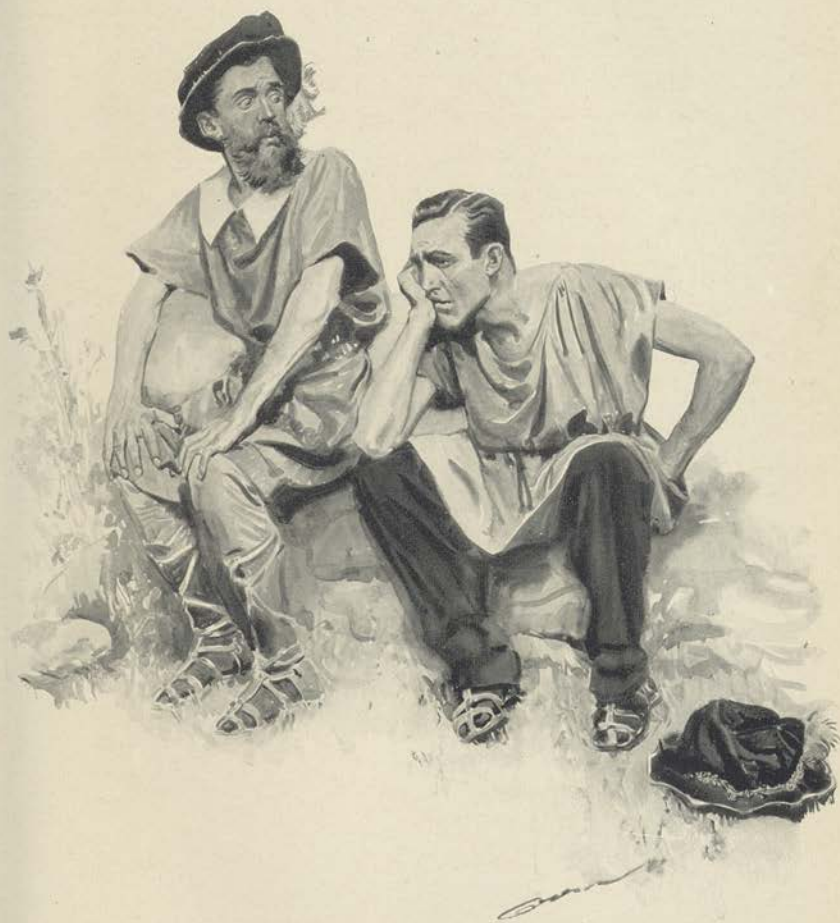
The only way for a man to escape homesickness in a strange land is to link himself to the country by a marriage with one of its daughters, and that method was not at all unattractive as he thought it over. He could make his choice of a wife, if the matter were left to him, without a minute's delay, and there flashed into his mind a rather uncomfortable picture of a slender, graceful, brown-haired and sparkling-eyed girl with pink cheeks, chatting gaily on the arm of a dolled-up, black-bearded prince in gray and gold, and with actual ruffles around his wrists and neck! If he couldn't outrush a man who would dress like that, he ought to be ashamed of himself. Why, put it as modestly as he might, Jimmy Smith was the smartest man in Isola, and was bound to be the richest, and after the most searching examination, he was bound to admit that he was a live member. He saw no reason why he should hang back, simply because he had no handle

to his name. He could outplay any prince in Isola at any game they'd let him sit in, and the best was none too good for him; except, possibly, in the case of the Princess Bezzanna, who was too good for anybody. Since she would probably have to marry, however, he felt he could pick her the best possible husband with his eyes shut.

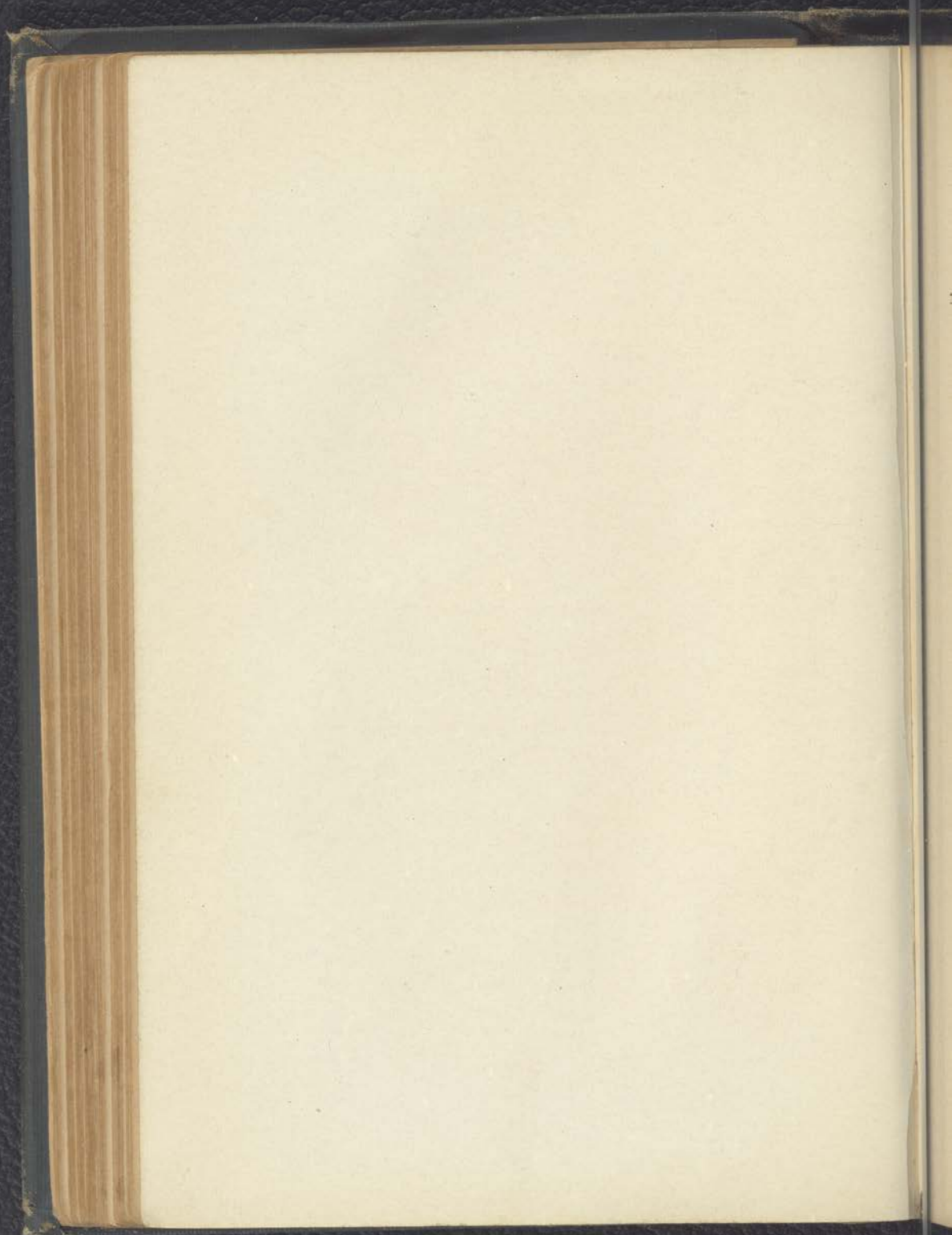
All at once he remembered that she had giggled at him, and suddenly he felt himself reduced to about the importance of a shriveled peanut. Who was he, anyhow, to dare aspire to a glorious creature like that? He had a long nose, and he was acutely conscious that his ears stuck out, that his hands were big and muscularly ugly and had hair on them. Was he to suppose that a girl who could pick and choose among all the marriageable men who had eyes, would fall madly in love with him because he knew how to make gunpowder, and could knock a baseball farther than any man on his prize factory team? He was a coarse, crude, ill-favored lump of humanity; and his pants didn't fit! He wanted to go home!

"What's on your mind, Old Sport?" asked the king cordially.

"I was just wondering about that tower over there," responded Jimmy, who realized, for the first time, that he had been looking steadily at it for the last half-hour without seeing it.



"What's on your mind, Old Sport?"



The king turned grave.

"That is the tomb of the Crown Princess Wahanita," he soberly replied. "It is also where she spent the last years of her life."

"Why, it looks more like a factory chimney than anything else," protested Jimmy. "There isn't a window in it."

"There is a small opening on the far side where one stone was left out. The opening was used for the purpose of passing food in to her, as long as she lived, and the commoner who had induced her to run away with him and marry him, and hide in a mountain cave, was permitted to hand her the food. When she died, a year or so later, Isola had no further use for him; but he didn't mind."

Jimmy shuddered. The evening seemed to have grown suddenly chill, and at that moment the red glow of the sunset on the eastern clouds faded out.

"I'll take it back," he said. "Your ancestors didn't come from America. Are there any other monuments like that in Isola?"

"No more have been necessary," the king significantly remarked. "The blood of the royal family has remained untainted through all the centuries since."

Jimmy Smith, feeling particularly ashy, immediately began the tedious and painful process of picking the Princess Bezzanna out of his heart, and

he had a sense of positiveness that when he was through there would be nothing left of that organ. He had previously believed that he loved her, but now he was so sure of it that he could have writhed in agony had he been alone. Every gentle touch of her; every glance of her eyes, roguish or friendly or vexed, or flashing with any one of the thousand fleeting whimsical thoughts of which she was capable; every murmur of the soft voice of her, and every movement of her supple and graceful figure came back to him with crushing force. He knew, now, in the awful thought that she was forbidden him forever, that, as he had never loved before so he could never love again, and that the beautiful image of the Princess Bezzanna would remain in his heart until he died. He made one more halting inquiry.

"I don't suppose that could ever happen again?" he suggested, as nonchalantly as possible.

"Scarcely," replied the king with a smile. "No crown princess would risk it, and no man who loved her would permit her to do so."

Jimmy gritted his teeth to suppress a groan.

"Betsy Ann!" he breathed, and it was a prayer and a vow.

CHAPTER IX

THE KING SELLS STOCK IN A MIRACLE

THE king, in solid black faintly edged with gold, raised his hand as a signal, and, from the balcony opposite the dais, there swelled a low enticing harmony. With punctilious gallantry, he led Prince Onalyon's mother upon the wide strip of tufted red carpet, which stretched from the dais to the great gold-traced doors beneath the musician's balcony, and paced with her through the first stately measure. Onalyon escorted Bezzanna and followed; then Tedoyah stepped down from the dais, and, with no hesitation whatever, selected the black-eyed little Toopy, in dainty yellow, who had just happened to be standing close by. The opening ball of Onalyon's magnificent two weeks' fete had been inaugurated, with the sanction and presence of the king himself.

The music swept into a livelier swing, after that first dignified ceremonial, and a hundred gaily be-decked couples, clad in all the soft-textured, lustrous colorings of field and forest and sky, of blossom and

bird and rainbow, hailed the long-awaited moment with a swelling murmur of delight, and whirled into the curving intricacies of the dance.

The king, taller than all his subjects, though not so tall by a good inch as the absent Jimmy Smith, made the round of the hall, and then, escorting Onalyon's stately mother to her seat on the dais, stood by, with an indulgent smile, watching the merry throng, as, in laughing pirouetting couples, they swung past him. His grave eyes softened as they rested upon his sister, in shimmering white, floating as airily as a thistle upon the proud arm of Onalyon.

"It's great sport, Thanks Old Scout!" she called to him, as she swept by, mischievously happy in the thought that no one but the king—and particularly not the prince—could understand her.

The king laughed and waved his hand at her, and then, reflecting that she was too young to understand the political menace to him in this apparently harmless fun, he made his pleasantly chatting way to the lounging-room, where already the older and more sedate nobles had begun to drift in, leaving the gaiety to the younger people, who had the greater appetite for it.

With a smiling demeanor, but a serious inner purpose, he remained in the lounging-room and about its entrances for nearly an hour, and found precisely

what he had expected to discover; that Onalyon's innovation had heightened his already dangerous popularity to an uncomfortable degree.

He smiled quizzically when he made sure of that, the little wrinkles of sly humor coming to his eyes, and then he set out in search of Onalyon. The music of a furiously rapid little dance had just ceased when he reentered the ballroom, and the loud shouts of approval, followed by the insistent clamor of two hundred eager voices, assured him, if he had needed reassurance, that this stroke of Onalyon's, made in direct defiance to his ten-year policy of retrenchment, was a highly successful one, from the view-point of the prince.

At the far end of the hall he caught the fluttering white of Bezzanna's robe linked with the sapphire blue of Onalyon's costume, and, hastily retreating through the corridor, lest he should be stopped at every step of his progress, he emerged upon the wide stone terrace, with its balustrade of ornately pierced marble, and walked rapidly to the corner. Fortunately the prince and Bezzanna had turned in his direction, and he met them just in the broad glow of light from one of the wide-open wooden windows of the great ballroom, Bezzanna leaning confidently on the arm of the prince, looking up at him and listening with a happy half smile upon her lips, and Onalyon bent earnestly toward her, talking

in a low intense tone. Time was when the king would have hailed this tableau with delight, but now it slightly oppressed him.

Bezzanna was the first to perceive the king, and she ran immediately forward to shake hands with him, in the hearty American style.

"Brother, it's the limit!" she advised him, with flushed cheeks, her melodious voice vibrating with happy excitement. "I didn't know there could be this much fun in the world."

"I'm glad that you are enjoying it," laughed the king. "Onalyon, I'll have to give you credit for giving Isola a thorough awakening, on the social side, at least."

"I am delighted that you approve of it," returned Onalyon, highly gratified, and a little surprised, as well. "I am confident that it will result, also, in a commercial awakening."

"I agree with you," returned the king pleasantly, and, taking the arm of Bezzanna, he led them across to the balustrade. "My only fear is that you might bankrupt the nobles before you enrich the commoners."

"I'll admit that there is some danger of that," smiled the prince, following the example of Bezzanna, and sitting beside her on the balustrade. "I am willing, however, to sacrifice myself for the cause."

"No sacrifice will be necessary," said the king, who knew pretty thoroughly the resources of Onal-yon, and just about how long he could stand the drain. "Since you introduce the subject of a commercial awakening, I feel perfectly free to advise you not to drain your resources by paying out any of your certificates immediately; for in a few days, ten at the most, you will have five times as much currency as you now have. Everybody in Isola will have."

The prince, prepared as he was for most emergencies, was swept off his feet by this statement.

"Why, that's impossible!" he protested.

"Not at all," returned the king calmly. "As soon as the new ones can be prepared, I intend to call in all the old certificates and issue five, of equal value, for every one now held in Isola."

"Why, it's impossible," repeated the prince, still bewildered. "Every certificate in existence calls for one measure of wheat, now held in the public granaries against a possible famine."

"Exactly," agreed the king. "I suppose you, as keeper of the public granaries, know that we have not enough grain to redeem all the wheat certificates now in circulation. Some of it has leaked away, in loading and unloading, transference and retransference; for the old wheat is exchanged for new, under compulsion, at every harvest time. More-

over, a large quantity of it has been destroyed because of mold and insects and other impairing influences."

"That is a bad condition of affairs," declared the prince, rising and standing before the king, who had now seated himself. "I have long contended that it should be remedied, by levying an assessment upon the forthcoming crops until the deficiency is made up."

"It won't be necessary," smiled the king. "We already have enough wheat in storage to withstand a three-year famine, and I would have stopped the further accumulation last year if it had not been that our people look forward to the annual increase in our national currency."

"That currency is backed by something, however," protested the prince; "even if it is depreciated by the loss of a few bushels of wheat. If I understand you, though, you propose to issue five one-measure certificates for every one-measure certificate now in existence, which would mean that our currency would call for five times as much grain as we now have. It is absurd!"

"That's what I thought," acknowledged the king; "but I see it in a different light now, and you will, too."

"I knew it was one of Jimmy's astonishing

ideas!" exclaimed Bezzanna with gleeful approbation, and then she suddenly remembered that she was angry with Jimmy Smith. "It sounds crazy enough," she supplemented, and the prince gave her a pleasant smile for that remark.

"It does sound crazy," admitted the king with a musing smile. "My friend, Jimmy, has a way of putting it which I believe I understand. He says that if we were to consider that as an inflated currency, he would fight it tooth and toe nail; for that is dangerous and the United States of America never does it; but that, since we are to consider it as a bonded indebtedness, he is for it so strong that he has convulsions."

The princess clapped her hands.

"That sounds like the good old days!" she cried. "When everything was silly," she added, remembering with difficulty that she was still angry with Jimmy.

"What is a bonded indebtedness?" inquired the prince.

"The way it has been explained to me," replied the king carefully, "the right kind of a bonded indebtedness is, really, a promise to pay, backed by somebody who is bound to be able to pay it. America has a heavy bonded indebtedness. That is why it is the greatest nation in the world."

"Though there are a lot of other reasons," interrupted Bezzanna, keenly interested and as serious about it as her brother.

"In this case," went on the king, "we consider these new certificates as the government's promise to pay one or ten or a hundred measures of wheat, on demand, with the full belief that the demand will not arise before the wheat is accumulated, or before the government has had time to retire the certificates with the proceeds of taxation on our new manufactures."

The prince was as bewildered by all this as if the king had recited him a chapter of the Koran in the original language of the prophet; which is the end and aim of every wise currency expert.

"But why are you doing all this?" he asked, with his brain in a whirl.

"Because we need the money," stated the king calmly. "We need it to finance our amazing new manufacturing projects. I have a subscription list in my pocket, which I shall presently invite you to sign; payment to be made in the new currency, capitalization one hundred thousand measures, forty-nine thousand to be offered for subscription, and the remainder to be held in escrow for the benefit of the promoters until the entire capitalization has reached par value."

He rattled off the translation of these unfamiliar terms so fluently that Bezzanna felt a sudden keen pang of jealousy. It had just occurred to her that the king was having a tremendous advantage of her in his American lessons.

"What is it?" asked the prince feebly.

"Matches," announced the king, with the absolute calmness of certain triumph. "Let me show you." He produced from his pocket a short section of hollow cane, closed at each end with a wooden plug, and from it shook into his hand a number of splinters tipped with yellow. "This is a match," he explained. "My friend, Jimmy, made these at the mines last night. He was hunting the right materials and preparing the mixture until nearly daylight. It caught fire and destroyed all his work several times, and once it singed off a little of his hair, which was why he would not come to the ball to-night. This little article is made of sulphur, combined with certain other ingredients which are the secret of the manufacturing department of the Isola Match Company. Here is how it works," and, selecting one of the splinters, he drew its head along the under side of the coping of the balustrade and held it up for the marvel of his auditors.

Where the yellow tip had been, flickered now a faint, almost invisible blue flame, which, gathering

intensity as it gathered heat, and changing color as it caught the wood, blended gradually into a bright yellow fire.

"I knew it!" cried the princess. "I told you it could be done! Didn't I say that somebody ought to invent a fire that could be carried around in your pocket, not burning all the time, you know, but just when you wanted it to? And Jimmy has done it! I could hug Jimmy for that! Let me start one!"

The king, delighted with the success of his miracle, handed a match to Bezzanna and one to the prince, and carefully instructed them in the use of the magical pocket fire. With awed countenances, they lighted them, and held them out at arm's length, and breathlessly watched them until they had burned down to their very finger nails.

"It is wonderful!" admitted the prince, completely humiliated and rendered docile. "Why, you can carry a few of these around in your pocket and start a fire any place, anywhere you like."

"They will become a household necessity," the king informed him. "No family will be without them. They will cost, at the present time, about one-fiftieth of a measure to manufacture a box of twenty-five, and, while the novelty lasts, they will be sold at one-fourth of a measure per box. Do you imagine that it would pay you to invest in the stock of this enterprise?"

"May I?" asked the prince eagerly. "What is stock?"

The king explained that to him very slowly and very carefully, pausing, now and then, to remember the exact words of his friend Jimmy, also calling attention to the amount of stock to be offered for public subscription.

"I will take the entire forty-nine thousand measures' worth," decided the prince without an instant's hesitation.

"Indeed you will not," declared the king. "I am talking to you first because I want your name at the head of this list, on account of your influential position in the community, but I can only let you have five thousand. I have with me, however, subscription lists for several of our other enterprises: The Park Soap Factory, The West Mountain Steel Works, The Smith and Scout Sewing-Machine Company, The Inter-Village Electric Transportation Company, The Hello Telephone System, The Advanced Planter and Harvester Concern, *The Daily Isolian*, and The Whirlwind Glass Monopoly."

"I only want stock in the matches," protested the prince, out of the depths of his bewilderment.

"You merely put down your name in the other companies," the king assured him. "You don't put up the money until you have seen a sample and are satisfied. Here are the lists," and with consummate

adroitness he lighted another match to select the proper parchment from the others.

"Let us go in by the back way to my library," invited the prince, his eyes fixed in fascination on that miraculous flame, and his brain filled with speculation on the number of uses to which this epoch-making device might be put.

A black-eyed little girl, in dainty yellow, came hurriedly by, so lonesome that she did not see the three people in the broad light. A long-legged boy, in green, came striding around the corner, looking anxiously for some one in particular. He met the little girl in yellow so suddenly that he had no time to think what he was doing, and kissed her!

"Ooooh!" cried Toopy, properly shocked. "Why did you do that?"

"I didn't know, myself," explained Tedoyah; "but now that I take a good look at you, I know, and I'm going to do it again!"

"You bad boy!" she exclaimed, and started to run, but suddenly she stopped. "What are they doing over there?" she demanded. "Oh, I wonder if they saw you!"

"No," he replied, not caring very much whether they had or not.

"But what are they doing?" she persisted, as the king and the prince and Bezzanna turned toward them.

"Oh, they're only striking a match. Come on, let's go around this way," and he drew her toward the darker path, back to the ballroom.

"You have to behave yourself, then," she naively warned him, but she went along.

"You see," explained the king, himself wondering at the enthusiastic Tedoyah's sudden and inexplicable lack of interest, "it will not be very long until everybody in Isola will be so used to matches, and consider them so much a daily necessity that they will pay no attention to the novelty of pocket fire. Teddy never saw one before daybreak this morning, and he has already lost his awe for them."

The eyes of the Princess Bezzanna snapped, but she said nothing.

The prince led the king into his quiet little library, where, surrounded by the immense collection of over a hundred well-thumbed parchment manuscripts, with the assistance of Bezzanna he clubbed the prince away from the forty-nine per cent. of match company stock, and secured his signature at the head of each of his subscription lists. Then, with the influence and support of the prince, and all Onalyon's newly-found popularity and prestige appropriated to his own clever use, he went into the lounging-room and explained the new currency system, and struck matches for the nobles; and when he rode away, with Tedoyah at his side, in hot

haste for a night trip to Jimmy's workshop at the palace, and with the Isolian substitute for the *Home, Sweet Home* waltz ringing in his ears, he had all his subscription lists filled, and the overflow on blank parchments, for Jimmy to adorn with the names of suitable new companies.

The nobles were not quite sure what they had signed, but the king had left them each two sulphur matches to play with in the dark; and that was enough!

CHAPTER X

JIMMY COMPLETELY FORGETS THE PRINCESS

BEZZANNA

THREE days after the king's return from Onalyon's opening ball, he and Tedoyah, perspiring happily twelve to fourteen hours a day in Jimmy's workshop, were wearing overalls, and becoming used to the clean freedom of limb which they inspired. One of Jimmy's first acts had been to open a tailor shop in one of the many vacant rooms in the palace, collect therein the three best tunic makers in the kingdom, give them elaborate lectures and copious diagrams on the correct architecture of trousers and start them to work. They labored more or less nonchalantly until Jimmy hurt their pride, and then they turned in and worked so savagely that they made a daily improvement, which their energetic boss himself could scarcely comprehend.

"You said you thought your people were lazy," he told the king; "but all they needed was to be interested. A man's pride is his strongest and his

weakest point. You tell him that he's either the best in the world, or rotten, and in either case he'll work himself to a skeleton of his own shadow, to prove that he's better than you thought he was. The pride of doing things better has made America the greatest country in the world. Look at these boys here," and he pointed to the fifty-four men whom he already had at work. "They're so eager about results that a sunset looks ugly to them, because it means quitting-time. They're crazy to get things done, not because it's cut out for them to do, but for the mere pride of accomplishment."

"I think it's because you're such a hustler," laughed the king, jamming a block of wood in an impromptu vise, and beginning to chisel it according to the pattern set before him. "You're busier than all of us put together."

"I have to be," protested Jimmy, tearing a sheet of parchment drawings off his board, and examining a sample of paper pulp that the impatiently busy Teddy had just brought him. "Here I find a country without glass or steel, gunpowder, steam or electricity, politics, monopolies, lawyers, or poverty; and if I could invent a way to go without sleep I'd do it."

"I suppose we have to take a certain amount of the bad with the good," mused the king. "What is this block for?"

"A part in the printing-press," replied Jimmy, spreading down another sheet of parchment, and turning with cheerful readiness from a design for a steam-engine to an electric push-button pattern. "A printing-press, with the right to use it without restriction, is the healthiest boil you can put on the neck of politics, and we're going to have some politics, I bet you. Politics is the greatest practical joke we have in America. It keeps everybody amused and happy, and it's harmless. What was that you were telling me about the laziest man in your kingdom? Didn't you say he invented the rowlock?"

"Yes," laughed the king. "He expected everybody to pay him something for using his idea, and when they wouldn't, he refused to work any more. The neighbors have had to feed him ever since."

"I want that man," declared Jimmy, as he finished blocking out his drawing and grabbed for his hat. "Give me his address and I'll get him on my way back from the copper mine. I have to go over there and see how they're getting on with that wire-pulling machine. By the way, when I get back to-night we want to figure on the plans for a patent office. America wouldn't have been worth shucks to-day if she hadn't encouraged her inventors. And by the way again, King, you'd better hustle out this afternoon and collect something on those gaudy

subscription lists of yours. We're going to need money to pay the hands."

He took a foreman's survey of the shop before he walked briskly out of the door and jumped on Step-lively. Along both sides were ranged stout wooden benches, and underneath these were rows upon rows of bins, filled with every conceivable material in the kingdom, from potters' clay to gold nuggets, and from quicklime to iron filings. A foot-power turning lathe was already in active operation, and other machines were in course of construction.

He nodded in approval as he passed out of the door. There, cluttered close together, and already elbowing one another for more room, were a score of the best protected infant industries in the world!

In the town, after a twenty-mile gallop on Step-lively, he located the electric light plant, the First National Bank, and the telephone exchange; paid his visit of superintendence at the buildings that were being erected for the rolling-mills where the rails for his electric traction system were shortly to be manufactured, and hurried on to the copper mines, which were his especial pet just now. He felt that he simply could not exist without wires, nor could he rest until he had telephone communication between the palace workshop, the town, and the mines.

It had only been four days since he had first driven through these streets, and already he could see a marvelous acceleration in the movements of every human being. Perhaps the prince had done something to awaken them, but Jimmy had enough experience with human affairs to know that no social stirring up can equal the good, healthy blood surge of a commercial impulse; and he was giving Isola the most violent commercial impulse that had ever been known in the history of wealth!

Prince Onalyon might have some large plans in view, as he gathered from his talks with Teddy, but if Onion only gave him a little time, he'd have the kingdom so firmly clamped to himself and the king that it couldn't be loosened with a tank of nitroglycerin. He was not quite sure why he so particularly disliked the prince. Onalyon was an intelligent chap, a good fellow, nice-looking, and was, in all probabilities, to marry his friend Betsy Ann. He and the prince ought really to be on splendid terms. It was a highly suitable match, and he hoped she would be happy; and, all at once, he discovered that he had been thrashing his poor unoffensive donkey most unmercifully.

He apologized to Step-lively and threw away his whip, which he had only carried as a matter of form anyway; but the laceration was not gone from his heart, nor would his stubborn mind reconcile itself

to the task of letting him be happy over the marriage of Betsy Ann and the Onion.

There was no use in telling himself that he was going to stop loving her, because he could not. His will had nothing to do with it. He loved her, and that was all there was to it! He would love her as long as he lived, and he might as well let himself go ahead with it. The only way for him to stop loving her would be to lie down and die, and he was not quite ready for that. He had, first, to reconstruct Isola on the American plan, and make a real live country of it. As for the Princess Betsy Ann, he intended just to let himself keep on loving her. It was nobody's business!

Suddenly he came face to face with the tower of the Princess Wahanita, and he gritted his teeth savagely. Before he quit, he intended to have that tower down. For the present, however, it stood there and mocked at him, with its stony reminder of the only reason he could not doggedly aspire to marry the Princess Bezzanna, and it made him so blue that it was all he could do to keep from taking the cross-road to Onalyon's palace. If he hung around in the shelter of the shrubbery long enough he might get a glimpse of the princess, and be comforted, and grieve himself to death.

Ye Gods, how he wanted to see Betsy Ann!

His poor bewildered donkey stopped, in despair,

to let him decide what he intended to do. That aroused him to a grim and cheerless sense of humor, and he braced up, hurried on to the copper mine, found there the first hundred feet of passable wire, and was as happy in the possession of this homelike commodity as a man could possibly be; with a persistent toothache where his heart belonged.

He showed his pleased workmen how to draw a finer grade of wire; galloped over to the iron mines to see how the new ore crushers and smelters were coming on; dashed up into the pine forest where he had a gang of men cutting down telephone poles, instructed them how to make and set in four cross-trees on each pole, for it was no use putting up temporary telephone lines, promised them glass insulators two days later; hunted the man who had invented the oar-lock and sent him up to the factory to work himself to death; turned in at the gold mine to sit on a pile of nuggets and eat a bite of supper with the workmen; then, feeling the urgent need of more work, rode home in the dark, to inaugurate a patent office system, and devise some means to substitute the word dollar for measure of wheat on the new money.

"It's a better word, anyhow," he explained to the king. "It's handier, means more, and, after the people get acquainted with the word, they'll grow to love it. Everybody does."

"It might frighten them and make them distrust the value of the currency," sagely objected the king.

"Well, it might in the beginning," admitted Jimmy, "so I think we'll just engrave it small somewhere on the bills, and enlarge it with each issue. I know ninety millions of particular people who don't think money's good unless it has the word dollar on it some place. Moreover, that money's intensely valuable all over the world. Everybody bows to it."

"We'll have to have it," promptly agreed the king. "Did you see the soap?"

"Where?" asked Jimmy excitedly, and the king showed him a cake of it, made after the best formula in Jones' *Handbook*.

It was the twelfth experiment in three days, and at last it was right. It was almost pure white, molded into convenient size for the hand, delicately fragrant, and was properly stamped with the advertisement of the Park Soap Company.

Jimmy felt it, rubbed his fingers along it to get the oily texture, smelled it, and almost tasted it, he was so glad to see it.

"How does it lather?" he anxiously asked.

"Out of sight!" replied the king with earnest enthusiasm. "I left a cake on your wash-stand, but I guess you overlooked it. Come up and I'll show you."

He led the way to his own bath-room, with its clumsy arrangement for heating the tub with a wood fire, jerked off his tunic and rolled up his sleeves.

"Look at my hands," he directed as he turned the water into the basin. "They're so white they're effeminate; but I washed them eight times since dinner."

With unabated joy he plunged his hands into the water and began making a suds with the soap. Jimmy took it from him, and almost gurgled with happiness.

"This feels like home!" he declared with emotion. "I wouldn't believe it, until I had traveled, that America is the only nation which has learned the joy of acute personal cleanliness. Other people bathe, but they set dates for it. America uses more soap per capita than other nations use per family, including grandfather and the cousins. That's why we're great. Did you ever see a soap bubble?"

The king never had, and Jimmy pitied him so for having passed an unnatural childhood that he insisted on hunting up Teddy and some straws. They held a soap-bubble party in the big hall for nearly an hour, and the fun of it reminded them to start Jimmy's untouched cake, by a special messenger, to Betsy Ann that very night, so she could have it to wash her face with in the morning; also they sent complete instructions for the blowing of bub-

bles; large, small, double and bulk; and, as a last happy thought, the king included a blank subscription list for the capital stock of the Park Soap Company.

The rest of them wanted to retire, but as Jimmy was afraid he might not yet be fatigued enough to go to sleep, he produced the checker-board that he had made during his convalescence, and the overjoyed Teddy beat him, for the first time. Jimmy disliked to acknowledge it even to himself, but that defeat was a blow to his pride, especially since the king seemed to enjoy it so much. Well, he was preoccupied that night, but, after all, he was comparatively contented. If he could only keep himself so furiously busy as to shut out thought, and could fatigue himself so much that he would go right to sleep when he went to bed, without lying awake and thinking of the Princess Bezzanna, he could get along fairly well.

The next day, in pursuance of that idea, he moved the soap factory to a separate building, and drafted a set of corporation laws, and helped the king appoint a secretary of state, and had an hour's fitting in the tailor shop, and moved the gunpowder department to a safe place behind a hill, and gave some pointers to the expert manuscript writers, whom he was training into type engravers, and selected two baseball teams from among his workmen. He had

figured accurately, from the day of the shipwreck, that the next day would be Saturday, and he intended to give Isola a calendar, in place of its present clumsy moon to moon reckoning, and to declare a half-holiday, so he could start the shop baseball rivalry.

He kept up that sort of activity for ten solid days, and he fancied that he was putting the Princess Bezzanna far enough out of his mind to leave him at least a trace of peace, but on the morning of the eleventh day he deserted the telephone receiver coils, which he was feverishly winding in order to be able to connect them at once with the wires that were stretching over the valley, and brushed his hand across his eyes to drive away the vision of Betsy Ann.

It was not merely a mental image, but a physical one which seemed so persistently to stand before him wherever he turned. He could see her roguish eyes, and hear her soft bewitching voice, and feel the flare of her wind-blown hair upon his cheek. Confound it, he could do nothing while she was there, and there was only one way effectively to dispel that image.

"I say, King," he observed, slamming an unfinished coil in the box; "let's drop over to Onalyon's to-night, all lit up like a Christmas tree!"

CHAPTER XI

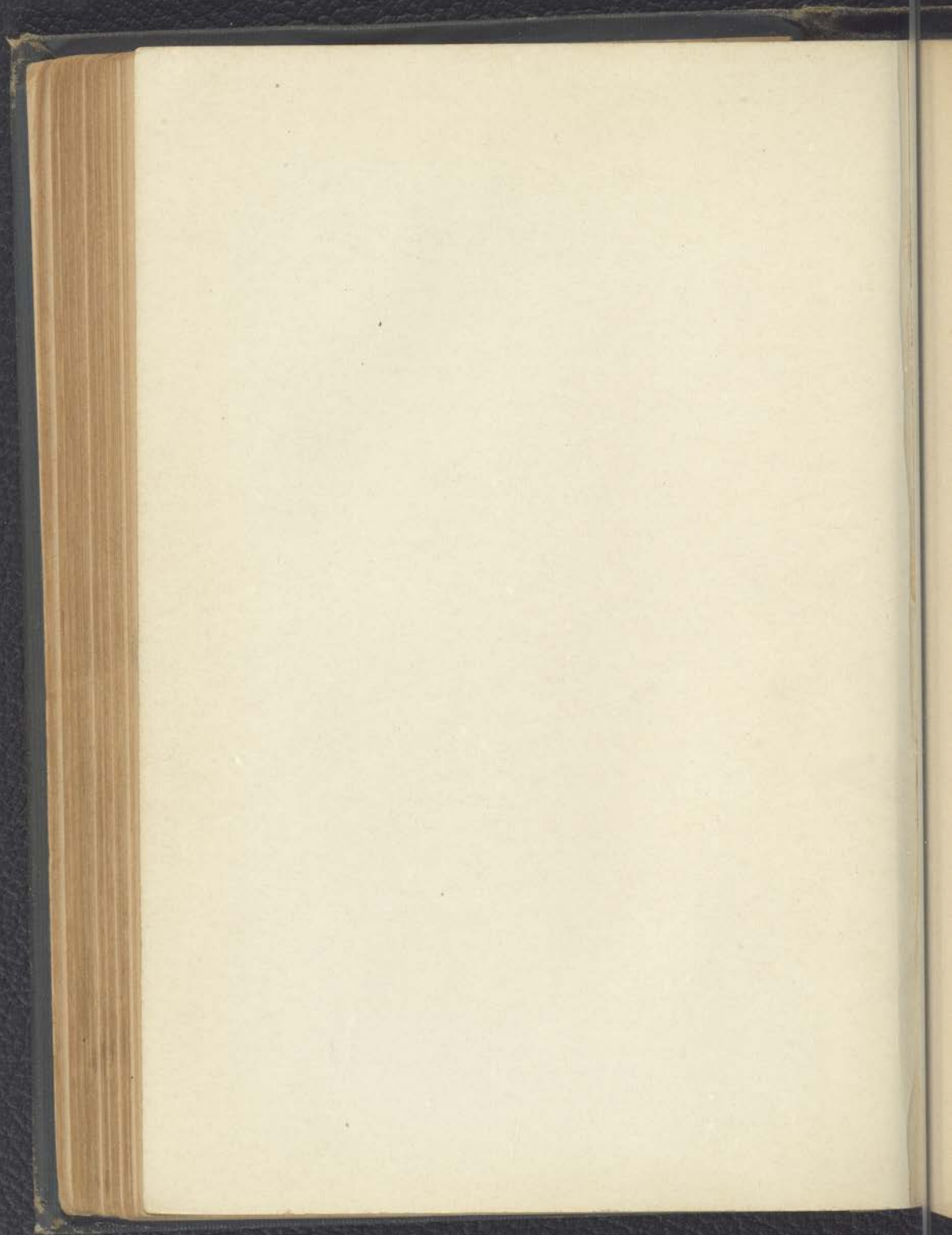
THE PRINCESS BEZZANNA DECIDES TO GO HOME

A HUGE soap bubble fell to the surface of the flat rock and rolled down the gentle incline, bumping and bouncing over the tiny obstacles with many yawings and flattenings of the fragile sphere, and hung poised for an instant on the very edge, gleaming with all the iridescent colors of the rainbow, before it plunged into the tree-tops below.

Breathless with interest, the two girls, in filmy gray touched with tender pink, had crept cautiously after it on their hands and knees, fearful lest their own gentle breath might destroy the fairy thing. When it dropped over the edge, two heads, one brown-haired and one black, peered out after it, watching it in round-eyed fascination as it floated serenely down between the tall pines, twirling and shifting with the quiet air currents, miraculously escaping a spiny tip here and a rough branch there, and finally disappearing in a patch of broad sunshine, one glistening drop falling swiftly to the



The two girls crept cautiously after it.



ground to mark the spot above which the bubble had burst.

"Duck, Toopy!" suddenly ordered the brown-haired one, and, crawling back hastily she lay face downward upon the big rock that overlooked Prince Onalyon's palace and park, and the only ascent to which was a rather perilous path of stones at the rear.

"Why?" demanded the black-haired one, lying flat, however, with prompt agility. The girls turned their rosy faces to each other and giggled.

"Onalyon and squeaky young Huppylac are down there looking for us."

In spite of her intense desire not to be seen, Toopy raised herself enough to peep down and see the two young men just ascending the glade toward the rock, and she dropped her head on her arms disconsolately.

"I don't want to be made love to," she complained.

"Neither do I," pouted Bezzanna. "I'm sick of it. We've had no other form of amusement for ten days. I want to go home."

"I want to go home," echoed Toopy, who invariably wanted to do anything Bezzanna did. "A grand party every night isn't half the fun I thought it would be. Everybody but the prince has tried to make love to me, and I've quarreled with every

one of them. I even quarreled with Teddy the night he came over to bring you that present from Jimmy."

"Quarreling is wicked," said Bezzanna sternly. "It never pays to get mad at a good friend. You always feel so mean afterward," and in handing this superior advice to Toopy she was flagellating her own conscience for her treatment of the helpless Jimmy.

"I know it!" wailed Toopy. "I don't care for the rest, I want them to be mad, but I do wish I could see Teddy."

"That's because he's the one who isn't here," sagely guessed Bezzanna.

"Is that the reason you're sorry you quarreled with Jimmy?" indignantly retorted Toopy.

"I didn't quarrel with him," as indignantly denied Bezzanna.

They were silent a while for they heard voices below the rock, and when the voices had retreated, Bezzanna, her gaze fixed mournfully on the fleecy clouds that hovered over the king's palace far to the north, observed longingly:

"I want to go home!"

"It seems years since we've been in this poky old place, with nothing but grand dinners, and music, and balls, and lawn parties, and games, and silly love-making—why, Teddy says I won't know the

place when I get home!" Thus complained Toopy.

"They're cheating me," said Bezzanna brokenly. "Jimmy sent me over that lovely present of a toothbrush and tooth-powder, to use in place of old hemp twists and charcoal, and he sent me that delicious vase of lilac toilet water. But think of it, Toopy, I wasn't there to see how they made them!"

Toopy, after a hasty reconnaissance to make sure that the coast was clear, supported her chin on her hands, and tapped her daintily shod toes alternately on the rock.

"They've been stringing shiny copper threads across the valley on queerly armed poles, for days now," she complained. "The men say it's for a telephone, a thing you can talk into and make Teddy or any one hear you, even if they are away up in the palace. I want to see a telephone."

"I'm going home," announced Bezzanna firmly, rising impulsively to her feet. "Golly Moses, my knees and elbows hurt!"

"What did you say?" puzzled Toopy. "Oh, I know; it's American. I'm going home, too."

"You quarreled with Teddy," severely reproved Bezzanna. "I'll bet that you abused him most shamefully."

"What difference does that make?" scorned Toopy. "He'll be so glad to see me he'll apologize for everything I said to him. Golly Moses!"

"Now what?" demanded Bezzanna, as Toopy sat suddenly down. "Did they see us?"

"Yes," pouted Toopy.

"Then we may just as well stand up," reasoned Bezzanna; "or, rather, we'll go and meet them. We're going home, anyhow," and gathering up their cups and their straws, and her own precious cake of soap in its golden box, Bezzanna entered airily on the descent of jagged and irregular steps, followed by the submissive Toopy.

"Here you are!" shouted Huppylac, meeting them at the turn behind the big boulder. "We're all going for a ride to Sky Lake before dinner."

"Sorry; but we can't," refused Bezzanna sweetly. "We have to see to our packing up. We're going home."

"Nonsense; this is to be the biggest night of all," objected Onalyon, looking scared, as he brushed past Huppylac to help Bezzanna, and the steps being particularly rough at that point and hard on dainty sandals, he picked that young lady up and carried her; whereupon Huppylac, though his bones creaked, attempted to follow suit; but Toopy, furious at the indignity, wriggled from his arms and sat flat down, and screamed. Huppylac, attempting to laugh as lightly as ever, stooped to pick her up as she was, and in the struggle that ensued both of them tumbled from the steps and rolled down the

hill. The prince set down his own burden and scrambled down the hill to render his assistance, if any should be needed, whereupon Bezzanna, who saw that they were not hurt, and who had treated this whole incident with the haughty iciness which refuses to lower its dignity by a struggle, walked around to the front of the boulder, with all the majesty of which her five-feet-four was capable, and then, being out of sight of the principals in the comedy, ran all the way to the palace, dashed into her rooms, clapped her hands for her maids, and began hauling finery out of the cabinets.

Suddenly needing the space on her table, she found there a small, flat, wooden box with a hinged lid. Opening it, she pulled out straw until she came to a very heavy slab of something, wrapped in a fine linen cloth, on which was marked, in silver paint, "From Jimmy."

She shrieked for joy when she slipped off this cover and found herself looking at the pink oval cheeks and the moistened brown eyes, and the waving brown hair of the beautiful Princess Bezzanna! She had never known that she was so really pretty as this charming, richly tinted face which she saw in the clear depths of the bevel-edged mirror, backed with red cloth, which the wonderful Jimmy had sent her!

Later on, Aunt Gee-gee, with a laughing face but

rather thoughtful eyes, found her there, with two maids, vigorously packing.

"What are you doing, child?" inquired her aunt, prepared for anything, for she had been with Bezzanna since the latter's childhood. "The prince is asking for you."

"I'm going home," explained Bezzanna promptly, placing her soap and her tooth-powder and her toilet water and her mirror in a separate place, to be packed particularly.

Aunt Gee-gee, whose name before Bezzanna had mutilated it, had been one of soft and gracious sound, sat down and thought the matter over carefully.

"Are you quite sure that you have a right to do so?" she inquired.

"Why not?" demanded Bezzanna, folding some daintily embroidered linen under-frocks herself, for fear the maids should not do it properly. "I am the Princess Bezzanna," and she laughed as she delivered that bit of quiet sarcasm; for in the big things of life she had no choice. In little things like this, however, she intended to have her way.

"It is for that very reason that I am afraid you must stay, without better authority than yours or mine to go. I have an idea that this grand fête of Prince Onalyon's has some political significance, and the fact that your brother has granted his permission

for you to be here at all, means that he would prefer you to be here."

The two maids were just going out for another packing case, and Bezzanna waited until they had closed the door after them; then she sat down in front of her aunt and clasped one knee in her interlocked fingers.

"I know all about the political significance of this party," she declared, to her aunt's gasping surprise. "Prince Onalyon wants to marry me, and, if he can't do that, he intends to be king, anyhow. If I were my brother I wouldn't come near the place, and I wouldn't let me stay here. I don't think he knows how the prince is talking to the rest of the nobles every day and getting them so friendly that they'll plug for him. I'm going home."

"Child, you must not," protested her aunt, thoroughly frightened. "You do not know what damage you might do by leaving without your brother's consent."

"I'm going home," insisted Bezzanna, but her voice faltered and suddenly she sank on the floor and buried her head in her aunt's lap. "I don't want to be a princess!" she wailed.

"I know," responded her aunt. "I am a princess, too, and I am still your Aunt Gee-gee, and unmarried."

Bezzanna slipped her arm around her Aunt Gee-

gee's waist, and drawing closer, snuggled her brown head upon the older woman's shoulder. She had heard before some hint of tragedy in her aunt's life, and she wished to show her sympathy, though she somehow felt that she should not ask questions.

That night Bezzanna put on her very prettiest robe, the one, by the way, which Jimmy had so much admired, and by the remarkable power of transition which she possessed, was the gayest, and apparently the happiest, to say nothing of being the prettiest girl at Onalyon's moonlight party.

Tall iron braziers filled with blazing pine knots dotted the broad lawn at the side of the palace, and, amidst their streaming yellow flare, the full moon shone down on a laughing concourse, deep in the fun of such hilarious lawn games as have insinuated themselves into the lives of every nation in the world. The orchestra, hidden among the trees, discoursed the gayest music to be drawn from their instruments, and, in rhythmic movement with the music, gay-colored robes fluttered across the grass, and brightly-clad gallants pursued their fleeting owners for the payment of a forfeit.

The merriment had attained its height, when suddenly, during a lull in the music, the shrieks of laughter died away, and Bezzanna, about to elude the halted grasp of Onalyon, turned to see the strangest costume that had ever been worn in

Isola. Descending from the terrace to the lawn, in the full flare of the braziers and the full glow of the moon, were three tall and splendidly-built gentlemen in solid black from head to foot, except for polished white cuffs and polished white collars, and soft white bow ties and polished white shirt-fronts, and snug white waistcoats. They wore splendidly fitting coats, which were cut away in a straight line at the waist, and which dropped behind like the tails of a swallow; and they wore, too, trousers of a slender cut and fit which explained, in a measure, why Jimmy Smith had wanted them.

The tall gentleman in the middle wore a brown beard, and the gentlemen on either side of him, one an inch taller and the other an inch shorter, were smooth-shaven. All three carried their heads proudly, and looked splendidly clean; and when Bezzanna, skimming across the lawn like a streak of violet, leaped into the arms of the king, she discerned about him the faint and subtle and delicious fragrance of soap!

"You're a scream!" she exulted, as, after kissing Teddy and shaking hands shyly with Jimmy, she stepped back to admire the three nice strangers.

"It's a shriek," admitted the king with pride. "This is to be the official costume of the state receptions of Isola."

"I want to dance with one of you," she demanded.

"That looks like a glorious costume for a dance. Why, do you know it lends contrast to the colors of the girls! I wouldn't dance with Onalyon all last night because I was in pink and he was in an ugly red. Come on, everybody; let's go up on the terrace and dance."

The king had not danced, except in the most formal ceremonials, since the recent death of the queen. Bezzanna looked around for Teddy. That tall youth, now on the other side of the lawn, had just succeeded in taking Toopy away from Dymp Haplee by main strength. She looked hesitatingly, and then with mischievous boldness at Jimmy.

"Won't Jimmy do?" pleaded that handsome young man, and offering his arm, he led her up on the terrace. The scarlet-clad orchestra was already trooping across the lawn—Teddy had seen to that—and Jimmy eyed them with a sudden clutch of fear. "I don't know what I'm up against in this music," he worried. "Do you waltz?"

"I pass," she laughed. "Is it something to eat?"

"You'll eat it if you get one taste. It goes like this," and, while a place was being made for the musicians, and the laughing excited guests were streaming up on the terrace, Jimmy showed her the waltz step; and she had it while he was still explaining it.

When the music began, Jimmy grinned. It wasn't

exactly a waltz, but it was soft flowing music, with still a good swing to it, and one second later, Bezzanna was whirling down the center of the long wide terrace in absolute heaven of busy delight.

It was a dream! It was a fairy-land! It was a paradise! Why, there was no dance in all the category of Isolian joy that could begin to compare with this! And Jimmy Smith, of course, had brought them everything! All the men now carried Jimmy Smith's matches in their pockets, and they each cherished a cake of Jimmy Smith's soap!

She felt ashamed of herself. She had fancied Jimmy clumsy and awkward, merely because she had seen him in funny trousers, but now she knew how hideously mistaken she had been. Big strong man as he was, he moved with the grace and ease of a bird; and dance? Why, he danced divinely!

She looked up at his smooth clean face, with its strong neck, and its good jaws, and its firm mouth, and its clean-cut nose, and its clear blue eyes, and its finely arched brows, and its broad high forehead, and its waving dark hair, and she wondered how any man could wear a beard! Of course it was all right for a grave sedate man like her brother, but for a live member like Jimmy— Why, the mere supposition was absurd, and she laughed aloud.

"What's the giggle?" he asked her.

They had been suddenly surrounded by a crush

of couples whirling in the clumsy old Isolian dances, which were now forever antiquated, and he guided her through the maze with the ease of a man choosing his path in an empty meadow.

"I'm going home," she said.

CHAPTER XII

JIMMY SMITH SUGGESTS A NEW NAME FOR HIMSELF

"THAT'S an impulsive-looking scarf," admired Jimmy, as he picked the filmy pink fabric from the floor of the dining-room for the Princess Bezzanna, two mornings after her return. "It's a dead ringer for an evening gown a friend of mine used to wear."

"Who was she?" inquired Bezzanna instantly. "What was she like?"

"I think she was a blonde," responded Jimmy carelessly. "She's married now; but I remember the gown, all right, because I stepped on it, and she never spoke to me for a month. It went like this," and taking it from Bezzanna again, he caught the exceptionally long scarf far enough toward the center to let one end of it reach from her waist to the hem of her robe, told her to hold it there, wrapped it broadly and tightly around her waist to the front, and had her hold it again, carried it up around her shoulders and back down to the waist,

where he caught it in, and with the wondering assistance of Bezzanna, spread out the two ends so that they covered nearly the whole of her white robe, from her waist to the floor. Thus seen, she was in a robe of white, with a belt and soft fichu and double panel effect of pink.

"The fashions!" cried the king. "Jimmy promised he would start you on them as soon as you came back." But Bezzanna was not waiting to hear. She was on her way with Aunt Gee-gee to her own room where stood a half-length pier-glass, on which the entire force of the mirror factory had worked for a solid week to give her this delightful welcome-home surprise.

"There won't be an idle scarf in Isola by to-morrow night," laughed the king. "It's a marvelous result, and more beautiful than I could have dreamed. I don't see yet how you did it."

"It's simple enough," returned Jimmy. "You've been using the straight Grecian robe for hundreds of years. I simply showed Betsy Ann a waist line."

Teddy threw down his napkin.

"I'm going right over and get Toopy," he declared, and at that moment, Bezzanna appeared in the doorway, out of breath from running up and down the stairs in such a remarkably short space of time, but with the pink scarf held in place, nevertheless, with fourteen pins and a brooch.

"I'm crazy about it!" she announced with effervescent joy. "I have to be dolled-up like this every day. Don't you love it to death?"

"I'm tickled stiff with it," admired the king. "I suppose, of course, that is the American fashion, Jimmy?"

"I couldn't tell you," regretted Jimmy. "I haven't been there for several weeks."

"It's the style in Isola, anyhow!" avowed Bezzanna with enthusiasm. "Jimmy, I'll never stop thanking you for this. Teddy, go right over and get Toopy, and tell her to bring her blue scarf."

"I'll tell her to bring everything she has," declared Teddy, as he hurried from the room. "She can't look like that any too quick to suit me."

"Well, we've arrived at it," decided Jimmy with a sigh. "We've started fashions, and nothing can stop them. Isola has to be prosperous in a hurry or she'll go broke buying scarfs. In order to get the thing started right, though, Betsy Ann, I'll have to give you a few pointers. Don't drape Toopy's scarf the same way."

"Why not?" demanded Bezzanna. "Why, I think she'd look sweet in it."

"It isn't good for business," explained Jimmy. "It took at least two hundred years to bring America's best dressers up to the point of throwing away a gown and discharging a dressmaker every time

they saw a duplicate, but the underlying principle is the backbone of our national commercial supremacy. We have the lesson well learned, though, now. We go so far in the desire to get original and striking frocks for our women that we design elaborate costumes, and send the designs and the material over to Paris to be made by inferior workmen, and pay duty to get them back into the country."

"That seems absurd," said the king.

"Naturally it would to a stranger," agreed Jimmy. "It's the only way we can get strictly original creations, however; for the foreign workmen are so bad that they're unable to make a design the way it was intended, and a striking variation is bound to occur."

"I wish I could have a Paris gown," mused Bezzanna.

"I'd rather get you some from New York," Jimmy advised her. "Really, they do make them much better there."

"I've no doubt you think so," Bezzanna argued patiently, kind with him because of his masculine lack of intuition and appreciation for creations which were really chic and jaunty and *distingué*. "I'm quite ready to admit, because I thoroughly believe it, that everything else in America is the best in the world; but I think I'd rather have my gowns from Paris."

"Why, you never heard of it till five minutes ago," protested Jimmy.

"I know, but I like the name of it," she insisted. "Of course it's no use to argue, Jimmy, because you wouldn't understand, so we'll just drop it. Can you remember any other way to drape a scarf?"

"If I had been an expert scarf drapist I never would have been called Jimmy," protested that young man, rankling still from the sense of masculine inferiority she had forced on him. "They would have called me Cecil."

"All right, Smith," she laughed, pleased that she had stung him, but sorry, too. "Show me anything else you know; won't you? Pretty please!"

"I apologize," gave in Jimmy sarcastically, as the king, laughing, left the room. "I can tell you one thing. Those sleeves don't go with that berth thing. They ought to come down about to the elbows, and stop there," and catching the point of the flowing sleeve which left her round white arm bare from the shoulder, he wrapped it around her upper arm.

In stooping to pick up the end of the other one, a sharp point in the pin-bristling fichu scratched his cheek, and left a tiny red mark.

"Oh!" cried Bezzanna, shocked that he had hurt himself so cruelly, and she passed her warm little palm over his cheek.

The touch made him tremble, and he was almost

on the point of crying out to her not to do such things. She was gone in a flash, however, and by the time she came back with the king's jar of ointment, some of which she insisted upon rubbing on the scratch with the tip of a pink forefinger, Jimmy had time to reflect that he had been an ass in wishing Bezzanna back. She was more of a torture to him here than she would have been at Onalyon's, for now, since he knew that he must hold aloof from her, he would have to endure the daily agony of mere friendliness, of glances arch with the same innocent coquetry which she used upon her brothers, of tones sweet with the same caressing accents she would use to her favorite donkey or the servants, of occasional touches, alive with the burning thrill which she had unconsciously given him just now. He began to be aware that it was better to be away entirely from a girl he wanted but could not have—but still, poignantly realizing all that, he was glad that she had come back; very glad!

He thanked her gratefully for the ointment, and was about to hurry away, for he had to install his first telephone exchange that morning. There were only two instruments to be connected just now, one at the palace workshop and one at the iron mine, but he thought that he might just as well run the wires through an exchange, and be prepared for fu-

ture growth. Also, he had positive instructions from Aunt Gee-gee to move the soap factory some place down in the country.

Betsy Ann called him back peremptorily.

"There seems to be so much clumsy thickness in here," she objected, pinching her tightly gathered robe at the waist. "It doesn't seem to fit around me nicely. It shouldn't be that way, should it?"

"Well, no," he admitted, studying the matter critically. "It seems to pucker too much. I think they cut a gash or something in there, and take out some of the material. You ought to know how to manage such things."

"I'll have to find out a way," she decided. "This gives me ugly lumps. They don't just fasten these things on afterward, do they?"

"No, the real dress is inside," he assured her. "It fits, some place or other, and everything else is fastened to that, mostly with hooks. I don't know much about dressmaking, but I'm sure of that; for I'm an accomplished hooker-up. Every American man is. He learns it in emergencies. He begins with his mother, and takes an advanced course with his sisters, and finishes with his wife."

"Did you have a wife?" she asked, with an untroubled gaze that annoyed him. It was the first time this curious thought had occurred to Bezzan-

na, and the possibility startled her, but she was not going to let him see that she was more than casually interested in the matter.

"Nobody would have me," he answered, with a nonchalance equal to her own, and using the brain-saving reply which has done duty as a joke for so many generations.

The eyes of Bezzanna darkened. She was offended with the entire race of American girls. What on earth did they expect if they wouldn't have Jimmy!

"What is hooking-up?" she demanded.

"It's the chief enemy to domestic peace and happiness," he stated. "It consists in pouring a woman into a frock one-half size too small for her stays, and trying to keep from swearing in front of the children. Further than that I decline to explain, until you've had on a frock that splits up the back, and then I shan't have to explain it."

"I'll have to learn a lot of American to understand all that," she sighed. "What are stays? Are they as pretty as this?"

He looked at her in silence mournfully for a moment.

"No, I can't tell you," he decided. "I can't take the responsibility of introducing them. There are still doctors who care so little for their practise that they declare them unhealthy."

He might have known better than to say that ; but the damage was done.

"I want some stays," she firmly declared.

"I'll see if there are any models in Jones' *Hand-book*," he evasively promised, and tried to escape from the room again, having suddenly remembered his waiting telephones.

Fate was against him, for at that moment Bez-zanna, reaching for something at the back of her neck, emitted an "Ouch" of pain.

"Aunt Gee-gee never could put a pin in properly," she complained. "One has come loose and is sticking me, and I can't reach it. Won't you fix it for me, please?"

She turned her back to him and he essayed the task. He had never known that his fingers were so thick and clumsy, and they seemed more clumsy still, when in the strictly impersonal duty which he attempted to perform for her, they touched her smooth, firm, white shoulder.

"I love the touch of your hands," she informed him with a naïveté that annoyed him, though he did not quite know why. "They are so warm and nice, and they have sort of tingle."

He jabbed a pin into his finger and drew the blood, then he finished that job in a hurry, and stepped crossly back from it.

At that moment gray-haired Aunt Gee-gee came

smilingly into the room, with a strip of fine lavender material, fully six yards long.

"You fixed Bezzanna's robe so prettily that I'm going to ask you to drape this for me," she requested, looking him cheerfully in the eye and waiting for Bezzanna to translate to him.

He did not wait for the translation, but smiling politely though fuming inwardly, he took that scarf and went right to work. The best way out of this job was to get through in a hurry.

"Not that way," protested Bezzanna. "I don't want anybody in the world to have a scarf draped exactly like mine."

Jimmy, appreciating that it was on him, but consoling himself with the reflection that Bezzanna would have arrived at that decision without his hint, chuckled, and fooled patiently with the infernal strip of cloth until he had given Aunt Gee-gee a splendid blouse effect, fore and aft, with the suggestion of a draped overskirt.

His efforts were amply rewarded by the unbounded admiration of Bezzanna.

"I like that better than mine," she enthusiastically declared, beginning to pull out her pins. "Do mine that way, only different."

Toopy Polecon bounded into the room with Teddy, both of them loaded with filmy flufferies of every possible tint.

"Oh, you darling!" screamed Toopy, dumping her pile of scarfs on a chair, and making a dive for Bezzanna. "You're too sweet for anything!" and she kissed her friend with a loud smack. "And how dear you look, Aunt Gee-gee! Drape me, Jimmy!"

"Call me Cecil!" groaned Jimmy, and got down on his knees.

CHAPTER XIII

ONALYON PAYS HIS STOCK SUBSCRIPTIONS

THE king, in a neat gray business suit, walked into the great hall of the palace, where Jimmy already sat at the end of a long table, with Teddy as his secretary, both of them busy with a mass of papers; and the king was beaming with a great idea.

"We've all slipped our trolleys," he announced. "We have the same crowd of men coming here in half an hour for the preliminary stockholders' meetings of a dozen manufacturing companies. Now, I thought of a great scheme. We have the same men in each concern, and for practically the same amounts. Why don't we save the time of all this red tape and form one big company?"

"Help!" shouted Jimmy. "Why, man, you're striking a blow at the very backbone of the American financial system. You're trying to make it all simple and easy, so that every investor will know exactly where he stands. The big business interests could never be conducted that way." He

paused a moment to contemplate the enormity of the king's error. "Why, you're allowing no chance for mergers and consolidations, and the other legitimate means of appropriating the profits to ourselves when they become too large to be healthy for the investor. The way you propose, the investors would reap forty-nine per cent. of the profits right from the start, and continue that way until the end."

"Isn't that what you contemplate?" inquired the king, perplexed. "That's why I thought one big company would simplify matters."

"It would," admitted Jimmy, almost discouraged. "It certainly would! But don't you see that the fun would be all out of it? Why, we'd have nothing to do but look after our factories, and make them successful, and bring our stock up to par value, and draw down our dividends. We couldn't even have a stock exchange!"

"You spoke about that the other day; the day after you started the fashions in Isola, I believe, and I think I understand what you meant by it, but I can't see where we need it."

"Need it!" gasped Jimmy. "Why, we couldn't get along without a stock exchange. A stock exchange is as necessary to business as a booger man is to frighten bad children. It has no more real relation to business than the bark of a dog has to his appetite. It's a thermometer on the bulb of

which you hold your thumb to see if the rising mercury can make you feel warmer. It is to legitimate commerce what a board of naval strategy is to war. It decides on what should be done in an emergency that never arises, and what should have been done in the emergency that did arise, and in the exercise of all its accidental powers it is as unlogically destructive as a baby king picking out men to be beheaded."

"Holy smoke!" gasped the king. "Then I don't see why we need it."

"To create panics," insisted Jimmy firmly. "No nation in the world has as many panics as the United States of America, and see how fat we've grown on them. The stock exchange in its busiest days was never able to give us panics enough to furnish our financiers with enough outlet for their energies, so we have them with every backward spring, and dry summer, and early frost, and we create an artificial one every presidential election."

"But what is the use of a panic?" puzzled the king.

"It shakes down the stock market. The people who are afraid sell their stock, and the people who aren't, buy them; then the panic passes by and the people with the nerve have a tighter hold on the helm of industry. It's a mere jolt-up to encourage the survival of the fittest. No, King, we have to

have panics, and we could scarcely have a good live panic without a stock exchange, and we could not have a stock exchange without stocks; so we'll have to split up our industries into as many companies as we can. When you see how eagerly your as yet undeveloped financiers take to reissues, and reorganizations, and recapitalizations, and watered stocks, and inflated securities, and market fluctuations, and all the other schemes by which the heavy-jawed captain of industry cracks the knuckles of the feeble-chinned ones, and makes them let go, you'll thank me for introducing the sport."

"But isn't that rather giving the advantage to the strong?" argued the conscientious king.

"No; it's only a process for finding out who is the strongest," Jimmy informed him. "Those things are bound to adjust themselves, and when the strong get too much individually, the weak club together and take it away from them. Now, don't you worry, King. America has pursued that system for over four hundred years; and isn't she the greatest nation in the world?"

"Of course," admitted the king, with the nonchalance of long conviction. "I don't quite understand it even yet, but I see clearly that it will be best for us to give up my foolishly simple idea of one big Isolian manufacturing company."

"Only for the present," corrected Jimmy. "You

see, in your way; that is, by starting in with a big company; we'd only own fifty-one per cent. of it from start to finish; but, by my way, after we get through with putting water into our companies and squeezing it out, and with our reorganizations and mergers, and our flurries and panics, and our other commercial amusements, we'll have your one big company, but we'll own it all." He took a neat stack of papers from Teddy, and passed him some loose ones to check up, and fold and docket. "By George, King," he concluded with a worried air, "do you know we'll have to frame up some restraining legislation against ourselves right away. I'm not against monopolies on general principles, but they need to be worried."

The door opened and Bezzanna entered, with her hair wound in a coronet braid around her shapely head, and wearing a pale green princess gown softened with a deep collar of lace, with dainty fluted frills at her sleeves.

The three gentlemen present immediately arose and bowed, impressed into stiff formality by the appearance of this lady, and it occurred to Jimmy Smith that if he were back in America and knew a girl like that, he'd marry her if he had to kill all his rivals and poison her family.

"Great!" declared Teddy enthusiastically. "Betsy

Ann, you're some vision. Has Toopy seen that dress?"

"She helped design it," Betsy was good enough to acknowledge. "But wait till you see Toopy's red princess. Jimmy, you promised to show me what a tailored frock is like. When are you going to do it?"

"Right this minute," said Jimmy, reaching in the pocket of his blue serge sack suit and producing a folded piece of paper. He opened it and looked at it dubiously before he handed it to her. "Now, Betsy Ann," he cautiously explained, "to avoid any charge that this might be an attempted portrait of you, I have purposely omitted the head; and the figure is only a conventional one, although I believe it is in very fair proportion. You must not consider the drawing but only the leading lines of the design."

"Certainly; I understand that," she agreed with a smile, and reached for the paper. A second later she dropped it. "I couldn't be as dumpy as that if I tried!" she wailed, both hurt and shocked.

Jimmy explained that fatal error, and Bezzanna forgave him very sweetly, but when a moment later Prince Onalyon was ushered in, she greeted that astounded gentleman with a warm cordiality that left his mouth empty of the effusive compliments he had begun to put together the second he saw her.

She left him no time for recovery, but in the slim gown which had turned her from a maturing girl to an awe-inspiring young lady, in one application, she swept majestically from the room.

Onalyon's coming was but the signal for the arrival of the other stockholders, a round hundred of them, who were escorted, as they came, to seats at the extremely long table, which ran diagonally of the room. When the last stragglers had taken their places, the king, with Jimmy at his right hand and Teddy at his left, took his seat at the head of the table, and tapped on a little block of wood with a plain and businesslike gavel.

"There being no objection, I shall myself take the chair as president pro tem. of all the preliminary meetings to be held at this session, and shall appoint my brother Tedoyah as secretary, pro tem., of such meetings," and the king looked about him with the kindly yet firm snappiness that marked him a born president of corporations.

"Good work, Old Scout," approved Jimmy in a murmur, highly delighted. He could not understand Isolian, but he knew what the king was to say, and he could understand thoroughly from the way he was saying it that he was cutting the exact center of the plate.

The gentlemen and nobles of Isola looked at one another in slow perplexity. This was their first

try at parliamentary proceedings, and if they had any particular objections to make they did not know how to make them. Jimmy, scanning carefully the long row of intent faces down the opposite side of the table, saw a dawning willingness on some of them, however, and he gathered the idea, which pleased him greatly, that before many meetings there would be a fine crop of objectors. He had feared that these affairs would be too tame.

The king tapped his gavel and laid a cake of soap on the table. The eyes of the stockholders brightened. They all knew soap.

"I now declare the organization meeting of the Park Soap Company to be open, and the secretary will please call the roll."

The secretary, grave with the importance of his entry into commercial life, in his deepest bass voice, which cracked only at rare intervals, called the roll, naming, also, the number of shares set opposite each man's name, and instructing the first two or three how to answer aye. Before the list was through, the ayes were coming with a bored and nonchalant crispness that was as the warmth of old wine to Jimmy's blood. It was so like the good old times that it made him homesick, except that there was to be no battle and no wire pulling; but he did not despair; these things would come later.

"The adoption of a constitution is next in order,"

announced the king. "The secretary will please read the constitution suggested by the organizers," and as that constitution was written in American, since that language was to be adopted as the official language of commerce, Jimmy listened to his own masterpiece with subdued pleasure and modest pride, and followed through its translation into Isolian with gracious condescension.

Onalyon, at the far end of the table, immediately arose.

"Why is the constitution written in American?" he demanded to know, and Jimmy felt that any fears he may have entertained as to tameness were groundless as long as Onalyon was in the companies. The prince, in spite of his lace ruffles, was a valuable man any place you put him.

Jimmy caught the king's eye and nodded his head vigorously. The king tapped his gavel sternly.

"The gentleman is out of order," he announced. "He has not addressed the chair, and the chair has not yet recognized him." Dropping his tone of authority, he kindly explained to the still standing Onalyon the method of addressing the chair.

Onalyon disposed of his Adam's apple.

"Mr. President," he called, quite humbly enough to the eye.

"I recognize Prince Onalyon," announced the king politely, while Jimmy discerned in the eyes of

the nobles that they had the man from America blacklisted from that moment for cramming parliamentary law and order down their throats.

Onalyon stood struggling with a fool defiance which wanted to well up within him. The king kindly helped him out.

"I believe the gentleman asked a question," he suggested.

"Yes," replied Onalyon, in tones as smooth as butter. "Why is the constitution of an Isolian manufacturing company written in American?"

"Because American is the natural language of business," the king stated with full conviction. "We expect to do good, clean, snappy work, and America is the only nation in the world which has brought that art to a high stage of development. The chair will now entertain a motion for the adoption of the constitution as it stands."

Teddy, feeling that he should never be a frivolous boy again, made that motion, by previous instruction, and Jimmy Smith seconded it; and the king, passing quickly over the invitation for discussion, ordered a roll-call vote.

Not knowing what else to do, the stockholders then present unanimously voted aye, even to the reluctant Onalyon, who was not yet sure enough of his ground to make a determined stand.

"The next item in the order of business is the

election of officers," announced the king, with a glance and a nod at his nearest neighbor and most loyal supporter, smiling and purple-visaged old Polecon, the grandfather of Toopy.

"I nominate the king," declared old Polecon, nodding and laughing around the board, as if he had performed a spontaneously clever act and expected to be admired for it.

Young Birrquay, who wanted to marry Bezzanna, and was keeping out of her way until she should see through the shallow throng which surrounded her, awaiting his turn eagerly, caught the eye of the chair and was recognized, and giving a last upward thrust of his beard to conceal his nose as much as possible, seconded the nomination.

Young Calamaz, smirking with the consciousness of being designed by nature for an orator, played his part in the carefully planned drama, by promptly moving that the nominations be closed.

Stern Grisophal, who wore his beard in three points, seconded that motion, and while the assembled stockholders were still holding their hands to their foreheads in a vain attempt to understand at least something, they elected the king president and treasurer, and Jimmy managing director, and Teddy secretary, all at the extremely modest salaries set forth in the by-laws.

After this they as obediently elected first, second

and third vice-presidents and six additional directors from among their number, all according to the slate.

The king, with a smiling nod at Jimmy, announced the meeting adjourned, and tapped his gavel, and removed the soap, and put a box of matches in its place.

The eyes of the stockholders brightened. They understood matches.

The king tapped his gavel and announced the organization meeting of the Isola Match Company now open, whereupon the carefully guided company adopted the constitution and elected officers, all of them different from those of the soap company, with the exception of Jimmy and Teddy and the king, again with extremely modest salaries.

The king exhibited and explained a safety-razor and put the West Mountain Steel Works through the paces of organization, performing the same pleasant duty for the Whirlwind Glass Monopoly, the Smith and Scout Sewing-Machine Company, the Hello Telephone System and the *Daily Isolian*.

By the time he came to the Advance Planter and Harvester Concern, however, Prince Onalyon had been able to overtake the abnormally swift proceedings and organize a caucus at his end of the table. He succeeded in having his name presented in nomination for president and treasurer of the Advance Planter and Harvester Concern before the nomina-

tions could be closed, and that clever stroke was appreciated and approved by the stockholders, as Jimmy could tell by their smiles of satisfaction. The king was a good fellow and a good king, and officially responsible for the awakening of all this commercial energy, and for their having five times as much money in their pockets as before, but after all, there was no use in letting him harvest the whole crop, nor pile up all those extremely modest salaries. It was about time to relieve the monotony. Prince Onalyon was a good fellow himself, and had done as much to rejuvenate the kingdom socially as the king and his foreign adviser had commercially. Anyhow, they wanted to show their power as voters.

When the poll was taken, eighty-two of the hundred stockholders present voted for Onalyon!

Neither Jimmy nor the king liked that very well. They had expected a majority of the voters to call a gentle halt on the king, but they did not like to see such a sweeping number siding with Onalyon. In view of future possibilities, it was too significant to be overlooked, for it was something in the nature of an overwhelming defeat.

"The secretary will please announce the result of the vote," the president requested, as calmly as if he were assured those figures were to be in his favor.

"For Onalyon," read Teddy, furious because his

voice in this tremendous crisis insisted upon returning to its boyish treble, "four hundred and ten; for the king, five hundred and ninety."

That meeting could have been swept into a heap with a feather and scooped up on a dust-pan, it was so demoralized, and it took the king, who had spent a solid month to understand it thoroughly himself, three-quarters of an hour to make them understand that they were voting, not as individuals, but according to the number of shares they held. There was one period of the agitation when they seriously contemplated mobbing Jimmy as the author of their humiliation. Moreover, they called it an American trick, as any other nation does when America shows them how to conduct business expeditiously and successfully.

The king had been coached more on this part of the program than on any other, and Jimmy, by his gestures and the expression of his face, and the set of his shoulders, and the tilt of his brown beard, certainly did admire the way Thanks Old Scout lit into them. The king explained the righteousness of the method, its justice, and its Americanism, showing exactly why the largest influence in any business should be wielded by the man who owns the most shares.

"But you didn't pay a measure for yours," protested Onalyon, carefully omitting to address the

chair formally, "and we did for ours. You and Tedoyah and Mr. Smith are voting five hundred and ten shares out of the thousand, and the rest of us, who have furnished your entire capital, have no more voice in anything than if we had been born deaf and dumb. Where do we come in, anyhow?"

It was fine to see the king's eyes flash.

"You come in as guests!" he roared, shaking his forefinger at Onalyon, and including the entire assemblage in its warning. "You voted according to the constitution you have just signed, and that's going to stick. If any of you doesn't like it, you can get right out and organize a company of your own. Invent something worth while and manufacture it, and see how far you get without handing fifty-one per cent. of the stock to somebody with brains and energy enough to show you what to do, and force you to do it. There will be a brief intermission in which the stockholders will kindly pay the amount of their subscriptions to the treasurer."

Onalyon, taking his medicine like a little man, was the first up to pass over his currency. This was too virile a game to stay out of.

CHAPTER XIV

PRINCE ONALYON DISPLAYS AN AMAZING LACK OF TACT

"HELLO," implored the Princess Bezzanna. "Hello, hello, hello, hello! Please, exchange, can't you shake up that wire a little?"

"I'm sorry," returned a cheerfully patient voice, "but there's so much noise at 3-1-Palace that I don't think they can hear anything. Oh, here they are!"

"Hello," boomed a deep voice with a peculiarly effective thrill in it. "Is this you, Betty?"

"What's the score, Jimmy?" she eagerly demanded.

"The game isn't started yet," he briskly replied. "We're holding it until the royal box is occupied. Hurry up! Where are you?"

"At my tailor's," hurried Betsy; "but my car broke down, and the prince has spent the last half-hour in trying to repair it. He's not very expert at such things, because he doesn't like to get grease on his fingers."

"And it's the only auto in the kingdom," groaned Jimmy; then he had a happy afterthought. "The work car's standing over in front of the First National, or ought to be," he said. "They're putting in a branch phone. If you'll ride in it, go right over, have them dump all those tools and materials, and hurry on out here. I think we can hold the game that long, if they don't tear down the grandstand."

"Please don't do that, Jimmy," she begged. "I couldn't look all those people in the face if I delayed them any longer. Who's reporting for the *Isolian*?"

"Dymp Haplee himself," responded Jimmy. "He's too much of a fan to let a scrub cover these games."

"Then it's all right," chattered Betty, relieved. "Have the game go right on, and when I get out there I'll drop in and look over his score sheet before I go up to the box, and I'll know as much about it as if I had been there. Who's pitching for the West Mountain team?"

"Old Horse Raybee."

"Oh, glory!" she exclaimed. "That makes me hang up, Jimmy. Good-by! I'm in an awful hurry!"

She rushed out, rescued the prince from his disagreeable task, and sent him into the Business Men's Club to wash his hands, while she ran over to the

bank to commandeer the work car and have it emptied and redecorated with a clean red blanket from the prince's big new department store. When she was ready she ran the car over to the Business Men's Club and waited impatiently ten, fifteen, twenty minutes. She shut her watch with a click as the prince came out, and prepared to crush him, but he was so busy talking with weazened old Huppylac that he only barely apologized as he came into the car. He did not even notice the gaudy red blanket!

"To-morrow at the club, then, say at three," called the prince to Huppylac, who nodded as gallantly to Bezzanna as if he had been young again.

Bezzanna drove straight on up Palace Road without a remark or a turn of her head or a bat of her eyelash.

"This is a good car in spite of its looks," the prince presently observed. "I only hope the one the Auto Company is building for me will run as smoothly."

The Princess Bezzanna drove straight on.

"Watch out there!" he called to her. "That pile of water pipes is shaky and is likely to tumble against the wheels. This water-works system has kept the streets of Isola torn up ever since it was started. I do not believe in turning the streets over absolutely to the corporations."

The Princess Bezzanna drove straight on.

"That's a stunning costume you're wearing," the prince complimented her, withdrawing more from his own train of thought and devoting himself to a nearer consideration of Bezzanna. "It does not harmonize so well with the Isolian costumes, which most of the nobles are still wearing, as the beautiful little simple robes in which I first learned to love you, Bezzanna, but still there is a smartness to these smoothly-fitting, tailored gowns that quite explains their popularity."

The Princess Bezzanna steered into the gutter to escape running over a fluffy little yellow chicken, and drove straight on.

"What's the matter, Bezzanna?" puzzled the prince, aware, at last, that there was an icy barrier between himself and the driver of the car.

"I'm in a hurry," she serenely informed him, without a turn of her neck or her eyes.

"Oh, I say; you're not angry because I stopped to speak with Huppylac, are you?" he protested. "Why, Bezzanna, that was one of the most important business talks I ever had."

The Princess Bezzanna drove straight on.

"I just closed a curb trade with Huppylac, whereby I give him my soap stock for his match stock, and that ten shares makes up the exact amount I

needed to become president. I've been working toward this end for six months. I now hold five hundred and five shares, and I intend to run the next meeting."

The Princess Bezzanna looked at her watch. By this time they were probably in the third inning.

"Bezzanna, I want you to see that I can play this game of business as well as any one," he urged. "The minute I found that the king and Jimmy were letting go of some of their match stock, and no longer held fifty-one per cent., I began a quiet campaign for it. I heard they were weakening their control to get hold of gold stock, and I had a lot of it thrown in their way on the exchange. I had everybody offering them gold certificates, and now the match company is mine."

For the first time in that drive the princess turned full toward him.

"Jimmy has a patent pocket lighter ready to put on the market," she observed, and gave him plenty of time to let that information sink clear down home.

The prince was so silent about it that presently she stole a glance toward him. He was staring straight down at the road that was flying so quickly under them.

"What's the matter?" she asked.

"That would hit me pretty hard," he confessed, having a very proper fear of the success of Jimmy's inventions.

A wave of disappointment swept over Bezzanna. She couldn't imagine Jimmy taking a business turn so seriously, even if they should happen to strip him of everything in the world, and throw him back in the ocean with his striped bathing trunks on.

"I can tell you a little more news about it," she relented. "He has already sold it to the match company on royalty."

"Frankly, I was scared," the prince acknowledged with a little laugh.

"You don't have to prove it," she assured him. "I just wanted to let you know, however, that Jimmy and the king were not particular about retaining their stock in the match company. The gold company has a royal grant on all the gold mines in Isola, on payment of a commission to the government, and the king and Jimmy were after that royal grant. I wouldn't blab any secrets like this if I wasn't sure that they had every last certificate of the stock, and they got it by trading some of their bonus shares in other companies which they didn't care about, particularly the match company. The gold company has forty-nine thousand of paid-up operating capital, and it didn't cost them a dollar."

"They must have found some way to make gold

valuable!" gasped Onalyon. "It's an American trick!"

"Piker!" she contemptuously charged him. "You were giggling your head off because you thought you had played an American trick, till I pointed out where the royal syndicate had put it over on you, and now you squeal. American trick! You ought only to use that phrase as a compliment. Everything we have worth while in Isola is an American trick, from the telephone you're having put in your palace to the fountain pen you'd walk back two miles to hunt if you missed it right now. You're as envious of Americans as Jimmy says the English are."

"But Bezzanna," pleaded the prince, in a panic, "I didn't know I was talking to Huppylac so long!"

"You could have left him wait till to-night, or brought him along out to the ball game with us. Now, I'm not angry; I'm just hurt; and not because you kept me waiting, when Jimmy had held the game for me, but because you didn't seem to notice your neglect when you came out, nor see this red blanket, nor pay any more attention to me than if I had been your wife. I pity her, from the bottom of my heart, I do."

"Don't!" he implored. "You know that everything I do is through my love for you. Don't treat that subject lightly."

"Very well, then," she kindly agreed. "I'm in a hurry, anyhow. Raybee is pitching against us. Don't you hear them cheering?" and the face she turned toward him now was full of animation, in which there was no trace of resentment.

Somehow, the prince wished that there had been.

The West Mountain team was just going into the field for the beginning of the fifth, when the princess and Onalyon hurried into the scorer's wire-screened cage under the royal box and grabbed the separate score that Dymp Haplee had religiously kept for her.

"And it was some job, too," big Dymp was careful to point out, as he gleefully indicated some highly intricate symbolisms on certain blackly scribbled spots. "There's where Yalimat thought he was breaking up the game with a three-bagger, and the Royal Parks made a double play of it; and here's where the West Mountains pulled off the only clean triple we've had this season. Old Horse Raybee's in fine form."

"How's our pitcher?" she asked eagerly, as she turned to go.

"Look at the score," he told her loftily. "Two to nothing in favor of the Royal Parks at the end of the fourth. All we have to do now is to stick it out for another half inning, and then let it rain."

"Why?" she scornfully inquired. "We'll play it

over if they want us to. I wish Raybee was on our team."

Every woman in the grandstand craned her neck to examine every stitch in the new glove-fitting, tailored fall suit of red bronze which the Princess Bezzanna wore as she stepped into the royal box, and she graciously stood up to take a good survey of the field and let them do it. It helped commerce. Autumn leaf tints of the warmer hues would be the prevailing tones this fall, and the cut would run much to the simple lines that required such exclusive workmanship and a perfect figure.

The king and Teddy and Toopy, the latter of whom had confused the interested ladies of Isola by appearing in steel blue, instead of conveying her usual distant hint of what Bezzanna's costume might be like, made the prince welcome and greeted Bezzanna with mingled joy and pity; for the game was a hummer for one so late in the season, and with the West Mountains and the Royal Parks so closely in the lead for the first annual big league championship of Isola; then they leaned forward eagerly, for Slugger Dottersis was just slouching up to the plate, swinging two bats to make one seem lighter when he hit her out.

As interesting as the moment was, Bezzanna was not yet quite comfortably ready to begin being excited. There seemed to be something missing. She

rescued her score-card from the prince and obtained a lead-pencil from Teddy. She hitched her chair a little forward, and then a little backward, and then a little to the right; then stood up and tugged at her jacket, and let the prince remove it for her. The first ball smacked in the catcher's hands, and a groan of disapproval arose as the umpire called it a strike. Bezzanna took her jacket off the back of her chair, where the prince had hung it, and spread it the other way, as it should have been hung up in the first place. The second ball smacked into the catcher's hand, and the umpire called it strike two, amidst a dismal silence. The Princess Bezzanna noticed that Raybee was pitching, and she looked around to observe that the grandstand was packed until it bulged. She frowned uneasily as her wandering attention came back to the game, and she saw two balls come over wide of the plate, then she looked indifferently away again. A tall young man, standing inside the field, down near the edge of rooters' row, was looking up intently at her. She had just discovered him. He raised his hat to her, and she settled back comfortably in her seat to enjoy the game. The tall young man was Jimmy.

"Oh, it wasn't a strike!" she protested. "They ought to buy a lorgnette for that umpire. It wasn't a strike! I saw it come over myself." She was explaining it, first to the king and then to the prince,

and then to Toopy. Teddy emphatically agreed with her.

"It was so wide of the plate it nearly crossed first base!" he grumbled.

Nevertheless, Slugger Dottersis waddled sheepishly back to the bench, and the next man came up, full of hope, which Old Horse Raybee dashed with three deceptive drops. The third man slammed the first ball which was handed him right on the left eyebrow, and it sailed for a beautiful point about two feet to the right of second base and three feet in front of it, in just about the right spot for the short-stop to scoop up a handful of hard packed earth, while the ball merrily made a streak in the clover clear out to the center-field fence; but Old Horse Raybee had an unoccupied hand on that side, attached to the extremely far end of a flexible arm, and he shot himself out sidewise and full length, like a street-crossing bar flopping down in a hurry for the passage of a limited express; and when he straightened up again the West Mountain players were tossing their gloves on the ground and heading stolidly for a seat in the shade.

In the West Mountains' half of the fifth, the first three men up found the ball with enough energy to reach first, and the fourth man paid off the life-long grudge he had against it by trying to batter it to pieces against the bank in far left field.

By the time the gardener out there had finished playing tag with it, that comfortable lead of two to nothing for the Parks had reversed itself into three to two in favor of the West Mountains, and the Princess Bezzanna, who was so rabidly partisan that she hated every other team in the league, was saying, in low agonized accents:

"Won't somebody *please* take him out! He always blows up in the fifth."

In spite of the piteous appeals of Bezzanna and the multitude, that pitcher was left in to finish his inning, but Bezanna had another spasm when his successor took the mound in the runless sixth.

"It's glass-arm Poosmab!" she wailed. "Let's all go home!"

Glass-arm Poosmab justified her fears. He pitched one errorless inning, but in the seventh he passed the first man, hit the second, and in trying to nail a thief at third, tossed the ball past the left end of the grandstand and off into the wide, wide world.

A captain who would have disregarded the desires of that blood-lusting mob would have been a successful candidate for a lunacy commitment. This one was not. He put in his last available pitcher, who stopped the slaughter for that inning, but was only saved by savage fielding from inaugurating another one on his own account.

In the beginning of the eighth the Royal Parks came to life again, and quit their half with an advantage score of six to five; but in the last half of the eighth the Royal Parks' third and last pitcher, after being pulled out of two awkward holes by the brilliant fielding behind him, let across one run, and then the insistent demand, which had been growing all afternoon, reached its climax. The stanch Royal Parks audience rose to its feet as one dangerously angered man and howled:

"Jimmy!"

That modest individual hid behind the scorer's cage, but Bezzanna, who was by now so determined to have that game that she knew no friend or foe, sent for him and gave him his orders.

Clad in the red-brown uniform of the Royal Parks, he came to the mound for the team of which he had been the original charter member, and a peaceful calm settled over the assemblage, as that peerless hero began to twist rainbow benders around the necks of the doomed and despairing West Mountainers, and dodged their bats, and made them jump, amid the jeers of the populace, from balls that cut cleanly the far corners of the plate. As he warmed up to his work he rained inshoots and outshoots and upshoots and downshoots into the swirling glove of his catcher, interspersed with fast straight ones and slow teasers, and he wound up

that game with an exhibition of fancy juggling which secured the triumphant score of seven to six, and was carried off the field by a screaming crush of Jimmy-mad fanatics!

After such an afternoon the prince had no more common sense than to insist that the princess allow him to accompany her home, since he had something very important to say to her.

When they arrived at the palace the prince drove away very quietly, and Bezzanna went in to the king with rather a frightened face.

"Well, I've done it," she confessed. "I've refused Onalyon, definitely, emphatically, permanently, and forever."

"I feared that something of the sort would happen very soon," he said gravely. "What reason did you give him?"

"Lack of tact," she giggled, then suddenly threw her arms around her brother's neck and cried, as much surprised at that performance as he was.

"Don't worry," the king reassured her, patting her shoulder. "What did he say?"

"For you to prepare for war!"

CHAPTER XV

TEDOYAH FACES A GREAT EMERGENCY

AT four o'clock in the morning the telephone bell rang in the king's palace, and old Amyah, awakened from a sound slumber, closed the windows in the great hall to keep out the rain that was not there, and then was oppressed by a vague sense that there was something else he ought to do. He finally plucked enough intelligence out of his feeble beard to reflect that maybe he ought to answer the telephone, which had been ringing insistently all this while.

Tedoyah, however, was down-stairs and had the receiver off the hook before old Amyah could remember where the telephone was.

"Hello! What is it?" he crisply asked, thrilling with the joy of facing an emergency.

"This is Dottersis, at the First National Bank," advised the father of the famous ball player. "I wish to speak with the king. The matter is urgent."

"Tell me and save time then," ordered the boy,

with a touch of pride in that answer. "I am Prince Tedoyah."

"Wagons, the new big ones, with the light running-gear, have been driving away from the public granaries, filled with grain, since midnight," answered the night watchman of the bank. "I had intended to tell you in the morning, but they are using all eight of the distributing doors, and they're taking so much away that I thought best to disturb you."

"You are quite right," approved Tedoyah. "Who is giving out the grain?"

"That I can not tell, Prince. I am not permitted to leave the bank."

"How much do you think they have taken away?"

"I have counted seventy wagon-loads in the last hour."

Teddy softly whistled.

"In which direction are they going?"

"Most of them over the bridge."

A slender figure in pink negligee glided into the big hall.

"What is it, Teddy?" asked Bezzanna, in a flutter of anxiety. "War?"

He held up his unoccupied hand commandingly, big with grave questions of state.

"Are they using much light?" he asked.

"I have never seen the granaries so ablaze with it. They are using the new protected lamps, which make it seem like day."

Further questions eliciting no additional information of value, Tedoyah cautioned the watchman strictly not to call up any one else, and turned to remove the arms of Bezzanna gently from about his shoulders.

"What is it?" she asked him, frantic with both anxiety and curiosity.

"War!" he bassoed, straightening his shoulders; and kissing her, he ran up-stairs and awakened the king and hurried on to rap on Jimmy's door.

"Fire?" demanded the king, appearing in his doorway with a bottle of chemical fire-extinguisher in each hand.

"War!" deeply answered Teddy, from down the hall. "Come on over into Jimmy's room."

There being no response to Teddy's persistent knocking, he and the king marched through Jimmy's sitting-room and into his sleeping apartment, where they pulled that heavy sleeper forcibly out of his bed.

"Who's the party on?" demanded Jimmy, rubbing his eyes, and wondering why his right arm and shoulder ached. "Oh, yes, I pitched two innings this afternoon, and got a Charley horse. Haven't

you fellows gone to bed yet? It must be nearly midnight."

They led him to the open window and showed him the first streak of gray in the eastern sky.

"War!" Teddy solemnly informed him, and Bezanna, crouching outside the door, with her feet tucked tightly under her, shivered with excitement and the chill of the dawn.

The horrible thing of which she had heard all her life was coming to pass—and it was all on her account! She had thought it would be romantic to have it happen because of her, but now that the thing was here, she felt so miserable, and guilty, and generally worthless and in the way, that only one thing held her from waking up her Aunt Geegee and having her cry out in that sympathetic woman's arms. The one thing was that she had to hear the rest.

"It's an inconvenient hour to start a war," commented Jimmy, refusing to be astonished properly, but making a swift and rapid collection of his clothing, nevertheless. "Where's the army?"

"There isn't any yet that I know of," confessed Teddy.

Jimmy threw his clothes on the floor.

"Then there isn't any war," he decided. "It takes at least two armies to make a war. Let's all sit down and unravel this."

"I hope you can," blurted the exasperated king. "If I've asked Teddy once I've asked him forty times, from my door to this window, to explain himself, and he only has one word. Stop it! If you say it again, Teddy, I'll spank you, big as you are."

"I'll bet the Gold Developing and Refining Company against a burnt match that I'm right," insisted Teddy doggedly, and at last he was indignant enough to tell them his news; quite clearly and concisely, too, once that he was started..

"It's war, all right," agreed Jimmy, considering the matter thoughtfully. "I guess we'd better have the Department G boys stay here from to-night on. You can turn that old semi-detached left wing into a barracks without much trouble."

"Do you think there are enough of them?" inquired the king dubiously.

"I could loan half of them to the prince," responded Jimmy confidently. "How much of an army do you suppose Onalyon can raise?"

"Twenty thousand," estimated the king.

"The more the merrier," stated Jimmy. "When our army gets through, the prince won't have anybody to talk to on the way home. This wheat affair, however, means more than a mere securing of food supplies. It's a blow at the financial credit of the government. It's a run on the bank."

"I don't understand that," worried the king.

"It's a simple enough affair," replied Jimmy. "By ten o'clock this morning, everybody in Isola will know that the people, instigated by the prince, are turning in their cash wheat certificates and demanding their wheat, and they'll be so afraid that it will be all gone before they get theirs that they'll come with everything, from a six-donkey wagon to the baby's toy pail, to cart it away; for they know as well as we do that you have certificates out for five times as much wheat as there is in the granary."

"That's the trouble with a currency system based on something you can eat," fretted the king. "I've often tried to figure out a way to change it."

"It doesn't make much difference," sighed Jimmy. "No sort of money's good in a panic. When people get that intermittent fever they draw their cash all out of the bank, and take it home to have the rats eat their paper and the burglars steal their coin."

A horrible idea dawned on the king.

"Why, this will paralyze business!" he declared in terror.

"That's what it's designed to do," explained Jimmy calmly. "If the prince can only stir up the belief that the government is broke and can't make its money good, he can have ninety-five per cent. of the men in Isola hitting it up for the south side of the river, with a spear in one hand and an oath of allegiance in the other."

"Inflated currency," mused the king. "I'm going to be game enough to stick with a plan I sanctioned, but it looks to me as if we were up against it with your scheme of increased wealth. When one-fifth of our currency is turned in, and the wheat taken out, the other four-fifths won't be worth much."

"You couldn't buy a dried-up gum-drop with a bushel basket of it," cheerfully responded Jimmy.

"Then what are we to do?" urged the king, and waited anxiously for Jimmy's reply. "The first thing, of course, is to declare martial law, and forbid the removal of wheat."

"The minute you repudiate payment you're gone forever. It's better to let them break you. A man can go broke forty times and keep his credit A-one if he makes his debts good afterward, but if he puts his property in his wife's name and then goes into bankruptcy, he'd better save back enough to live on the rest of his life, for he couldn't get credit from a newspaper carrier until the end of the week."

"Then what are we to do?" persisted the king, aghast at any possible interruption to the fascinating game of business.

"Go to bed," advised Jimmy. "Let them collect their wheat. Order them to do it. Send down your own people to help. I hope they take it all."

The king paled at that daring suggestion.

"That's bankruptcy," he urged, unable to get

away from that appalling idea. "We can't sell a cake of soap."

"Nonsense," Jimmy consoled him. "They'll waste a little of that wheat in hasty handling, but they can't eat any more than the normal quantity, and they won't burn it. We'll have it all back as soon as we lick the prince, and then they'll charge him up with all the trouble. In America, the loser always bears the blame."

The king studied over that bit of comforting psychology, and a slow smile of satisfaction sat upon his features.

"Let's go to bed," he suggested, rising and yawning. "We have to see about the instalment of our big power plant for the Electric Light and Street Railway Companies to-morrow. By George!" and he suddenly sat down again, "the waterfalls are on Onalyon's private land, and now I suppose the negotiations are blocked. Onalyon was bound to have fifty-one per cent. of the stock, anyhow, and under the present circumstances he'll insist on it."

"We'll let him have it," calmly conceded Jimmy. "If I couldn't frame up a strictly legitimate business method of jerking the control away from a rank amateur like Onion, I'd go out of business and get me a wife who would take in washings."

"Good night," laughed the king, and passed out of the door.

He made a violent effort, and sprawled half-way across the corridor, for he had stumbled over a huddled-up, little pink figure, which, with its head in the angle formed by the door and the jamb, had been fast asleep.

"Golly Moses!" exclaimed Bezzanna, leaning back against the door-jamb in a fright, and then, seeing that it was only Teddy and the king, she scrambled to her feet, shivering, and remembered things. "Isn't there going to be any war?"

"I think so, if we can get Onalyon to set the date," smiled the king.

"You may go along, if you'll be good," offered Teddy.

"Cross your heart?" she demanded.

"Cross my heart, hope I may die," he laughingly assured her.

"Come on, Old Scout," and stooping down, he clasped his wrist, and he and the king made a basket of hands on which Bezzanna nestled with a sigh of content, slipping an arm around the neck of each brother.

They galloped back through the corridors, at the fire-alarm speed that she so hilariously enjoyed, and dumped her unceremoniously in at her door. Then, one by one, the lights in the palace went out.

CHAPTER XVI

ISOLA IS TAUGHT A SEVERE LESSON

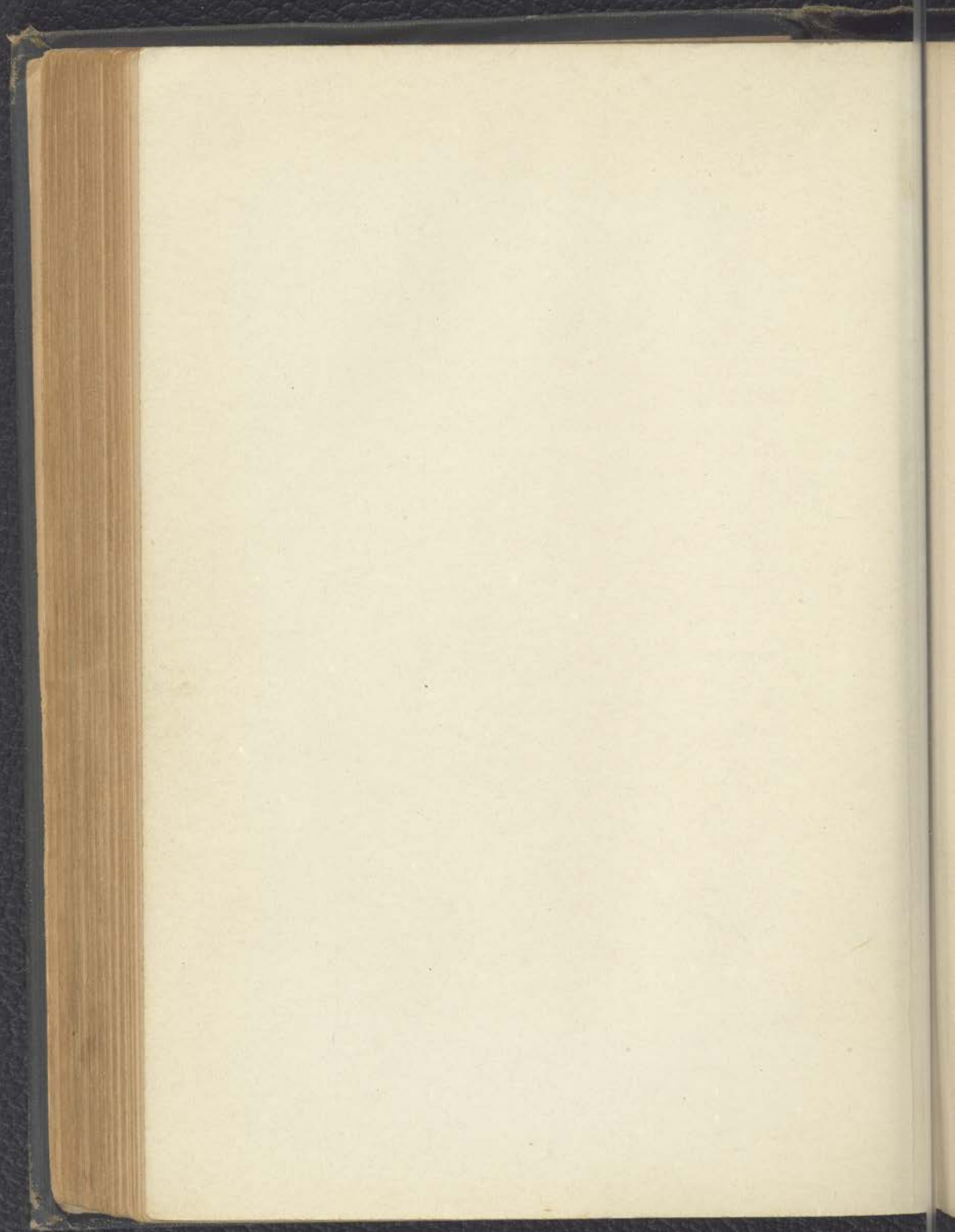
"JIMMY, dear, you're a wonder!" observed the Princess Bezzanna, resting her head affectionately on his shoulder, and leaning over to watch him put the finishing touches, decoration, inscriptions and number on the drawing of a street-car.

She had settled thoroughly her relations with Jimmy: the sea and the storm had brought her another good, kind, lovable brother, one of whom any girl might be justly proud. It was all very comfortable and nice since she had found this out, and it allowed her to act toward him just as she should feel. Of course, she never went so far as to kiss him, he was not exactly her brother, you know, there being precisely the shade of difference—well, you understand! Anyhow, it allowed her a great deal of the same sort of freedom, to a certain extent, you know, that she enjoyed with Teddy and the king.

Whatever Jimmy thought about this comfortable



He sprawled half way across the corridor.



and altogether miserable arrangement he kept to himself, along with several other thoughts on which he heaped the stones of obloquy whenever he found himself thinking at all on personal matters. He was rather a cold and distant brother, too, as Bezzanna carefully complained to herself, now and then, and never took the slightest advantage of his brotherly rights; never put his hand on her shoulder, for instance, nor anything like that; and sometimes Bezzanna was so piqued with him for his reserved manner that she stood on her dignity with him, for hours at a time. He was so good and so kind, however, so filled with grave thoughtfulness and consideration for her that she could not be out of sorts with him long, and always made amends by some sweet little token of her sisterly regard. He never repulsed her, anyhow; although, to tell the truth, he never gave any particular manifestations of joy over her affectionate touches. Sometimes he seemed pale and distressed when she came near him, and at such times she was particularly affectionate with him, trying to comfort him for whatever secret sorrow it was that he had; possibly homesickness. She worried, also, that he was working too hard. He was always so tearingly busy nowadays, and never had time to play with her, nor to sit long hours and chat, as he had at first. One thing he would always talk about, however, she had found,—his work.

"Did you hear me?" she insisted, shaking the shoulder of the arm which held his pen and laughing at the funny jiggle that process had made on the paper. "I said you are a wonder!"

"I know it," he calmly admitted, rising up to study that jiggle dispassionately, and figure if he could not work it into the striping design. "Whole families used to come for miles just to look at me."

"Silly," she chided him, pulling his ear, and pausing to consider the hair at the back of his neck, which always betrayed an inclination to curl up into a drake's tail. Having assisted that inclination with her two shell-pink forefingers, she resumed her annoyance. "Truly, Jimmy, I don't see how anybody ever got to know so much."

"I had an American education," Jimmy advised her, beginning to lay out a cross-section of the car. "I left high school at a tender age, but not in time to escape the multiplication table or the Latin class, though carrying with me such a love of the natural sciences that there were acid holes in all my clothes. I worked in the offices of a lawyer, a doctor, a real estate dealer, and a grafting promoter, and amused myself by learning the business thoroughly in each case. I took a job in a department store, but quit when I found myself selecting a red necktie for my own use. I traveled with a medicine show one season. I served brief, but handy apprentice-

ships as a lightning-rod salesman, an insurance solicitor, and district organizer for a fussy, purple-robed, fraternal benefit society. I took a correspondence course in mechanical drawing, went into a model shop, a cash-register works, and a steel bridge concern, and finally settled down with the Eureka Machinery Company, which is the biggest plant of its kind in the world, and where we manufacture everything from a screw-driver to a forty-ton lathe. Now, hold still, Betty. You asked for this, and you have to have it. In the Eureka shops, I became foreman, office manager, junior partner, and foreign salesman; and, in the meantime, I developed a streak as a boy orator, and was elected, by an overwhelming majority, to my state legislature, from which I escaped without arrest, or even scandal."

She surveyed him with wondering and admiring eyes.

"But where did you learn to play baseball?" she was anxious to know.

"I didn't," he replied. "No American kid learns to play baseball. He's born with a knowledge of the game, and is allowed to back-stop until he is big enough to swing a bat."

She sighed ecstatically.

"I wish I could go to America," she said wistfully.

That was the hardest thing to resist of anything she had ever said, but Jimmy gulped it down without swearing that he'd give his eyes to take her there, and measured the proper height for the hand-straps on his cross-section. He wanted plenty of hand-straps in his street-cars, and he hoped to see every one of them supporting the weight of an angry human being.

The king came in and smiling fondly on the two, drew Bezzanna's hand out of Jimmy's pocket, where she was resting her wrist, and turned her about-face for the door.

"Your class is waiting," he told her.

"I'm going to graduate that class of old maid school-teachers," she declared wearily. "They know so much American now that they correct my grammar, and they lift their eyebrows every time I use a bit of slang."

"I thought you had cut it out," remarked Jimmy with a laugh.

"I have," she stoutly asserted. "I gave it a pat on the curly head and kissed it good-by months ago, but, just the same, I keep a nice little fluff of it tucked in my sleeve, for emergency use. When you're in a hurry, it's really the only way you can put things across."

"I wouldn't take any more medicine for it if I were you, Betsy Ann," Jimmy kindly advised her.

"Slang is chronic, and nobody who catches it ever becomes entirely cured."

Old Hira Edas, the man who had invented the oar-lock, his eyes bleared red from working nights, and his face shining through the oil with the glow of creative delight, approached them, hugging a heavy box, from the top of which protruded a long metal funnel.

"Well, how's she working, Thomas A. Edison?" inquired Jimmy, clearing a space on his work-bench for the box, and reaching for a little lever at the side, but Betsy Ann peremptorily stopped him.

"Don't you dare!" she cried. "If you start that phonograph, and it's actually working, I'll never get away from here until I wear out all the records; and I've only time to slip in the back way and change my frock."

"I don't see why," protested Jimmy, surveying her with an approval in which there was no possible flaw. "I think it charming!"

"That's why," she informed him. "If I were to wear this pet little house frock of mine into that class-room, every one of those purring spinsters would have a cheap one just like it before to-morrow night."

Jimmy considerably waited until she was out of hearing before he tested the phonograph, pointed out the latest flaw in its construction, and sent

Thomas Alva away with it, determined to conquer the thing or die.

"Well, what's the latest news?" asked Jimmy of the king, who had already climbed on a tall stool and locked his fingers around his knee, in Bezzanna's favorite pose.

"The wheat's all gone," replied the king, smiling. "Old Polecon brought away the last load in the granary this morning."

"Full of gossip, I suppose?" guessed Jimmy.

"Quivering with it," chuckled the king. "I don't suppose that, outside of yourself and Bezzanna and Teddy, and the rest of the family, and the boys in the factory here, and the Royal Park team, and the bunch of devil-may-care jokers over in Department G, I have a stancher supporter in the kingdom than old Polecon."

Jimmy laughed softly.

"That Department G gang is the pride of my heart," he observed. "I selected every man in there because he had a sense of humor. There isn't a rough-neck in the department who wouldn't consider it a good joke on himself to have his leg sawed off."

"I like the thing you call a sense of humor," mused the king, with jovial little wrinkles at the corners of his eyes.

"It takes a sense of humor to appreciate it," ex-

plained Jimmy seriously. "A sense of humor is the thing that keeps a tragedy from becoming serious. An Englishman can see a joke if it is explained to him, a Frenchman if it's nasty, an Italian if it's cruel, a German if it's on somebody else, but the American is the only man on earth who can really enjoy a joke on himself. The American sense of humor is the bubble on the cup of courage."

"*The Star Spangled Banner*," sang the king in friendly derision, and doffed his cap to the ten-foot American flag which was draped above Jimmy's work-bench.

"Oh, long may she wave," finished the rich voice of Jimmy, who followed the king's salute with one of his own. "The opening exercises having now been concluded, what did our spy have to say?"

"Polecon is worried to death," replied the king. "He tells me that the panic is already in full sway. Onalyon began it by refusing our money at his department store, and is issuing credit slips in exchange for wheat to be used as currency. Onalyon has told the people that I have gone mad with commercial greed, and I think he believes it. He declares that I have taken, with your assistance, the lion's share of every enterprise for myself, and am planning to drain the resources of Isola to make myself rich. I don't see how people can be such fools, Jimmy. We are making them richer in lux-

uries, enjoyments, largeness of life, opportunities, and actual wealth by a hundredfold, than they could ever hope to have been without these five centuries of progress which you have given us in less than a single year; and yet it was possible to persuade these people that I am robbing them!" and he crimsoned with indignation.

"Double tut!" chided Jimmy. "People like to be persuaded, at least once, into every fool belief in the world, so they can know how it feels, but they always come back to the right thing. What else did Polecon have on his mind?"

"The prince's new currency system, for one thing. Onalyon, it seems, intends to consolidate all the manufacturing enterprises of Isola into one big company, and issue one-dollar interest-bearing shares, which will take the place of currency."

"I needed a laugh this morning," responded Jimmy. "I wish we could afford to let him make an ass of himself trying to harness a currency of fluctuating value. I've been in the Central American countries at a period when people never asked the price of commodities when they went marketing, but the price of money, and every time they saw an American dollar, which is worth a hundred cents any place and all the time, they hid it, and squatted over the spot with a gun. What else frets Polecon?"

"The worst is yet to come," laughed the king. "The fine old codger is half wild because I'm not defending myself against anything Onalyon does, and because I'm not raising an army."

"Doesn't he see that we can't spare the time?" demanded Jimmy, then he closed his eyes to snicker. "I'll bet Onalyon is more worried about that than Polecon."

"He is," chuckled the king. "Just while I was talking with Polecon, I had a telephone message from Huppylac, who urged me, with tears in his voice, to defend myself, assuring me that war was really imminent. I'm sure that the message was inspired by Onalyon, for his family and that of old Huppylac have been sworn friends for two hundred years."

"Of course the message is from Onalyon," decided Jimmy, with a nod of approbation. "Onalyon doesn't want to hit you behind your back. He's a good sport."

"I like him," heartily agreed the king. "He is a splendid and most lovable fellow." He hesitated a moment, but it was difficult for him to keep anything from his trusted prime minister. "There was a time when I was anxious to have him marry Bezanna, but now I am glad—" He broke off sharply. "You know what the war's about, don't you? Bezanna refused to marry him."

In spite of the fact that Jimmy had positively no trace of interest in Bezzanna's marital affairs, his heart gave an unruly jump.

"Why?" he asked.

"Because Onalyon is so unlike you and Teddy and myself, she explains," laughed the king. "Secretly she is very much worried about this war, and has developed a conscience at such an alarming rate that I am worried about her. Really, however, she has done precisely what I wish in the political way, although she believes I say that merely out of kindness. Onalyon, fine fellow as he is, inherits too many traits, including cruelty, from that misguided artist, Xantobah, to be quite safe."

"He is the most dangerous type of man in the world," declared Jimmy soberly. "He is plausible without being practical."

One of the foremen came in.

"That shipment from warehouse number six is ready for delivery to the Grand Bazaar Department Store," he stated with the anxiety of a man so thoroughly satisfied with his responsibilities that he feels entitled to take liberties. "Shall we send it out, under the circumstances? Prince Onalyon's manager telephones that he is sending up wheat to pay for it."

"Not on your life!" refused Jimmy emphatically. "Send back that wheat the minute it gets here and

tell Onalyon's Bazaar, also, that it can't have that shipment even for cash."

"Thanks," said the foreman gratefully, happy in the task of delivering anybody an ultimatum.

"What are you going to do?" inquired the king, smiling his approval of whatever it was.

"Teach Isola a lesson that she won't forget in a hurry!" announced Jimmy savagely. "She has forgotten how rich she is!"

"Good," applauded the king. "I am strong for your idea; but what is it?"

Jimmy smashed his fist triumphantly on his workbench.

"She gets no soap!"

*Sunday
Oct 26*

CHAPTER XVII

OLD AMYAH ACHIEVES A GLORIOUS LIE

ALL night long, old Amyah, worried into a condition of painfully alert wakefulness, pottered about the great hall, keeping hot broth on the fire, and warm capes ready for instant use against the night air of the late fall, and looking out of the great glazed windows toward the valley a thousand times. Meanwhile, he alternated between the telephone and the window, wringing his bloodless hands as if to keep them warm.

The windows never gave him any satisfaction, for the darkness remained as placidly secretive as the moon herself; but the telephone was more helpful. Its bells had been replaced with a red electric light, and shortly after midnight, the vivid glow first called the old man's attention. It was Dottersis, the night watchman at the First National Bank, who called.

"I must speak with the king or Jimmy," he demanded.

"Impossible," replied Amyah. "No one is to be

awakened unless there is an actual invasion of the palace grounds."

"This is serious, however," insisted Dottersis.

"No one is to be awakened," repeated Amyah firmly.

"Then carry him this message. Men with spears are passing over the bridge to the south side of the river; large numbers of them, and other bodies of armed men are joining them from the south valley."

"It is true, then!" trembled old Amyah. "I would not believe that an army could be raised against the king."

"Believe anything that is foolish, since merchants refuse good money!" growled Dottersis. "Will you tell the king or Jimmy what I have said?"

"In the morning," worried Amyah. "Is there anything else you have to tell them?"

"Not now," answered Dottersis; "but I shall tell you everything I see from my windows."

"Do!" begged old Amyah. "You can not call me too often. Night is so lonely."

He paused and wrung his hands, and looked toward the great stairway which ran upward into yawning blackness. Surely, the king or Jimmy or Teddy should know at once this startling news. Held back by his strict instructions, but prompted by his devotion, he put his foot upon the lower step, and held motionless a full five minutes, struggling

within himself. But obedience conquered, and in great agitation he ran to the window and peered down into the valley, as if, through all that dimly lighted distance, his old eyes could see the gathering hosts that menaced his king.

The light of the telephone flashed, and the peremptory voice of a sharp-timbred old man said:

"Hello, Palace-1."

"Yes, sir," quavered Amyah.

"Who is at the phone?"

"Amyah, sir."

"Tell the king I wish to speak with him."

"It is impossible, sir."

"The matter is imperative."

"The king is not to be awakened, sir."

"This is so important that you must disobey orders. This is Huppylac. Do as I bid you."

"I dare not, for any one," responded Amyah, a feeble trace of satisfaction thrilling his old soul that he could disobey a noble! "I can only take your message, and deliver it in the morning."

"It will be too late."

"I have my orders, sir."

"Tell him this, then," snapped Huppylac. "A detachment of one thousand men, brought together by my order and armed by me, is just leaving my estate to join the army of Prince Onalyon."

"Yes, sir," faintly answered Amyah, aghast at

this information. Why, he had known Huppylac for sixty years!

"Tell him," went on the harsh voice of Huppylac, "that I am sending him this message because I do not wish him to be taken unawares, but that, as he has had ample warning, we shall not let his unpreparedness hold us back."

"Yes, sir," murmured Amyah.

"That is all. You may use your own discretion about advising the king now or in the morning," and a click in the instrument told that Huppylac was through.

Old Amyah was in despair, but he still held firm against the powerful impulse that urged him to call his master. The king could not have known the tremendous events that this night was to bring forth.

Amyah passed to the south windows and peered through the dark trees down into the moonlit mistiness of the valley. The very air seemed aquiver with mystery. Out of it came frightening soundless voices, and strange weird shapes moved stealthily under the dark shadows,—creatures of his own fancy he knew, but none the less awful because of that. The very night itself was made of horror!

He shifted uneasily to the eastern windows, those that faced toward the hidden sea, and he thrilled with the joy of human company, for upon a tree-top, streamed a mellow light, the glow from Bez-

zanna's windows. He knew then that she, like himself, was keeping a sleepless vigil and longing for the dawn; but with less relief than he, since she had no blessed duties to perform.

Two o'clock! The big timepiece over the mantel, swinging its long pendulum unceasingly, in token of the relentless flight of time and the never-halt-ing approach of death, told the hour with its mellow silver chime.

The telephone called him.

"Hello, Palace-1," came a crisp voice. "This is Dymp Haplee. Call Jimmy or the king or Teddy."

"Impossible, sir," returned Amyah, himself stirred into crispness of thought and speech. "No one is to be disturbed."

"All right! I'm in a hurry, anyhow," said Dymp. "The *Isolian* is getting out a morning extra about the war. Run up and ask the king, or Jimmy, what they want me to say about it. Tell him I'll tint the story any way he wants it, or suppress the whole issue if he thinks best."

"I am not to awaken any one," Amyah insisted; "not unless there is an actual invasion of the palace grounds."

"Good leather!" laughed Dymp. "That sounds like Jimmy. It's a good story in itself. The gov-

ernment was so little worried by the threatened hostilities that only Amyah, the faithful old master of the servants, who was the king's body-guard when he was a baby, was awake last night at the king's palace. Good stuff, eh, old boy? I wish I had your photograph. Say, Amyah, what time is the king to be called?"

"Seven o'clock, sir."

"All right. You tell him I'll hold my edition on the press until he calls me up, at about five minutes after seven; and, if he objects to anything, I'll pound that part of the type flat with a mallet; that is, if I'm here. Whatever time that army starts out for the palace I'll beat them to it by half an hour, and you tell Jimmy to have a good, heavy, number nineteen spear leaning up at the side of the front door for me. How's Bezzanna?"

"She is very well, sir, thank you," quavered Amyah, and when Dymp had hastily hung up, he shuffled over to the east window to see if she was. Her light was still burning.

Young Birrquay called up, but he did not ask for any one. He was in great haste.

"I shall have five hundred men camped at the foot of the palace park before daybreak," he stated. "If the king wishes them disposed anywhere else, let him send a messenger down to meet them."

"Yes, sir," trembled Amyah, and the tears sprang to his eyes. He had thought that perhaps the whole world had deserted the king.

Calamaz, conceited and foppish young Calamaz, who talked with an affected lisp, and bragged always on himself, and was supercilious with Amyah,—that Calamaz called up and hastily inquired to what point he should center the men he was arming! Two detachments, of a hundred each, were ready, and he would start more within an hour.

Amyah, trembling at his own temerity, told him: "At the foot of the palace park."

An eternity of fifteen minutes passed, and the night lay as black as ever, as if the world were to be swathed in darkness forevermore. He opened the eastern window a little way to look up more directly at the light which was friendliness and companionship, and he wondered if Bezzanna, kneeling there at her window, and gazing out toward the tumbling waters of the ocean, had seen his light, and had thought of him as he thought of her, with the feeling that there was still trust and faithfulness in the world. The night air was still chill, and he closed the window gently; then he took a cup of the hot broth up-stairs, and set it at Bezzanna's door, and knocked softly, lest she might have fallen asleep. He thought, as he turned away, that he heard her

sobbing quietly, and he hurried, for fear that he might make sure.

The red light was glowing when he came down into the hall. It was young Polecon, fat Polecon, the brother of Toopy. He had a hundred and fifty men; and old Polecon, the laughing, purple-visaged joker, had, by moving Heaven and earth, obtained three hundred and fifty stout spearsmen, whom he intended to lead himself.

Grisophal, the ill-tempered, swore violently into old Amyah's ear the moment he knew himself in possession of it. He had eight hundred villainous scoundrels who would have holes in their backs if they didn't get some in front, and he would assemble them anywhere the king said. At the foot of the palace park? All right.

Others of the nobles called, loyal to the king, and ready with men and arms and their own bodies, but, after all, they were pitifully small in number, and the utmost combined forces they could offer, including the men at the factories, were less than four thousand.

The prince, old Amyah had heard, had more than twenty! It seemed like a dream, a nightmare; and the red light, which glowed now over the telephone, was ominous in its significance!

A red mist seemed to come over old Amyah's

eyes, and to cast its sinister hue upon the clean smooth floors of the palace, and on its walls, and even, in his mind's agonized visions, upon the corridors, to the right and left of which slept the king, and Teddy and Jimmy,—and where knelt the Princess Bezzanna!

With a strange reluctance, he took the receiver from its hook.

"Amyah!" thrilled the tensely hurried voice of Dottersis.

"Yes!" vibrated the voice of Amyah, catching instantly the contagion of excitement.

"The war is begun! I must talk quickly, for they are pounding at my door. I've been trying to get you for a long time, but your wire was busy. They are taking possession of the city, in the name of King Onalyon. The streets are swarming with soldiers, and they are carrying Onalyon's orange banners, with the prancing goat on it! They have taken possession of all the factories and warehouses, the office of the *Isolian*, the stock exchange, and now are demanding the surrender of the bank, but you may tell the king that I did not let them in, so long as I had strength in my body!"

"Wait!" cried Amyah, and in that second of anguish, in which he saw the suffering of Dottersis' soul as if it had been his own, the feeble spirit of old Amyah, which had passed a lifetime in such

servility as can only come to those servants who are masters over servants, developed itself into the proportions of a man, and he achieved a beautiful daring lie!

"Wait!" he ordered. "The king left word that if the bank were besieged you should surrender it without resistance." And so it was that he saved Dottersis the glory of a useless martyrdom.

Again the red light. This time it was the voice of a girl, a voice full of courage, and of calm business briskness as well.

"Hello, Palace-1," she said. "I'm sorry to inform you that your service will be discontinued immediately. The revolutionists have taken possession of the telephone exchange and are cutting all the wire on the palace switchboard. Is there any hurry-up connection—"

The deathlike silence, as still as the grave itself, so still that those wires, from which the life current had departed, had a trace of the awe that attaches to the corpse of a dead, once-animate thing, took possession of Amyah's telephone, and he felt its uselessness so keenly that he did not even think to hang up the receiver, but let it dangle limply from its fastenings, like a palsied and lifeless arm!

How far away the world seemed, and how isolated the palace, as if it had been suddenly removed, in the twinkling of an eye, far, far distant from all

human life, or action, or, worst of all, thought! What startling scenes, what acts of violence, what tragedies might be going on, in the maelstrom of events that swirled down in the valley beyond that wall of velvet darkness, he could not know. He could only wait for the dawn.

CHAPTER XVIII

JIMMY PREPARES BEZZANNA FOR THE FIELD OF BATTLE

WAR! There was a thrill about the very name which turned the king to gravity as he listened, at breakfast, to old Amyah's report of the night. That breakfast was the most exciting state function at which the king had presided in many years; for the Polecons, and Birrquay, and Grisophal, and Calamaz, and Dymp Haplee, and the other nobles who were loyal to him and had flocked to his support with their troops, came in to the early morning meal, and discussed strategy, worried that the king should take so little interest in the disposal of their forces.

Outside there was the tramp of many feet, the clank of antiquated armor, and the sound of tense voices, and while the king's heart was melted by the thought of all the love for him which it meant to have these men ready to face death in his defense, it was made mournful, too, by the thought that so

many were ready to turn against him, and to kill, if need be, for so slight a reason; for after all, it was a pitifully small company which he entertained that morning.

The foreman of the experimental shop, a big brawny fellow with a flawlessly round head and eyes that looked cold but were merry, came awkwardly in, with the license which prevailed that morning about the palace.

"I beg your pardon, Jimmy," he said. "The men are here early, and they're so restless I don't exactly know what to do with them."

"Did they all come?" asked Jimmy.

"If there was a man missing I'd go after him," announced the foreman, who had an arm like a ham and a fist like a cannon-ball, which was one of the reasons he was foreman.

"Every man from every shop is here, and armed; but I'm afraid I can't hold them in check. They want to start right out and meet Onalyon."

"I think you'd better blow the whistle," advised Jimmy, looking at his watch. "Work is the best cure I know for nervousness."

"Thank you," returned the foreman with a grin, and went away.

"I wish we had ten thousand men like him," offered Dym Haplee, whose breast was filled with a rage which was half heart-break. "I'd go straight

down to the office of the *Isolian* and get out my war extra with job type. Why, boys," and in spite of himself, the tears came into his eyes, "I stood right there and watched them mash up the plates of the first morning edition I ever got ready for the press! All hot stuff, too, and the only real sensation I've had since I went into the newspaper business! I had waited for a real live scoop like this six months; blast them!"

"They've taken something from you that you'll never get back," sympathized Jimmy, himself pained and saddened by the outrage. "History is of no use to a newspaper."

"Except while they're pulling it out of the oven," supplemented Dymp. "If I'd only had the story Dottersis told me as we streaked up the hill at day-break, I could have closed the forms. It was so full of color that I'd have needed red ink."

"Have you a good steady heart action?" inquired Teddy.

"I was Jimmy's first baseball umpire," grinned Dymp.

"Then hold tight to your chair while I tell you something," directed Teddy. "Your old hand press and that first lot of soft-nose type is out in the west annex of the shop."

"Excuse me, please," begged Dymp, rising hurriedly; "I'm in a rush. Is there anybody here who

can help me stick type? I'll dictate the running account of this war right at the cases."

"Ask for young Edas," laughed Jimmy. "He can do anything. Gee, what a purple lamp you're getting! Somebody pasted you a beauty!"

"That was a present from one of Huppylac's donkey-drivers," responded Dymp, smoothing the bruised eye tenderly. "He's the only one in the bunch which invaded my office who fought American. I will say, though, that the rest of the boys have a trace of the spirit of it. They threw down their spears when they poured into my office, and gave me a chance."

"It must have been a bully scrimmage!" sighed Teddy enviously as Dymp hurried out.

"I am thankful for the fact that there has been no great cruelty so far," commented the king; "but it hurts, too, to find that Onalyon's army holds us in such contemptuous regard as to make a joke of the matter. They laughed when they overpowered Dymp and Dottersis, and they took the girl at the telephone exchange a box of American candy when they cut the wires of the palace switchboard."

"I'm for that girl till my breath stops!" declared Jimmy. "She threw the candy at them, and went home."

Everybody laughed, but the king could not join them. He was hurt.

"It is all because they expect no genuine resistance," he explained. "I feel to-day as if I had been a failure as a ruler, or Onalyon could not have obtained so large a following."

"You've been too good," explained Jimmy. "Kindness is too often mistaken for weakness. You've governed so justly and so gently that Isola did not know she was being ruled, and so modestly that they scarcely felt they had a king. An American can't be very strong for government by heredity, and the example of America has been so powerful that the king business is dying out all over the world, but, if I were to take up that profession, I'd never move a step without a brass band, and I'd slam every man in jail who didn't kiss the dust every time he saw a royal uniform."

Fat young Polecon laughed until he shook like a bowl of jelly.

"Can't you imagine Jimmy as a cruel tyrant!"

"I'm only saying what I'd do if I took up the profession," defended Jimmy. "I wouldn't do it, to begin with, but just the same, I'm right. Other kings have been popular, but the tyrants are the only ones who ever got away with the job. The reason an American policeman is the most respected officer of the kind in the world, is that the average citizen knows that a copper will pound his head off if he needs it."

"Jimmy will now tell us a few facts about America," laughed old Polecon. "It is the best, the most progressive—"

Jimmy suddenly rose and took up a glass of water, as a loud sound from outside the window interrupted Polecon's friendly raillery. It was the soap factory band limbering up for the exercises of the day, and it had burst into the strains of *Dixie*.

"The national hymn!" toasted Jimmy with a hushed voice. "America! Boys, you're nice people, and you've given me a friendly hand, and a business opportunity such as no other man ever had in the world; but I want to go home!"

A broad giant, who swung his shoulders so much that he waddled, was ushered into the dining-room, and stood slightly sidewise. He looked at his enormous hands, also, as if he were somewhat handicapped by not being able to spit on them before he began.

"Good morning, Chief," he hailed Jimmy in a husky and rumbling voice. "The Royal Park nine and the West Mountain team are having a chewing match as to who's to head the National League division of the army, and they was just starting to settle it with bats when I called time long enough to come in and put it up to you."

"Settle it by the percentages," ordered Jimmy.

"But we're tied for first place," worried the captain of the Royal Park nine.

"That's right," acknowledged Jimmy with creased brows. "That's the first time in my life I was ever so busy as to forget the October standing in the big league race."

"Why not play an unofficial game to decide it?" proposed Teddy. "There's plenty of time."

"That's the ticket," approved Jimmy, delighted with the suggestion. "Why, Teddy, that settles the whole problem of how to keep our army from fretting itself to death before Onalyon gets here. Line them all up on the hillside at the foot of the royal park and let them have a baseball game. If it's a good tight one, the audience will be so wrought up that I think they could wipe Onalyon's twenty thousand tired marchers right off the scenery. All you'd have to do would be to start the umpire in the direction of Onalyon's army and give the mob leave to chase him."

"It may wear out your ball players, and we'll probably need them," urged the cautious Grisophal.

"It'll only put us on edge," growled the captain of the Royal Parks, as he spraddled out.

"Teddy, you're a genius," complimented Jimmy. "Run over and tell the foreman to blow the whistle and start the main shafting as usual, for the sake of

discipline, but to declare a half-holiday. Come on, boys; let's hustle down and get front seats."

There was a noisy shuffling of chairs as the king's guests laughingly arose. As they were passing out of the door, Jimmy, who had been missing something all morning, and missing it keenly, managed to fall back with the king.

"Where's Betty?" he asked. "It wouldn't be fair to have a ball game without her."

"I scarcely think she will care to go," replied the king, much worried. "She did not sleep well last night, and this morning I reassured her, very earnestly, as to the outcome of to-day; but she is so wretchedly pale and hollow-eyed that I am sure she will not let herself be seen publicly. She's a vain little sister."

"She is not!" Jimmy hotly defended her. "She is pretty, and she knows she is pretty, and she takes the care of her beauty which every girl should, for it's not only a woman's right and privilege to appear as pretty as she can, and as dainty and charming, but it's her secret duty. Vanity, however, is a different thing, and our Betsy hasn't a trace of it. Vanity is the quality which destroys the beauty of beauty."

"I apologize," laughed the king.

"Then don't do it again," admonished Jimmy.

"Do you suppose Betsy Ann would see me?"

"You might try it," suggested the king. "She is in her sitting-room, I think."

Jimmy hurried up the stairs, but before he went to Bezzanna's apartments he went into his own, and came out with a big flat parcel wrapped in the latest triumph of his paper mills—pink tissue-paper—and tied with olive-green ribbon.

"Who's there?" asked a sorrowful little voice from the other side of the door when he knocked.

"Jimmy," responded that young man cheerfully. "We're going to have a ball game."

"Before the war?" she inquired, and he could hear by her voice that she was coming to the door.

"While we're waiting," he explained. "Hurry up, or we'll be late."

"I can't go," she replied miserably, and he heard the touch of her hand upon the latch and the soft crush of her body upon the door. He knew that she was leaning against it, in dejection.

"Why not?" he demanded.

"I feel so wretched, and I look it."

"I have a present for you."

"You're a dear!" and he detected a note of rising animation in her laggard tones.

"May I come in?"

"I don't know. Wait a minute," and he grinned as he heard the rapid swish of her robe. He knew that she was hurrying over to her mirror.

"It's your birthday present," he called.

"Jimmy! and a week ahead of time!" She rushed back to the door faster than she had left it, threw it wide open, and stood revealed before him, a pale-faced little vision in fluffy pink.

Her mouth had the pitiful curves of a child who had been abused, but in her eyes there glowed a steady something which he was not more than half pleased to see. Somehow, she had grown up in the night.

Jimmy's heart tugged at him fiercely. He wanted to take her up in his big strong arms and comfort her. The piteous mouth impelled him to do this, but the eyes, which had suffered, forbade it.

"I'll bet it's a corker!" she guessed, walking swiftly along beside him, and patting the parcel as he carried it to her table. "I'll bet you worked an hour on this bow," she laughed. "It's cute, though." He stood by, smiling happily, while her deft white fingers untied it. "What a darling box!" she cried, as the wrappings revealed a gold-mounted lacquered case. "What's in it?" and she twisted so excitedly at the little gold key that she could not open it, nor would she let Jimmy do it.

When she had finally thrown back the lid, however, her delight could only express itself in a long-drawn-out, half-whispered:

"Oo-o-o-o-oo!"

Within the box, nestled in receptacles let into the soft white velvet lining, were exquisitely cut little glass jars and pots and bottles, of varying sizes and shapes, filled with substances of many shades.

"Isn't it glorious!" she exclaimed, and then her voice grew hesitant. "But what is it?" she puzzled.

"It's one of the withheld industries of Isola," he informed her with a curious smile. "I don't think we're ripe for it, and, moreover, I hesitate to put it on the market. It's like whisky; a good thing in its place, but used in the wrong way by so many of the wrong people. It's a make-up box."

"Come again," she invited him. "I guess I'm foggy this morning, for I don't get you. I think those long, thin little bottles, with the delicately colored liquids in them, are perfume, but the rest of it has me swimmy."

"Well," Jimmy explained, still with that curious smile, "this is rouge, and that is a lip pencil, and these are face powders, white and pink and flesh tint, and those are eyebrow pencils, and that is brilliantine, and these are finger-nail creams, polishes and tints, and these, chamois and puffs and rabbit's feet and other junk you'll find a use for quicker than I can tell you. This big long jar is cold cream, and this wicked-looking little slim bottle with the fancy stopper is smelling-salts. You get that first. Be careful!"

His warning came too late. He had unstopped the bottle as he spoke and handed it to her, and she had smelled, not wisely, but too well. The next two minutes were spent by Bezzanna in trying to recover.

"Why did you do that to me?" she demanded, wiping her eyes.

"To make your head feel better, and to brace you up all over," Jimmy told her, most humbly. "Try it again, but be afraid of it."

"I do believe my head feels better already," she admitted, sniffing the bottle from afar. "Why, this is a sort of medicine-chest. Will it all make me feel better?"

"Heaps," he solemnly assured her. "A good reliable make-up box is the best tonic any artistic woman has. She can be pale and ill, and discouraged with life. After twenty minutes with a life-saver like this collection she can come away with the bloom of health in her cheeks, the sparkle of vivacity in her eyes, and the peace of confidence in her soul. The first thing you do, Betsy Ann, is to smear your face with this cold cream."

She dipped her fingers in it daintily, and tested its odor. It was delicate with the fragrance of peach stones, and thoroughly satisfied, she followed his directions.

"Now, take a towel and rub it off," he ordered.

"It's a lucky thing for you that I had two grown-up sisters."

Breathlessly interested now, Bezzanna followed instructions.

"Now the rouge," said Jimmy, and dipping his finger in the little dark red jar, he placed a tiny spot of the red on her cheek, and began to rub it around and around, unfolding the extension-hinged triple mirror in the lid of her make-up cabinet so that she could see the effect.

"I know how!" she exclaimed. "Let me! I can do it better!"

"Help yourself," invited Jimmy. "Believe me, Betsy, I don't like the job, anyhow. On general principles I'm against this sort of thing, but I'm strong for first-aids-to-the-injured, and I'd rather see a woman who needs it make herself carefully pretty with rouge than to see her utterly miserable without."

"You're a corker, Jimmy!" she told him, turning toward him big eyes that beamed with genuine gratitude. "I don't believe I thanked you for all this. You're one of the three best brothers in the world!" and drawing him down to her, she kissed him. Then she caught sight of herself in the glass, and laughed. "How funny I look with one healthy cheek," she said. "I'll be down in ten minutes, Jimmy."

"You won't if I don't stay here a little longer, and explain what this powder's for."

"You're a nice Jimmy," she told him, "but I'll bet I can find out how to use that powder. You select the shade you need, and you put it on with this beautiful fluffy thing, and you smooth it with the rabbit's foot, and then—and then—and then you brush your eyebrows and lashes, I guess."

"I'm going to the war," declared Jimmy, and stalked out.

"You have to wait for me," she called after him.

"I will," he gaily called back to her.

Confound it, why had she kissed him—like that!

CHAPTER XIX

CAPTAIN TEDDYAH BRINGS UP THE ARMY

IN the tenth inning of the savagely-contested game that was to decide the precedence of the Royal Park and the West Mountain teams, General Jimmy Smith, watching down in the valley with the first and only telescope in Isola, saw, on the farthest rise of the winding road, a steadily advancing cloud of dust, and he turned to the captain, who sat beside him yelling vociferously for slugger Dotersis to "hit her out."

"Go and tell your Department G boys to knock off work, and get ready for the parade," he ordered.

"Aye, aye, sir," said Captain Teddy, his face lighting with eagerness. "May I wait to see if Dotersis finds that ball?"

"It isn't usual on a field of battle," chided Jimmy with a grin; "but, under the circumstances—" "That's the boy, Dotersis!" and Jimmy was on his feet, frantically shaking both tightly clenched fists. "Go to it, you old ice wagon! Don't stop to look for the ball! They'll be chasing it yet to-mor-

row morning! Hit her up, Dot! Let out another link! If he doesn't get out of the road, jump over him! Watch out! They're after it! Hold third, now! Hold it! Hold it! Hold it! Well, slide then!"

Dotterisis, needing no instructions, took a good lead off third to get his directions straightened out, threw himself headlong on the grass, and slid all the way across the home plate, where the catcher, snapping the ball in his glove one second later, held it straight up in the air, and frantically appealed to the umpire to call it an out.

Jimmy, cheering himself hoarse for joy, and with a rosy-cheeked and sparkling-eyed girl on his arm who was jumping up and down and squealing in ecstasy, was gradually aware that some one, shouting hoarsely close to his ear, was pounding him violently on the back.

"I thought I told you to go and bring the army," he sternly reproved the captain.

"Aye, aye, sir," apologized Teddy, with beaming countenance. "Wasn't it a beauty!"

"Great!" cried Jimmy, wiping his eyes, and unconsciously patting the slender hand that gripped his arm. "It means another inning."

"I wonder if we couldn't put off the war," said Teddy wistfully.

"I'll go along," volunteered the black-eyed little girl who hung to Teddy's other arm.

"All right, Toopy," accepted Teddy with alacrity. "Will you make her a lieutenant, Jimmy?"

"The Polecon family is pretty well supplied with officers now, but, for this special service only, Lieutenant Toopy may have the title. About face, march, you kids!"

The king, who, with his hat on the back of his head, had been keeping score on an old envelope, left his group of nobles on the sloping rock which had done duty as a royal box, and came over to Jimmy, just as Teddy and Toopy ran up the hill toward the palace.

"Isn't there a cloud of dust down there over the bend?" he inquired, reaching for Jimmy's telescope.

"That's all you'll see," replied Jimmy. "It's a big cloud. It goes straight up, and spreads wide, and it keeps steadily advancing."

"It's Onalyon," decided the king, releasing the glass, and a shade of sadness passed over his face. "It is a desperate and a serious thing, war! I had not realized until now—"

The sharp crack of a bat interrupted him. Squirrel Lospol, trying to emulate the mighty feet of Slugger Dottersis, had pounded the ball right on the front part of the girth, and had sent it whizzing down into that same treacherous and lumpy right field, and the king immediately began to help him run.

He got the Squirrel across first base, as a matter of course, pushed him across second with a tremendous spurt of energy, and died with him on the way to the next station, where he was run down by the second and third basemen, the short-stop, the left fielder and the pitcher.

"It's a shame a game like this can't go on the official score," he complained to young Calamaz.

"I'm afraid Squirrel will have to go back to the minor league for another year," commented surly-looking Grisophal. "He takes some absurd chances. Hello! Isn't that a cloud of dust coming up the road?" and he looked around hastily, to make sure of the location of his men.

"It's Onalyon," answered the king.

Birrquay, overhearing that, came closer to them.

"We had better dispose our forces, and make ready for action immediately," he urged.

"I can use them better just as they are," replied the king, with an affectionate sweep of his gaze over the crowded hillside.

"It would be suicide," declared Birrquay. "We have not a chance in the world in the open this way. If we line the pass, which leads from the foot of the palace park in through the lower portion of the palace grounds, we shall be able to hold them off for hours, then possibly at night a portion of our forces might attack them from the rear. If we can

split them up into sections, our men may be able to conquer them piecemeal, for they are hard fighters and capable of becoming desperate, as men must be who join a losing cause. It is the only chance I see."

"I have a better one," smiled the king; "Jimmy. He is going to try to end this war for me without bloodshed, and, until he has had his try, I prefer these men to remain exactly as they are. I guarantee that they will have plenty of time to gain control of the pass after the parley, if such a thing should be necessary."

Grisophal turned on him with a contraction of his brows.

"If this thing is to be made a matter of concessions and commercial bargaining, if you plan to relinquish anything that is yours, I withdraw my men at once," he announced. "They came here neither to surrender nor to make a treaty."

The pale clean-shaven face of the king stiffened and waxed, and his eyes darkened.

"Grisophal," he sternly replied, "Prince Onalyon is carrying a banner with a prancing goat, and he calls himself king. There will be no treaties."

"I beg your pardon," apologized Grisophal, and then he laughed. "Our friend Jimmy may do anything he likes," he granted. "I am certain that it will be interesting."

As the twelfth inning began, the nobles went quietly about among their respective forces, instructing them precisely what to do.

When the army of Onalyon arrived over the brink of the gently sloping hills at the far side of the plateau on which the ball game was in progress, they were greeted by the mad cheers of four thousand lusty throats, for Slugger Dottersis had wound up the sixteenth inning with a sky-scouring center-field fly, which had allowed Lote Rimmersy to scamper from third home with a winning run, and had gained for the Royal Parks the proud privilege of dying in the thickest of the coming carnage.

The king frowned as, in the fore front of the troops, he distinguished Onalyon, preceded by a huge orange banner embellished with the prancing goat, and ordering a parley sounded, he went out alone toward the center of the plateau, where the prince, dismounting, and halting his army, came out to meet him.

"I presume you know that your life is forfeited by this act of yours, unless I choose to make you a present of it," declared the king. "What do you expect to gain?"

"The kingdom of Isola," replied the prince. "I shall either marry the Princess Bezzanna, and succeed to the throne in that way, or I shall take it by force, to-day."

"You will do neither," the king calmly assured him. "If you will go home at once, and disperse your army, and undo the things you have done to injure me, I shall give you pardon and permit you to retain your estates, but if you take so much as one of those yellow banners with you when you leave this field, I will have your head, if I have to strike it off with my own hand."

His tone was so quietly confident, and he was so full of deadly earnest that, for a moment, the prince was nonplused, then suddenly he laughed.

"It is I who will dictate the terms," he stated. "If you are not disposed to make peaceable way to the palace for myself and my troops, we shall start immediately to carve our way through. I have twenty thousand men behind me. I do not care to waste much time in parley."

"Nor I," returned the king, "except that I do not want bloodshed, nor the harming of a single one of my people; not even those who have followed you here with spears in their hands to take my life. Nor do I think you prefer to turn this field into a slaughter ground."

"By no means," returned the prince quickly, and feeling their responsibility, both of them involuntarily turned to the natural amphitheater in the midst of which they were standing.

On the steep hillside toward the palace, backed

by the rocks and trees of the park, stood the orderly ranks of the forces that had been brought by the friendly nobles, for the defense of their king. Their stout spears stood erect, with no one of their sharp points wavering, and well to their front, with the Royal Park team in the foremost rank, stood the hundred red-brown uniformed men of the Isolian National Baseball League. They were ready to fight, these men, all of them; and to die, if need be; and the king saddened as he reflected how the lives of thousands like these, the best that any country could produce, could be snuffed out by the whim, or the ambition, or the mistake of one human being.

Next to the big league detachment, between that and a tall figure in dark blue, was a bright spot of color—Bezzanna in her very reddest dress—and the king dwelt lovingly for a moment on that vision.

He turned to the other side of the plateau. The fore ranks of Onalyon's army had swarmed down the slope to the very edge of the wide level space, and looked across with smiles of derision at the mere handful of warriors who had been gathered to oppose them.

The king, in that moment, knew how much, unconsciously, he had been a father to his people, how much he had cared for them, and nurtured them, and loved them; for even now, he could find no

hatred in his heart for them. They were mistaken and misled, that was all.

Both the king and the prince pricked up their ears. It seemed that, faintly, in the distance, they could distinguish music.

"I'm going to ask a favor of you," said the king with a smile. "I'm going to ask you for an armistice of half an hour, in which I wish to show you an excellent reason for your leaving your banner behind you when you go."

"I have no mind to wait," declared Onalyon, becoming suspicious, as the sounds of the coming music grew louder, and he could feel the thrill of excitement in the king's ranks, even at that considerable distance.

"I think you will," returned the king quietly. "Look just behind you." The prince turned quickly. At a space of perhaps thirty rods there was a slight, freshly-made embankment surrounding three sides of a rectangular hole in the ground. As the two men turned, an enormous iron cylinder, thickened heavily toward the butt, raised slowly out of the hole, gazed inquiringly, with its one great black eye, in their general direction, and as quietly retreated beneath the level of the turf.

The prince had not the slightest idea what this iron monster had on its mind, but he was visibly im-

pressed, and he felt a curious itching sensation at the roots of his hair. He decided to grant the slight favor which had been asked.

"It was Jimmy who did that," calmly explained the king.

The strains of music became suddenly louder, and the people, on the king's side of the plateau, set up a mighty cheering.

"That's *Dixie*," observed the king. "It's Jimmy's favorite tune. He says it would put ginger into a tombstone. It was the gift of the South to the North, in America's one and only civil war, and the North cheers while the South yells every time they hear it. I've adopted *Dixie* as the national tune of Isola. How do you like it?"

The prince did not answer. He was looking at the great gate of the palace park, through which, at that moment, there came sweeping, to the inspiring, exhilarating, blood-stirring strains of *Dixie*, the king's army. It consisted of the band, in neat dark-blue uniforms braided with gold, of a neat little donkey cart garlanded with flowers, in which jauntily rode Lieutenant Toopy and Captain Tedoyah, of the fifty brisk-stepping, square-shouldered, insolent-necked, laughing-faced workmen of Department G, clad in khaki, and with glistening guns over their right shoulders, and of a salmon-colored cow!

CHAPTER XX

THE HORRORS OF WAR

THE parade halted long enough to exchange Toopy for Jimmy, and then, with the music blaring, and the lines of boys in khaki stepping it off as if all their legs were moved by one set of lively springs, it came straight on across to the center of the field, where the king and the prince stood together, the band opened up in the middle, without the loss of a single toot, and left the army through, and the high private in the rear rank dropped back and tethered the cow.

"Hello, Prince!" greeted Jimmy, jumping out of the cart and shaking hands cordially. "Don't you think my band's a looloo? If they're ever suspicious about my pulse, just let them have this band play *Dixie*, and if I don't get right up and salute, I'm dead."

"It is a very stirring air," agreed the prince, in the midst of his profound bewilderment clutching eagerly at the relief of small-talk.

"Stirring?" repeated Jimmy. "It's riotous! I

never heard it played North or South, that some still unreconstructed son of a secessionist didn't rise straight up and let out the rebel yell, while the live sons of the original Union cheered him on."

"Hep, hep; hep, hep, hep," called Captain Teddy briskly, as the band stopped and dropped to the rear with the cow, and drawing a shiny new sword from its scabbard, he paced out ahead of his troop.

They marched and countermarched, they formed hollow squares, they drilled in single and double files, and by fours. They paused for the gun drill, and they went through a nice little cluster of fancy evolutions, which the prince and the crowds on the hills followed with amazement, finally coming sharply to rest in a double rank, before the reviewing officers, the king and General Jimmy, arms sharply grounded with a thud, eyes right, and the lines dressed to a hair's breadth.

"I'm so proud of Department G that I'm foolish," confessed Jimmy. "I used to belong to the state militia, and I'd back this squad against any collection of dry-goods clerks that ever blistered their feet and contracted rheumatism, in a two-weeks' encampment drill, for the benefit of their grateful country."

"But, what's it all about?" inquired the prince, much baffled, but perfectly willing to respect anything in which Jimmy took a serious interest.

"For impressiveness," declared Jimmy. "It's on the same principle that a nigger makes circles in the air with his razor before he starts to carve. It's to bewilder the enemy so that he won't know where he's going to be cut. I'm not strong for war, but, if I have to have one, I want it trimmed up with all the frills. This is our regular army."

The prince smiled.

"How many have you?" he asked, inspecting their queer-looking weapons with much curiosity.

"Just these," replied Jimmy. "They're enough. They're my selected boys of Department G, which is the gunpowder and ordnance factory. I've held gunpowder back as a surprise. These boys have their factory over among the hills where they can't hurt anything if they all blow up, and they sit right on the crumbling edge of kingdom-come all day long; and know it. Teddy, get busy."

"Column right to the rear!" ordered Teddy with the true explosiveness, which could be heard quite distinctly by Toopy, contrasting her navy blue against the Princess Bezzanna's dark red. "Form in squads! First squad, step forward! Corporal Jenkyay, deploy squad two to set targets!"

They moved with the beautiful precision of clockwork, and jerking targets on long sticks from the cart, squad two scampered down the field and set them in the ground.

"We may as well sit in the cart," the king invited Onalyon. "You'll need a rest for the telescope, anyhow," and as they seated themselves, the king reached down and produced that marvelous instrument, which he extended for the prince and instructed him how to focus.

"It's wonderful!" gasped the prince. "Why, it brings those targets up so close that it seems as if I might almost reach out and touch them."

"It's one of Jimmy's contrivances," said the king carelessly. "You don't see any holes in those targets, do you?"

"Holes?" repeated the prince in surprise. "No."

"Do you think that an arrow could be made to carry accurately at that distance?"

"Not even with the strongest and latest improved cross-bow."

"Then let her go, Teddy."

"Ready, aim, fire!" boomed the captain.

Toopy Polecon was proud of that manly voice.

The first squad made ready, took aim, and fired, to the intense consternation of the prince and the multitude.

When Onalyon had regained command of his nerves, by the king's direction he examined the targets with the telescope. Some of them that had been hit on the stick were still swaying, and all of

them had holes in them, varying from the center to near the circumference.

Again the first squad fired, and again, and again, and again, till each man had taken five shots, and the prince, now following the game excitedly, saw that there were five holes in every target.

"If you'll kindly let me have the telescope a moment I'll call the scores," requested the king kindly. "It was Jimmy's idea to offer some little prizes for to-day's exhibition, and the boys are pretty eager about it."

"With pleasure," returned the prince politely, and very seriously as well. He was doing an excellent job of concentrated thinking. It was just beginning to dawn upon him that Department G was not at all a handful of men; it was an army! "What are these instruments?" he inquired, turning to Jimmy, since the king was busy calling scores and Teddy recording them.

"This is a gun," explained Jimmy softly, taking one from Corporal Jenkyay, who was concealing a jubilant grin. "You may fool with it because a load has not been let into the firing chamber. More properly speaking, this is a magazine rifle. Here is a bullet," and he produced one from his pocket. "There is a charge of powder in this cartridge, back of the bullet, sufficient to send it through a man's

body at a hundred yards, and with speed enough left to turn around and come back and kill him. It goes in here," and he opened the breach of the gun. "I put the cartridge in here, close the gun, you pull the trigger, it releases a hammer, explodes the powder, and sends that bullet out hunting with a whiz. Would you like to try it?"

"I'd like to hold it in my hands," replied the prince, suppressing his hesitation and taking the dangerous weapon in his hands very gingerly. He was not a coward, he told himself fiercely, but the infernal thing might go off at the wrong minute.

"It's all right. Fuss around with it," encouraged Jimmy. "I pulled the cartridge out."

Much relieved, the prince put the gun to his shoulder and pointed it at the target, and got the sights in line, and pulled the trigger, and handed it back.

"Load it," he ordered.

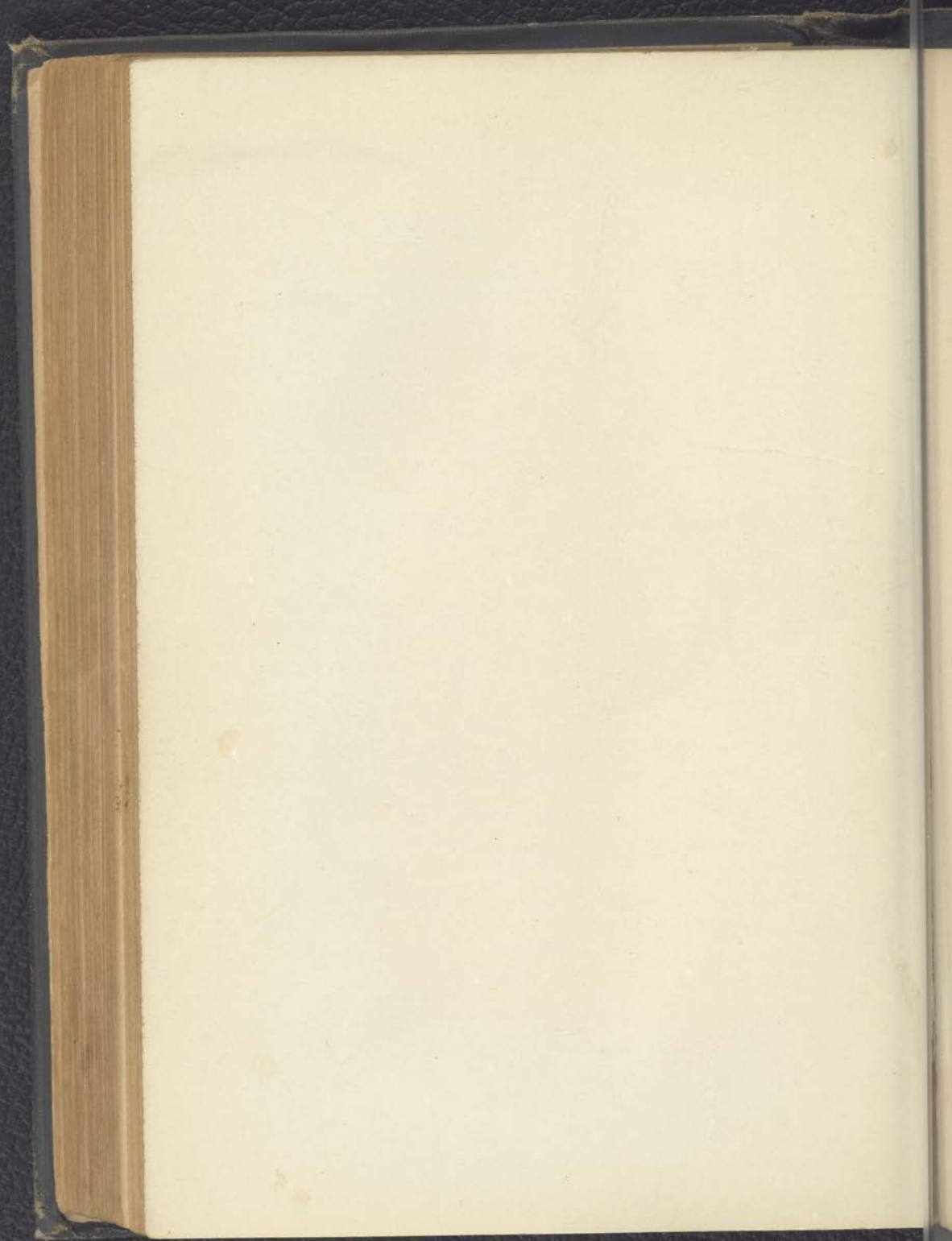
"You'd better come down here," advised Jimmy, throwing the lever which pulled the cartridge into place. "You'll have a more solid footing, and Step-lively won't be in so much danger. I couldn't spare Step-lively."

He stood within six inches of that rifle when the prince got ready to fire it, but Onalyon was a man of steady nerves.

"Did I hit it?" he demanded, feeling of his shoulder and handing the rifle to Jimmy for a reload.



"Did I hit it?" he demanded.



"Which target did you shoot at?" inquired the king, standing up in the cart with the telescope.

"Number one," replied the prince.

"No," reported the king. "I think there is a new hole in the number two target, though."

"Impossible!" retorted the prince indignantly, then he glanced at the king and saw that he was laughing. He clenched his jaws without a word and took the gun from Jimmy. "Did I hit it?" he demanded, with a trace of impatience.

"No," reported the king soberly, now interested.

"Well, I will!" Onalyon declared, throwing the lever himself, and Jimmy stepped back out of the way.

At the fourth attempt, the prince dropped the butt of his gun to the ground.

"I hit it!" he excitedly claimed. "I hit it! I saw it move."

"Almost a dead center, Onalyon," approved the king.

"I knew I could do it!" exulted the prince, handing over the gun and climbing back into the cart. "Let them shoot."

He took an intense interest in the contest, as the different squads came up for their try, and helped the king call the scores, and offered a special prize of his own for the best marksman of the day.

It was not very much sport, however, for the

densely packed crowds on the hills, and Bezzanna sent out a peremptory word to Jimmy that if he didn't do something pretty soon besides little cracks of musketry and little puffs of smoke, she'd go home.

Jimmy waved his hand to her and smiled when he received that message, and, an over-curious buzzard happening to flap its lazy way over the field just then, he took careful aim at it, and brought it down. He hated the thing, anyhow. It had no business to be flying over a threatened battle-field. Its presence was too suggestive.

As the great black bird, following the report of his rifle, suddenly stopped its lazy flight and dropped, like a lump, straight down to the earth, a murmur of awe rose from the hills at both sides of the plateau, and Jimmy judged that it was time for a dramatic climax.

"Bring out the cow," he ordered, and the high private in the rear rank—little Keezap—untethered the salmon-pink cow, and led her out to where the targets had been.

"We had to have her to-night, anyhow," Jimmy explained to the prince, as the prize marksman of the day got down on one knee. "We're out of beef at the palace."

The prize marksman pulled his trigger, and the king's dinner dropped dead.

It was an impressive exhibition, as the swelling voices of the audience attested. The power of the new weapons actually to take life had been fully demonstrated, and while the prince was pondering this startling and disquieting fact, the king deemed it the psychological moment to turn to him with:

"By the way, Onalyon, we haven't come to any agreement about that water power of yours."

"I want fifty-one per cent. of the stock," immediately asserted the prince, not so much impressed by the death of a pink cow that he was overlooking anything in a commercial line. He had been too long on the stock exchange for that.

"All right," agreed the king easily. "You mean, of course, in the Power Company?"

"Certainly," agreed the prince. "Is there to be another company?"

"Yes; the Operating Company."

"I don't quite understand the difference just now, but I do know this much, I must have fifty-one per cent. in the Operating Company also. I expect to pay a great deal of attention to business from now on; in fact, I expect to give up all my other interests for it."

"That's a commendable idea," approved the king. "I don't know, Jimmy, but that we may be able to arrange it to let the prince take up fifty-one per cent. in the Operating Company also. Eh?"

"Well, yes," agreed Jimmy, giving up the point with surprising readiness; "and possibly in the Holding Company also, Prince."

"What is the Holding Company?" puzzled Onal-yon.

"We'll explain that to you when the time comes," Jimmy cheerfully assured him. "Let's step to one side here. They're getting ready for a final demonstration, and we're slightly in the road. We couldn't stay here if we wanted to, because if we tried it, we'd disappear. By the way, Prince, don't you think it would be a good commercial idea for some one to start a strictly cash department store having the exclusive sale of the American products which have become so popular?"

"Well, I don't know," cautiously hesitated the prince, as he walked back with the king and Jimmy to the little artificial embankment; "I intend to put my store on a strictly cash basis as soon as I return to the city."

"I'm glad to hear that," observed the king. "I doubt if the city needs two big cash department stores," and he and Jimmy exchanged glances of quiet and calm and peaceful satisfaction. They were having a very enjoyable field-day.

"If you intend to do that," suggested Jimmy, "it's a pity that so much of the cash has been retired from circulation."

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The prince considered that matter with the utmost care.

"I don't think it will take long to persuade the people to replace their wheat in the public granaries," he hopefully stated, and paused as he found himself peering into the mouth of the heavy iron cylinder in the pit. Only its mouth projected above the level of the ground, and the mouth, which was very black, was almost large enough for him to stick his head in. He was standing directly in front of it, and he moved to one side.

"This is a cannon," explained Jimmy, patting it affectionately on the nozzle. "There are a dozen of them concealed about the palace grounds, and most of them are pointed in this direction, although they can be shifted very easily."

The prince glanced up toward the palace park apprehensively. He was not exactly comfortable. It was a very brisk and chill fall day, but he wiped the back of his neck.

"I guess the ordnance department is about ready," suggested Jimmy. "We'd better give these men a good clear space to work in," and he started walking briskly away from there.

The king and the prince followed him with equal briskness. They did not care to stay.

"What are those men doing down at the far end of the field?" asked the prince, who was not over-

looking anything, from the foreground to the horizon, in any direction.

"They serve a double purpose," Jimmy informed him. "They are attracting attention to that clump of young trees at the end of the field, and they are also seeing that no one has strayed in there to look these proceedings in the eye. They're ready now."

The men in khaki began running toward the hill, and when they had left an extremely clean space between them and the group of forty or fifty young trees, they held a little wigwag drill with the men in charge of the big gun. Shortly afterward those men also began running, off-side and to the rear. One lone man crawled out of the pit last, leaving a little sputtering wreath of blue-white smoke behind him, and he ran faster than anybody. He stumbled once, but he hardly touched the ground, and when he got up again he certainly did go! He only used up one breath the rest of the way.

"Now, hold tight to something, and watch that clump of trees," Jimmy warned the prince.

Onalyon looked around, but could not see anything to hold to except some tufts of dried grass, and that seemed undignified.

Suddenly the world gave a tremendous throb, and all the earnest noises of the universe were condensed into one roar, to which were added the screams and

yells of about twenty-five thousand people. As far as mere sound was concerned, it even satisfied Jimmy. He could have done with less. He had a grave suspicion that there were only ragged rims where his ear-drums had been, but he did not care. He was enjoying the countenance of the prince.

Onalyon's mouth and eyes were distended to their utmost extent, and following the direction of his gaze, Jimmy was gratified to discover a large, bright, new area of blue sky at the lower end of the field where the trees had stood. There wasn't a young tree left, not even a sapling, not even a leaf. There were a few splintered trunks projecting a foot or so from the ground, but there were not many branches lying around. That promising young forest had simply gone away.

The prince, for all his dumfounded aspect, seemed to have a thorough appreciation of what he had seen, for when the king once more reminded him that they neither one had a right to incur bloodshed, Onalyon earnestly, though somewhat falteringly agreed with him; for his lips were stiff.

"Then take your army and go home!" ordered the king, turning so suddenly savage that his ears were red. "The gunners may want to practise with the rest of the cannon. If your army stays it may be in the way."

The prince looked about him disconsolately. His army had already gone home.

He decided to go himself. He very thoughtfully took no banners with him. They were too heavy to carry.

CHAPTER XXI

DAMN

THERE probably were never two more popular men in the world than the king and Jimmy immediately following the war. The common people made it a special point to come far out of their road merely to salute the royal carriage, and as for the nobles they fairly became a nuisance with assurances of their distinguished esteem and affection. Those who had espoused the cause of Onalyon took especial pains to make it plain that they had seen the error of their ways, and the king, though trying hard to be haughty, as per the instructions of Jimmy, ended by forgiving them all.

"Confound it, Old Scout, if you don't make a few enemies you won't have any friends," complained Jimmy. "If you'll only do some tearing act of injustice, you'll see how much more the rest of them think of you."

"I know it," sighed the king, passing his hand over his brow in perplexity. "The fundamental principle is all right that every puppy needs one whip-

ping, and I've scraped my brain for hours trying to think of some striking and neat piece of tyranny and injustice. I recognize that it's a serious need, but I can't seem to think of one that will do. What do you advise? I'll just put it up to you, and whatever you say I'll do."

"By George, that's a bully proof of your confidence and esteem, and I appreciate it," returned Jimmy. "It ought to be an easy thing, for a man whose power is now so firmly established and whose authority is so thoroughly unquestioned, to pick out a nifty little piece of spectacular tyranny, and I'll get busy with the problem. I'll hand you the answer in a day or two, all finished off with frosting and little pink candles."

"Thanks," replied the king gratefully, and they shook hands on it, and the king walked away with quite a load lifted from his mind.

Jimmy was never so exasperated with anything in his life. Try as he would, he simply could not think of some act of conspicuously rank injustice that he would care to have put into execution, and finally he had to give it up.

"I'm as chicken-hearted as you are," he acknowledged. "You see, I wasn't born right. If I had been a noble I might have got away with it, because they're used to it. They've developed cruelty to a fine point, and many an American girl marries

a foreign nobleman so she can be beat up by a perfect gentleman. It's a sensation she couldn't enjoy at home; in America gentlemen don't beat women."

"They don't in Isola either, any more," responded the king. "If I could find a wife-beater or so, we'd solve your problem of an act of high-handed tyranny, but I had a couple of them pushed off the cliff, when I was young and just beginning to reign, and the amusement has rather died out of fashion since."

"It made you strong from the jump," approved Jimmy. "It ought to be repeated. All we need to do is to push one man off a cliff to restore the blind love and devotion of your people, and if you could only fasten something on one of Onalyon's nobles and make him the goat, so much the better. You can always spare a noble. Any country can."

"The institution needs to be braced up by the infusion of new blood, once in a while, at least," smiled the king. "By the way, that reminds me of something," and walking into his library, he brought out a neat little inlaid case, containing a roll of parchment with gold knobs at each end and tied with a tasseled red cord. "I know you don't care much for such things," he observed as he handed it carelessly to Jimmy, "but it's the usual reward of distinguished services, and I don't see very well how you can avoid accepting it."

Jimmy, with a well-founded suspicion of what was coming, for he had evaded the thing for months, opened the document, and found it to be a patent of nobility, engrossed in three colors and embellished in gold. It created him Lord Westmountain, with a large section of land sloping from rich mineral deposits to fertile tillage soil, and it entailed these estates to him and his heirs forever, with the right, in every generation, of personal companionship with the king.

"It's the best in my power to give you, Lord Jimmy," stated the king.

Jimmy held it as if it was hot.

"That's awfully nice of you, Old Scout," he observed, "and I thank you from the bottom of my heart; but I don't see how an American, and a jingo, a representative of a nation that has hammered the very idea of nobility ever since 1776, could possibly lug around a handle to his name. Why, if I ever got back to America, that Lord Jimmy thing would queer me with the boys forever."

"It's the only way I can give you those estates," urged the king, "and I want to hand you something solid and substantial."

"An entailed estate is too solid and substantial," objected Jimmy. "I don't believe you could make an American see the value of land that he can't sell

or borrow money on. It isn't classed as an available asset; and besides, I'm against entailed estates, anyhow. I'm against anything that has a tendency to tie up wealth indefinitely. All property should be subject to being turned into cash, and spent, and put back into circulation. The salvation of America is the fool sons of rich parents."

"I should think they would particularly need protection," laughed the king. "If you'll notice, Lord Jimmy, that grant, which I had to strain a point to get you, is one particularly designed to protect your posterity. It increases in rank with each generation, and you could even marry into the royal family in the sixth generation."

Jimmy passed it over.

"If you could date this back six generations I might accept it," he observed. "Honestly, Old Scout, I don't want to seem ungrateful, but I couldn't look the star spangled banner in the face if I accepted a title; and you don't know how much I think of the old red, white and blue. It kind o' gives me a lift-up feeling, right in here, every time I see it."

"All right, Jimmy," laughed the king, tossing the gaudy license to one side. "I knew you'd take it just about this way, and to tell you the truth, I'm rather glad you did. If you're not worried about your posterity, I'm not."

"If I have any posterity it can take care of itself," returned Jimmy. "If it can't, after I've given it a good start, it ought to go under."

He had carefully concealed it from the king, but the whole thing rather nettled him. He felt sure that he was a clean man, with good blood in his veins, virile, progressive, energetic, and he knew how to treat a woman. He came from a country where that is lesson number one, in class A. His posterity in the sixth generation might consist, through some unfortunate taint of intermarriage or just through natural cussedness, of rank degenerates, but they would be qualified, nevertheless, to marry the Princess Bezzanna of that time; whereas he, Jimmy, who had been the man of strength enough to earn such a gift for his posterity, was barred. If he married the Princess Bezzanna she had to die, and he couldn't for the life of him see what for. It was a fool business any way you looked at it, and it made him angry, the more so because everybody was so helpless in the matter.

He was not at all positive that he could induce the Princess Bezzanna to marry him, even if all the obstacles were removed. She was a bewitching and a bewildering little kid, who teased him unmercifully, as she did her brothers, and had a thousand whims and fancies, so that he never could tell in what mood he would find her next, but she liked him tre-

mendously, and steadfastly. She had never given the slightest hint, however, that she loved him. That was an entirely different matter. The worst of it was that he had no right to find out. He was not at all conceited, and he was not sure that he could win her, but there was one thing he could swear to; if his hands were not so infernally tied, she'd know she was being courted, so help him Tommy Rodgers!

Needing tremendously a little of the comfort and sympathy which she was always so sweetly ready to give him, if she felt in the mood for it, he hunted her up, and the first word she said, when he walked in at the already open door of her sitting-room, was:

"Damn!"

"Why, Betty!" he protested, shocked into numbness.

She was in the midst of tumbled and tangled heaps of pretty finery, and she held up one beautifully modeled arm, upon which was an elbow-length pink kid glove.

"That's the second pair I've ripped," she told him, half sick with annoyance. Her cheeks were flushed with exertion, her waving brown hair was charmingly disheveled, and altogether she was a picture of feminine exasperation pretty enough to frame. "I've only one more pair like these, and I'm afraid to try them on, and afraid not to. I had them made to go with my pink evening gown, for the opening night of

the Princess Theater, and now I'm so mad I can't see!"

"It's enough to infuriate an oyster," consoled Jimmy. "But Betty, I heard you using a shocking word as I came in."

"Damn?" she inquired, looking at him in questioning wonder.

"That's the one," he assured her, admiring the pretty way she had of saying it, but being stern, nevertheless. "It's not considered good form in respectable circles this season."

"Why, I perfectly love it! It's such a nice word, and it relieves one's feelings so. What's the matter with it? Jimmy, truly, I don't see how just a word like that can be bad. It's a mere sound, and I don't see why it should be any worse than ham, or lamb, or slam. Now see if it is, when you come to think of it that way. Da—"

"Stop it!" commanded Jimmy. "Where did you get it, anyhow?"

"I heard you say it," she charged. "Where else would I get an American word?"

"I didn't know I had brought that one along with me," regretted Jimmy. "I guess I supposed it must have just sprung up here like a weed; it's so common. I'm sorry if it slipped out of me, Betty, and I'll try never to let you hear me say it again, but, whether I do or not, I don't like to hear you say it."

"Why not, if you do?"

"Well, ladies aren't supposed to use such language."

"Why?"

"Because it isn't nice."

"Why isn't it nice for a lady to use if it's nice for men?"

"I didn't say it was nice for men," protested Jimmy, beginning to cast about him wildly for means of escape.

"You said that I mustn't say it, whether you did or not. If you do, I'm going to."

"Please don't!" he begged. "I'd like to promise you that I'll never say that word again so long as I live, but I don't like to lie to you. I don't use it to request the loan of a match, or to ask somebody to pass me the salt, but I know perfectly well that if I were to crack my thumb with a hammer, that word would pop out of me before I could stop it, if I were to be hung for it the next minute. You see, Bezzanna," and he sat on the edge of her table where he could look down at her marvelous hair, and talk it over, "women are supposed to be, and are, better and finer than men, and it's that which shields the human race from the return to savagery which the strong and coarse dominance of men would give it. Men have been the creators, not alone in mechanical and commercial things, but in the

things of art and spirituality; but women have inspired all their creations."

"I like the word, anyhow," mused Bezzanna. "I don't see where it's bad. It seems to me that I should rather like it."

"Women, too," went on Jimmy, "have been the supporters of all the finer things. Why, if it were not for them, we would not even, in these modern days of unfaith, have religion."

"What's religion?" instantly demanded Bezzanna. "You've spoken of that a lot of times, but every time anybody has asked you about it you've changed the subject. Is it bad, too?"

"It depends on how it's used," returned Jimmy, considering the matter very carefully. "To tell you the truth, Betty, I've missed it dreadfully here. I didn't know I had it so thoroughly ground into me, but, whenever Sunday comes, I want to put on a silk hat and a long-tailed coat, and stroll down the avenue and hear the church bells ring. Most of the time I'm too lazy actually to attend services, but my conscience never quite stops nagging me about that neglect, and when I do slip inside a great dim church, with the mellow light streaming in through stained-glass windows, and drink in the flood of soft sweet music from a solemn old pipe-organ, and hear a rattling good sermon, which makes me feel what a miserable sinner I am, and be game enough to slip

at least the price of a good theater seat into the collection plate, I feel not less than seventy-five to a hundred per cent. better, and walk back up the avenue looking with scorn on men who have not been to church."

"It sounds awfully nice," said Bezzanna wistfully. "I wish I could go to church."

"You shall before you're many months older," Jimmy fervently promised her. "I'm sorry I built the theater first. It's like getting the trimmings before you buy the material. But I was afraid of theology, Bezzanna. That's why I hesitated to introduce religion, and besides, I feel squeamish about it. I'm not a competent person; I'm not good enough."

"That's not true!" she indignantly asserted. "I don't understand yet what you mean by it, though."

He gave her the idea as briefly as possible, because he was very diffident about it.

"Oh, yes," she said, "we had something like that in Isola a long time ago. Our ancestors believed that there were hidden creatures in the woods and in the trees, which could help or hurt them, but those on the south side of the river, who were always quarreling with the people on this side, did not believe very much in those things. In the great famine of Xantobah's time as many people died on one side of the river as on the other, so after that we had no more religion, if that was it."

"That's the trouble," responded Jimmy. "People expect their religion to cure warts, or to influence the fluctuations of stock in their favor; but after all, the drawbacks don't begin to outweigh the benefits, and I don't believe I can do without religion any longer. I don't want so much of it myself, but I like to have it lying around handy if I should happen to need it. Take marriage, for instance. I don't see how anybody can be married outside of a church."

"I like church," mused Bezzanna.

"I wonder if that is the answer," pondered Jimmy.

"What has the church to do with marriage?" asked Bezzanna. "From what you said about the church I should think it must be very beautiful."

"Well," floundered Jimmy, picking his way clumsily through this tangle, "it puts the sanction of the best that is in the human mind on the best that there is in human life."

"I want to be married in a church," declared Bezzanna.

"I'll try to have one ready for you in time," he laughed.

He had taken her ungloved hand, in his earnestness, and now he patted it gently and affectionately.

"You'll have plenty of time," she smilingly assured him.

The fool rode on to his fate.

"Apparently you haven't set the date," he suggested, knowing that he was fluttering his wings around the flame of a dangerous topic, but fanning the blaze, nevertheless. He was looking down at her jealously, enviously; on her shining brown hair, and her deep brown eyes, and her still slightly flushed cheeks, and the delicious curve of her half-parted lips; and there welled up in him a hunger which well-nigh drove him mad!

"Not yet," she returned lightly; then, more seriously, "I don't think that I ever shall," then, miserably, "I don't want to be married at all! Do I, Jimmy!" and sobbing, out of the acute distress which this whole tangle of marriage had brought on her, she leaned impulsively forward and bent her head upon the strong warm hand which held her own on Jimmy's knee.

He found himself bending over her, with his arm about her shoulders, half sobbing with her, begging her, almost incoherently, not to torture him so; but even through it all, he remembered that he must not, dare not take her in his arms, and hold her head upon his shoulder, and tell her a thousand times, yes, a thousand thousand, and in every tone, from tenderness to savage fierceness, that he loved her, that he loved her, that he loved her! He beat back that desire with all the strength that was in

him, struggling against it as a drowning man struggles against the water which clogs his breath, and, in the midst of that struggle, something of its tenseness came to Bezzanna through her own emotion, and she became aware of it so keenly that she raised up to look at him, and read in his burning eyes a something tremendous, overwhelming, a something so fraught with frightening possibility, that she did not dare to fathom it! She did not understand it, but she trembled lest she might do so—and she gently withdrew her hand.

CHAPTER XXII

AN AMERICAN TRICK

PRINCE ONALYON bustled into the crowded assembly room of the Chamber of Commerce, which had been assigned for the afternoon to the meetings of the three electric companies, and began shaking hands gleefully, right and left.

"Wasn't that a warm session?" he exulted to the gentlemen who had preceded him. "I never knew such a busy day on the stock exchange."

"It's probably a record breaker in the number of shares that changed hands," agreed Birrquay. "Prince, it's a wonder you wouldn't get rid of that antiquated costume. It's all right for old Huppylac and some of the other ancients, but a young chap should keep up with the procession."

"I am an Isolian," declared the prince. "You don't see me falling behind any, do you?"

"No," admitted Birrquay; "but there are fifteen pockets in an American business suit."

"Most of us can carry our money in one," laughed the prince.

Calamaz joined them, in a rather foppish green

pin-stripe suit and a Fedora hat. He still wore his beard, but he had it trimmed to a close Vandyke.

"Here you are again, in spite of the water-works graft exposures," he hailed the prince. "I saw you everywhere on the floor of the stock exchange, and they tell me that you are responsible for the day's volume of business."

"Not quite," chuckled the prince, who was in high good humor. "I put one over on your old friend Jimmy, though. I caught him short on soap, and soaked him the limit, and after that I unloaded the most of my Electric Operating on him."

"That was a crime," laughed fat young Polecon. "It's the Operating Company that has lost all the money, in spite of its atrocious overcrowding of the street-cars and its rotten arc-light service," and he glanced at heavy Grisophal, who, with his hands in his trousers pockets, was regarding the prince with surly dislike.

It was common report that undercapitalization had been the handicap of the electric companies, but Grisophal was earnestly propounding the theory of bad management.

"You don't hear of my turning loose any of my Electric Power stock, do you?" gleefully returned the prince. "I still have my fifty-one per cent. in that company, as well as in the new Holding Company."

"The prince has an earnest regard for number one," commented Dymp Haplee, joining the group which had now moved toward the head of the long board table, where the prince sat comfortably in the big padded chair of the president.

"It's business," explained the prince briskly, secure in the righteousness of that attitude. "The Power Company has, and the Holding Company will have, practically fixed earning capacity, and I very naturally have retained my majority of stock, my control, and the presidency in both. The Operating Company has lost money from the first, and it was its inability to pay its debts to the Power Company that made a Holding Company necessary for both. I relinquished all but a hundred shares of my Operating stock, and I shall lose my office in that concern, with pleasure, at the regular stockholders' meeting next month."

"Clever work," applauded young Huppylac, who had not only clung to the Isolian costume, but to the old-time brilliant colorings as well.

"I understand that the king and Jimmy obtained eighty per cent. of the Operating stock," remarked Haplee, with a professional desire to know. "Is that right?"

"They got all I could hand them, and all that I could induce my friends to relinquish," boasted the prince, looking at his watch.

"They got it cheap enough," growled Grisophal. "Fifty-four is a bad price for stock that was originally sold at par."

"I've learned to pocket a loss in a hurry," explained the prince loftily. "As long as I had to make a sacrifice to capture fifty-one per cent. of the Holding stock, I am convinced that I cut off the right leg."

Dymp Haplee turned to Polecon with a laugh.

"I look for some improvements in the Electric Operating Company," he softly observed.

"I'd get up out of bed to trade anything I have for stock in any company of which the king and Jimmy own eighty per cent.," returned Grisophal, who was on the floor of the stock exchange every day, made few trades and no plunges, and was reputed to have the grandest little collection of extra-safe, A-one, dividend-producing stocks ever imprisoned in a safety deposit vault.

The prince looked at his watch again, and reached for his gavel. Dymp Haplee looked hastily about the big room, from group to group of the animated gathering. Men everywhere in the hall, mostly clad in spring business suits of the newest cut, and after the fashions affected by Tedoyah, who had grown to be of overwhelming social importance during the last year, were discussing the exciting events of the day, in a babble of voices punctuated with cheerful

laughs, but in no quarter of the hall could Dym discover his friends.

"The king has not arrived," he reminded Onalyon.

"We have the special stockholders' meetings of the three electric companies scheduled for this afternoon, and the opening hour of the first one is set for three o'clock," the prince informed him icily; for the *Daily Isolian* was a rabid royalist organ. He pounded his gavel.

The babble of voices died down almost immediately, as the stockholders made a concerted onslaught on their chairs. Time was money in Isola! Two or three of the more intensely interested groups were a trifle slow in relinquishing their respective bones of contention, and their voices were still heard after the scraping of chairs had stopped.

The prince tapped his gavel again, impatiently.

"We have three meetings to-day, and I must ask for strict order and crisp procedure," he sternly chided the loiterers. "The special stockholders' meeting of the Isola Electric Operating Company is now in session, the secretary will please call the roll," he rattled with scarcely a pause for breath, and sat down.

Young Huppylac began calling the roll, but President Onalyon stopped him, in order to let an impressive silence rebuke the king and Jimmy and

Teddy and two other belated stockholders. They filed meekly into their seats, and the president, nodding to them courteously, coldly instructed the secretary to proceed.

"The secretary will now read the proposed contract," he ordered, and listened to it in pleased complacency, for he had devised it himself.

It placed the distribution of the hundred thousand dollars capital, with which the Holding Company proposed to relieve the debts, reestablish the credit and reorganize the finances of the other two companies, entirely at the disposal of the Holding Company, which was just and right, since to the victors belong the spoil, and the man with the largest investment should have the most say. Inasmuch as the prince held fifty-one per cent. of the Holding Company's stock, he anticipated no interference in the handling of the funds to the legitimate advantage of the heaviest investor.

A good, handy, right-hand man of Onalyon's, an investor who owned five shares, jumped to his feet, and obtained the recognition of the president in the flash of an eye.

"Move adoption contract as it stands," he blurted, and sat down.

"Secon' the motion," the man across from him shot out of himself.

"You've all heard the motion," offered the prince

in a sing-song rush. "Are there any remarks? If not, the secretary will proceed—"

"Mr. President."

The prince had been expecting that interruption from the king, even though he had tried to railroad the motion through. After all, this was the king's meeting, since he held eighty per cent. of the stock. He could not do much without the Holding Company, however, and he might as well be permitted to have his say. He granted his recognition with a nod, but remained standing.

"As I am speaking to the members of the Operating Company alone, I think it is only right that they should know in advance the new devices which will be offered to its board of directors at their next regular meeting," the king observed, "and, for that purpose, I ask the permission of the chair to occupy not to exceed ten minutes in exhibiting them."

"I am sorry to say that the gentleman is out of order," announced the president courteously, but firmly. "There is a motion before the house."

"This proposed exhibit is a portion of my remarks on the motion," explained the king.

"I beg to remind the gentleman," persisted the prince, "that this is a special meeting, and that it is not within the power of the chair to open for consideration any other subject than that of the contract with the Isola Electric Holding Company."

The prince prided himself on the adroitness of his mental resources, as well as the adroitness of his speech. The king and himself were always punctiliously polite to each other.

"This proposed exhibit has an intimate bearing on the proposed contract," declared the king with equal firmness. "It is of the gravest importance to every stockholder here, and I insist on my right to illustrate my discussion on the motion before the house, with this ten-minute display. I demand a vote on whether I shall be allowed to do so."

A strange light glowed at the lower end of the table. Teddy, sitting between Jimmy and the king, was toying with a small glass bulb, which alternately glowed with a vivid radiance and lapsed into darkness, apparently at his will. Every human intelligence at that table craned the neck that supported it in that direction, and acutely painful curiosity sat on every countenance. The prince read the handwriting. After all, it was a small matter. Also, he was curious himself.

"A vote will not be necessary since the gentleman has explained himself so fully," he graciously granted. "The exhibit may proceed," and he laid his watch on the table.

Jimmy and Teddy moved with the swiftness and precision of prize drill stage-hands. In the corner of the hall was a big padlock box, to which no one

had paid particular attention, and by it stood a huge electric transformer, connected with the cable that supplied the two big arc lights. Out of this box Teddy and Jimmy now produced two long strings of glass bulbs, such as the one which Teddy had secretly attached to a plug in the big box while the roll-call was being finished. These strings of bulbs were rapidly laid on the two edges of the table, and there was a bulb for each man, including a red one for the prince.

They regarded these objects with interest, though no man touched them. Electricity was no longer a novelty in Isola.

Working swiftly, the king's two expert assistants placed, also, down the center of the table, a queer-looking metal box ornamented with silver and tinted glass, a queer-shaped silver basin, a pyramidal wire rack on which reposed some slices of bread, a nickel-plated laundry iron, and a big silver lizard with a golden tongue, all these articles connected by insulated wires to the big box in the corner.

The stockholders shrank suddenly back. Teddy had switched the current on all of the bulbs at once.

"These are the incandescent lamps," explained the king suavely. "They have just been perfected, after months of experiment. The gentlemen will find little turn screws at the base of each lamp, by which they can be switched on and off. I guarantee

that there can be no harm from the current," and to prove it, he manipulated his own light.

The bulbs went winking and blinking all up and down the table. Those men were as tickled as a baby with a shiny new razor.

"They are the product of the Electric Manufacturing Company," went on the king, "an organization, I may add, in which there is no stock for sale. The Electric Manufacturing Company is prepared to offer a monopoly of these bulbs to the Electric Operating Company at its next regular meeting, and as I dictate eighty per cent. of the latter concern, I can assure the gentlemen present that a contract will be entered into at once, which will render the Electric Operating Company the best paying investment in Isola. We're prepared to place ten thousand of these bulbs in the homes of Isola at once. They can be offered to consumers, at a handsome profit, for two cents per hour per bulb, with a certainty of an early reduction in consumers' cost."

The prince was aware of a faint feeling in the region of the diaphragm. He had let go of the wrong company again. Why, this would revolutionize the entire lighting industry. The clumsy old arc lamps, which were all that Isola had so far seen, would disappear entirely for indoor use, and

these handy little incandescents would be scattered everywhere. He would be using them himself! He was artistic, too, and he could see their decorative use before it was pointed out to him.

"The gentlemen will please place their hands upon the utensils in the center of the table," the king requested. "You will observe that they are perfectly cold. All right, Teddy."

There was a snap of a switch. The lights in the little silver-mounted box began to glow, the wire rack supporting the bread turned red hot, and the bread began to toast.

"This is an electric stove," the king explained. "It is already throwing out heat. This is an electric chafing-dish. The water in it will be boiling in three minutes. The electric toaster needs no explanation, nor does the laundry iron. It will be too hot to touch in a short time. The lizard there is a boudoir device, for which we expect a fancy sale. Pull out its tongue, and you will discover it to be a curling-iron, already hot enough for use. These, gentlemen, are a few of the many other devices which will be contracted next week to the Electric Operating Company by the Electric Manufacturing Company, and they're exhibited here for the purpose of urging the claims of the Operating Company for a voice in the distribution and use of the

funds which the Holding Company is to provide; and I wish to offer an amendment to that contract. Gentlemen, I move to amend—”

The prince listened with all his ears. He intended to fight that amendment to the last ditch.

“—I move to amend that the funds provided by the Holding Company shall be disbursed by a finance committee of nine, composed of three members each, from the directorate of the Holding Company, the Power Company, and the Operating Company.”

The prince smiled in relief. Why, that was a cinch. He held fifty-one per cent. of the stock of both the Holding and the Power Companies, and he picked his own directors. That would give him six out of the nine on the finance committee!

“I see no objection to that amendment,” he most unethically announced. “Are we ready for a vote?”

A score of voices yelled:

“Question!”

Discussion was silly on a fair and square proposition like that.

The secretary, under instructions, proceeded with the roll-call vote on the amendment. Dymp Haplee, sitting up at the end of the table next to the president, a seat which he had scrambled to obtain, turned to young Polecon with a laugh.

“Slipped one over on us again,” he observed, look-

ing up from the furious writing in which he had indulged since the opening of the meeting.

"Looks like it," chuckled Polecon, with a glance at the prince. He was not listening. "Have you much Operating Company stock?" he inquired in a slightly louder tone.

"No," replied Dymp, grinning, and glancing down the table toward Jimmy. "I wish I could get in on the manipulation of the Operating Company."

The prince looked suddenly away. He was listening. That thought was one which had occupied his own mind.

"Impossible," protested Polecon.

"I think there's a way it could be worked."

"With the king holding eighty per cent. of the stock? I thought you'd cut your eye-teeth."

Dymp lowered his voice to a point at which the prince had to strain to hear.

"If we put up a roar that the interests of the three companies are so identical, that each should have a voice in the management of the other, I think we could work it through that the stockholders in every company have a right to vote according to their holdings in all the others."

"Come again?" requested Polecon.

"I say, if the stockholders of the Holding and the Power Companies could only vote the amount of their stock in the deliberations of the Operating

Company, we could give the king a rough toss if we wanted to, which we don't, because he only holds eight hundred shares in that company, and he'd have the rest of the three thousand in the three combined companies against him. I guess that would put a crimp in his eighty per cent. control, unless he was nice to everybody."

"That's too elaborate for me to get at a single sitting," worried Polecon, who really was too much foozled to keep up his share of the dialogue properly. "I guess it's because I'm fat. Anyhow, I think it's a fool stunt, even if it is only supposititious. The king could get even in the other companies, anyhow."

"What with?" scorned Dymp. "He only holds twenty per cent. in the Holding Company and fifteen in the Power Company."

The prince, who had been looking quite vacantly over at the power box in the corner, reached over to the secretary's place and picked up a stockholders' list, upon the edge of which he began to make some quiet figures. Presently he called his handy five-share man up to the chair just behind him, and, turning around, began to talk with him in a low and earnest voice, while Dymp Haplee and fat Polecon smilingly drifted into talk of other matters.

Apparently the prince had difficulty in explaining to his man just what was wanted, for he gave his

chair an impatient hitch at intervals, and when the secretary interrupted him with an announcement of the total vote, which was unanimously in favor of the king's amendment, he turned back to his duties with an air of being distinctly out of sorts.

"The amendment having carried, we are now back to the original motion on the contract," he stated.

The right-hand man was on his feet in an instant, but he had a slow voice, and he propounded an amendment to which no human being present could attach any meaning whatsoever.

The thick-lipped man across from him immediately seconded it.

"It has been moved and seconded," announced the prince calmly, "that, inasmuch as the three companies concerned are to be identified so closely by a mutual finance committee, appointed from the three directorates, the stockholders should be given an equal participation by being permitted to sit in the deliberations of each of the three companies, voting their shares in all three, at each stockholders' meeting of any company. This, I believe, is the sense of the gentleman's amendment."

The gentleman immediately assured him that it was, and the prince's official seconder nodded his head violently.

"You have all heard the motion," announced the

president suavely. "Are there any remarks?" and he waited anxiously for them. Counting the voting strength of each company at a hundred per cent., and that of the combined companies at three hundred per cent., the king's total voting strength in the Operating Company would be represented at a hundred and fifteen, and his own at a hundred and twelve, the scattering votes totaling to seventy-three. If he could not obtain a majority in the Operating Company out of the scattered seventy-three per cent., he missed his guess. It was worth a try, anyhow.

"Do I understand, by this amendment, that the holders of stock in the other companies expect to participate in the profits of the Operating Company?" inquired the king.

"I think not," laughed the prince, with a glance of inquiry at the original propounder.

The original propounder assured him, so heartily as to be almost violent, that no such intention had ever entered his mind, and the official seconder shook his head until his lip flopped.

"Then I have no remarks to offer," stated the king. "It seems a fair exchange of courtesies."

The rest of that meeting, and of the meetings of the Power Company and the Holding Company, which immediately followed, were mere matters of parliamentary procedure. All three companies

adopted the contract with its two amendments, and signed it, by order of the stockholders, with the names of the president, the secretary, and the treasurer, these officers having each to sign their names three times on the same document, since they were the same for each company.

Immediately after the close of the meetings, the king brought up a bunch of stock certificates, and requested them to be entered in his name. He had a hundred and ten shares in the Holding Company and two hundred and fifty in the Power Company, stock which had been voted by its original owners but which would hereafter be voted by the king.

The prince paled and reached for his pencil, but he did not pick it up. He sank back and laughed at himself instead. After all, he still had his fifty-one per cent. in the Holding and the Power Companies, and, consequently, his six members on the finance committee.

"I'll give you a hot tussle under that second amendment for control of the Operating Company," he complacently informed the king.

"Figure again," suggested the king, looking up from watching the stock transfer. "Out of the three thousand shares, in the three companies combined, I have one thousand five hundred and one. I intend next week to make myself president of all three companies, and appoint a good reliable finance

committee which will pay quite proper attention to the Operating Company. By a little close trading and careful buying, the getting of that hundred thousand additional capital cost us very little."

"It's an American trick," snickered Dymp Haplee, but he frowned thoughtfully as Onalyon walked away with young Huppylac. He had not liked the look of vicious anger which the prince had cast upon the king.

"Well, it worked as if it had been freshly oiled," observed Jimmy, walking up to Dymp and shaking hands with him.

"He took the bait like a hungry shark," agreed Dymp with a short laugh. "Jimmy, I'd like to offer you a piece of advice. Have the king pinch Onalyon."

"On what charge?" asked Jimmy.

"General principles," replied Dymp soberly. "There is tragedy in the man. He means murder!"

Jimmy glanced across at the prince and Huppylac at the desk in the far corner, and looked worried.

"I have urged it on the king, but he won't do it," he regretted.

If he could have overheard the conversation of the prince and Huppylac at that moment Isola would have been spared sorrow and suffering.

CHAPTER XXIII

BEZZANNA LONGS TO ELEVATE THE STAGE

THE curtain had just fallen on the witches' scene in *Macbeth*, and the tragic poet, Calamaz, was bowing his exultant gratitude to the frantic applause of the fashionable audience, when Jimmy slipped up from his arduous labors behind the scenes and bowed his way into the royal box.

"Well, how about it?" he asked, leaning over the back of the Princess Bezzanna's chair, after he had accepted the enthusiastic congratulations of the king and Aunt Gee-gee and Teddy and Toopy Polecon.

"It's one continuous round of pleasure," she assured him, leaning back her head to look up at him with dancing eyes. "I never could have dreamed anything like those wonderful lighting effects. They're more real than nature, I think, and ever so much more beautiful and awe-inspiring."

"You get it," he told her, pleased intensely with her appreciation. "To my mind the drama didn't begin until the invention of bunch lights, and bor-

ders, and built-up backgrounds, and gauze drops. I've seen some revivals of the pure drama, where they did without costumes and props, and relied entirely on the beauty of the lines and the nobility of thought and the sympathetic imagination of the audience, but I always went out with the rest of the men to play billiards after the first act, and got so interested in the game I forgot to come back. I never begrudged my five dollars to the encouragement of real art. How do you like the lines in this?"

"They're too lovely for anything," she earnestly returned, anxious to reassure him. "I think Calamaz' gift of poetic language is wonderful. How did you come to open with a play like this?"

"Well, there were several reasons," he replied, sitting down just behind her, glad that the others had left the box for a promenade, at the insistence of Toopy and Aunt Gee-gee, who wore their first trains. "To begin with, I believe in encouraging the classic drama, and the only way to do it properly is at the beginning of the season, when people are so theater-hungry they'll stand for anything; but the main reason was Calamaz. I let him buy a controlling interest in the theater company, and explained to him farce, comedy, burlesque, musical comedy, comic opera, grand opera, melodrama, drama, and tragedy, but the minute I told him

about Shakespeare, he began to let his hair grow, and nothing but *Macbeth* would do him for a starter; so I told him all I knew about it and turned him loose, and here you are. I couldn't remember where this witches' scene came in, but I think it does as well here, at the end of the third act, as anywhere. It's good any place you put it."

"It's very charming," she admitted, "and highly artistic, and really, it's an intellectual treat. I wonder if you made a mistake in letting Calamaz have the controlling interest. Not that I don't think him a very wonderful author, you know, but that being so occupied with business cares might interfere with his creative work, and er—possibly interfere with his judgment as to what is best to present."

"I don't think it's a mistake," Jimmy replied. "This is all right for a spring try-out, but, when we have the real opening in the fall, I've made Calamaz promise me to put on a musical comedy, and after that, it'll be all off. We'll only have a one-week's revival of the classic drama every season, as a sort of social function. If Calamaz tries to run it longer than a week his treasurer will come to him with a pale drawn face and show him a balance sheet. We'll have a quick come-back to the vulgar amusement, which sordid people, who eat three square meals a day and hustle for a luxurious living between times, will pay two dollars a throw, in real

cash, to see. The only way I know to cure a high-brow is to give him a taste of money."

"Calamaz ought to be cured then," she laughed. "I think everybody in Isola is here," and she looked about the pretty auditorium, with a keen delight in all the sparkle and bustle and hum of excitement.

It was indeed, as Dymp Haplee so aptly described it in the next afternoon's *Isolian*, "a scene of splendor and of beauty, where the chivalry and fashion of fair Isola intermingled, in a brilliant revel of gaiety, in the intervals between the genius inspired acts of W. Haplee Calamaz' masterly adaptation of Shakespeare's great masterpiece." To quote further from Dymp: "The magnificent auditorium, richly decorated in the beautiful and striking electric-light style of architecture introduced into Isola by that brilliant and distinguished American, Mr. Jimmy Smith, was packed, from pit to dome, with an enthusiastic concourse of Isola's noblest sons and fairest daughters. The from-henceforth-famous horseshoe, ablaze with jewels and with white shoulders agleam, curved majestically away on either side to the proscenium from the royal box, the latter graced by the dazingly beautiful Princess Bezzanna, in an exquisite shell-pink baby empire gown, ornamented with a myriad of tiny prismatic crystals; by the charming and stately Princess Zheneezha, in a richly fascinating and effective princess creation in black

jet; by the graceful and bewitching Toopy Polecon, in a dainty baby-blue chiffon empire embroidered with pink rose-buds; by his gracious majesty the king; by the handsome and gallant Prince Tedoyah; and last, but not least, by that marvelous wizard of commerce and invention, that accomplished American gentleman, and that peerless leader of men, Mr. Jimmy Smith."

"It's a riot," approved Jimmy, looking them over, "and I love them madly for the way they pick up this recall thing. I have fourteen ham-handed ushers scattered around down there, and as many more in the gallery, carefully trained to lead the applause, but I nearly dropped dead when everybody got up and cheered after the first scene."

"It wasn't their fault," insisted the princess, jealous for her people. "The only training they've had in applause is baseball, and the season's nearly on. How did you stop it?"

"Gave my paddle fists a cue for approval in the middle of a scene," chuckled Jimmy. "At first the house didn't know what had happened to it, but it tumbled in a minute, and since then it has behaved in a perfectly commendable manner. I nearly had to send in the riot alarm after the curtain, though, to quiet the leading lady. She's as full of temperament as a hornet, and she swore that I deliberately broke up her best scene."

Bezzanna shook her head.

"I'm afraid I don't like her," she regretted to acknowledge. "She seems a sort of common person." Her eyes took on a far-away and speculative look. "The drama can be made such a great public teacher that I think the presentment of its great moral lessons should be left only to those of the best thought and refinement," she speculatively stated.

Jimmy gazed at her in such consternation that he felt his hair begin to raise!

"Great governor, I've done it!" he groaned. "I can see it dawning in you already. You want to elevate the stage!"

"It would be a noble work," she urged. "I feel myself particularly fitted for it."

"You're too pretty to make a stage beauty," objected Jimmy, prayerfully thankful to have found a valid excuse. "For that purpose you need a perfectly plain face as a foundation."

"Am I pretty, Jimmy?" she asked, with sudden wistfulness.

That little remark almost strangled him. He looked at her critically, with a vague, but almost hopeless idea of trying to express how pretty she was. About her perfectly formed head, framed in the simple waves of her soft brown hair, was a band of pink, set with the tiny crystal prisms he had made for her, and her tresses, at the nape of her exquisite-

ly modeled neck, were caught in a simple shining knot. Her flawless tapering arms carried perfectly the graceful sweep of her round ivory-tinted shoulders, and with the gentle swell and fall of her breast the band of iridescent prisms at the top of her bodice snapped and sparkled and glittered into his eyes, and set her away from him, behind a dazzling glory. Her eyes, they were rich brown velvet; they were deep wells of tenderness; they were the warning signal-lights of a dangerous coast; they were—

Jimmy Smith gave it up!

"You're a corker!" he said.

She was laughing heartily at that, and unthoughtedly patting Jimmy on the hand for it, when Prince Onalyon, pale and rather haggard-looking, and compromising his solid black Isolian costume enough to have cut his tunic to a V-shape in front for the display of a polished white shirt bosom, came into the box, with a message for the general manager of everything.

"They're absolutely rudderless back on the stage, Jimmy," he smilingly observed, bowing to the princess. "I don't think they'll know which act they're making ready to play if you don't hurry down to them."

"All right," sighed Jimmy, looking at his watch. "I'd like to see the show myself, but I'll wait."

"You will find it quite worth while," compli-

mented the prince smoothly. "It is distinctly another triumph to add to your already crowded list."

"You are very kind to say so," acknowledged Jimmy. "I don't know whether Shakespeare would recognize this show, but he certainly couldn't say much, for he can't make good himself nowadays."

The prince sat down in the chair Jimmy had vacated.

"You are the focus of all eyes," he told the princess. "There is no one here who attracts so much attention as you. You are the most wonderfully beautiful human being, I think, who ever came upon earth." His voice was low, and, in spite of his quite evident repression, it trembled.

Bezzanna, reading in his eyes the passion there, and frightened, too, by a certain tenseness in his manner, brought all her self-possession to her aid to answer him lightly.

"You have not lost your art of pretty speech," she smiled.

"It seems to me that I have never found it," he declared, clenching and unclenching his hands; "else I could have induced you to listen to me with more favor. I could have made you realize the depth, and the strength, and the passion, and, yes, the agony of my love for you, and I could have persuaded you to give me some portion of your love in return."

"Please don't, Onalyon!" she begged him, reach-

ing out her hand. "See? I want us to be friends again, just good friends, dear good comrades, as we always were until the day you no longer laughed when you looked into my eyes. Love, Onalyon, is not a thing of persuasion."

"It is a thing of life and death," he told her, quivering, as if with a passing chill. He had taken her hand when she had offered it in her plea for the restoration of his friendship, and now he gripped it so tightly, drawing her tensely toward him, that she winced with the pain and slipped it from his grasp. His eyes burned upon her as if a veil had been removed from them upon that action, and he bent lower to her ear.

"I told you it was life and death, and I meant it," he said. "I shall have you or I shall die, and I do not care if the whole world dies with me. I have come to you as a lover should, with flowers, and wooing speech, and a body torn with a torture of love. I have begged with you, I have pleaded with you, I have tried to paint, with the most glowing colors at my demand, truthful pictures of the things which my limitless love would do for you, but now— Wait. I must ask you once more. Bezzanna, listen to me, carefully, and think seriously, for this is the last time I shall bend my pride to you. Bezzanna, humbly, I implore you to marry me!"

"I can not," she told him quietly, and coldly; for

the sympathy she had felt for him was gone, now, and forever.

"Then I shall take you," he as quietly asserted, with an ugly squaring of his jaw, and he strode out. Her impulse was to spring up angrily, and call to him her own clear defiance, but a burst of melody from the orchestra reminded her, if she had needed such reminder, of where she was.

The king and her Aunt Gee-gee came into the box, chatting lightly, and she nodded brightly to them, then lost herself in a painful reverie, which took its sway and its rhythm and its sweep from the somberness of the music. Somehow, the world seemed wrong.

Just before the rise of the curtain, Toopy and Teddy came hastily in, quivering with suppressed excitement.

"Have you seen Onalyon?" Teddy demanded.

"I met him with his hat and cape as we came in," replied the king. "He told me that he was going home. Why?"

"He must be arrested!" declared Teddy breathlessly. "I've just been talking with Grisophal. He tells me that, all winter, Onalyon has been manufacturing guns, and ammunition, and cannon, and that he is ready to equip his entire army with them. It's to be a real war now."

The king bowed his head.

"It means the death of ten thousand of my people!" he groaned, then suddenly his head raised proudly and his eyes flashed. "Run quickly," he commanded. "Give orders that Onalyon is to be taken to-night if possible; if not, we must begin gathering our forces to-morrow. I am going after the prince, if it takes the life of every able-bodied man in Isola."

The Princess Bezzanna swayed, and the world grew black.

CHAPTER XXIV,

BIRRQUAY! DEAD!

JIMMY and Dymp Haplee paused just inside the entrance to the magnificent new auditorium restaurant, and submitted themselves to the insolence of two masterful check boys.

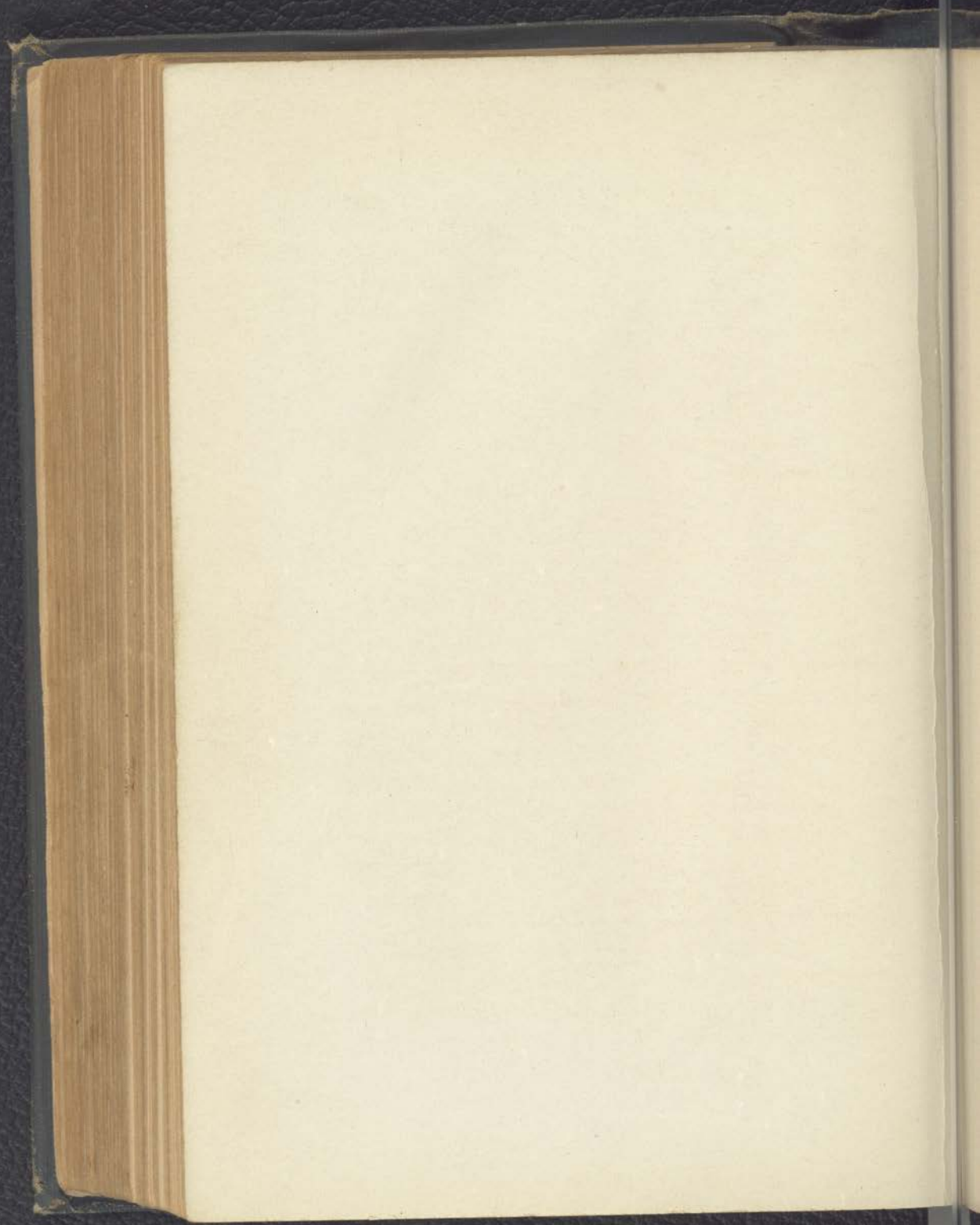
"I had a notion to cut out this feature of it," observed Jimmy, as they saw their Inverness coats dragged on the floor, and the nap of their silk hats rubbed the wrong way against the clothing of every passer-by, and their smoothly polished canes cracked against the rough vases which held the huge artificial palms; "but I couldn't spare it; it reminds me so much of home. Some grand opening, isn't it?"

"It fairly yawns," agreed Dymp, dodging an impetuous waiter, who resented more people coming in because his tables were all filled. "If I hadn't made a fool promise to write this myself, I could settle down here and enjoy the evening."

They both sought shelter between two of the palms, and surveyed the bustling scene with pleasure. Nearly every table on the lower floor was occupied, and those that were not bore, on silver standards,



The world seemed black.



little white cards that showed them to be engaged until a good tip came in. There were flowers, and snow-white napery, and gleaming cut glass everywhere, and at every table were alert-looking men with handsomely gowned women, the latter of whom were carefully inspecting all the others. The place was alive with the hum of animated conversation, punctuated, now and then, by the high-pitched silvery laughter of feminine voices mingled with the lower notes of their escorts.

It was to the balcony, however, that Dymp and Jimmy turned their attention, for here, surrounding and overlooking the entire floor, swelled the low-latticed fronts of private stalls, where, in the most favorable position to see and be seen, were supping the same gay throng that had filled the horseshoe at the theater. At the far end of the spacious and gorgeously decorated dining-room, was the isolated balcony of the royal party, directly opposite the orchestra, where Jimmy was mildly surprised to observe an unusual number of callers, men, who, lounging against the rail, obstructed his view of the Princess Bezzanna.

"I'd think it was a bunch of waiters carving a duck, if it wasn't that I was cute little Jimmy and punctured the grand joke of having a fellow in evening dress serve your soup," he laughed. "I got so tired over home of asking a fellow guest to run

up and get me my overcoat that I thought it would be a smarter scheme to keep the waiters in the Isolian costume. I think it will encourage the use of sensible American clothing. Besides, evening dress for waiters isn't an American idea, anyhow. It was imported from England and the Continent, where the master of the house picks butlers of his own measurement, from motives of economy."

They had mounted the richly carved stairway to the balcony, and now, for the first time, Jimmy caught a glimpse of the pink gown of Bezzanna, and, at the same moment, the orchestra caught sight of Jimmy and struck into *Dixie*, whereupon that large and fashionable throng, having just learned to clap their hands, broke into a wild storm of applause, and, discovering Jimmy, at the head of the balcony stairs, gave him an ovation that brought the blood to his cheeks and the moisture to his eyes. Dymp held him back from an ignominious flight, and made him bow, and when they reached the king's balcony, he was still blushing.

"I'm sorry I'm late," he apologized. "It took me longer than I thought to soothe the troop from their triumph. Why, what's up?" and he gazed, in quick anxiety, from one to the other of the cabinet, for whom the king had sent for as they had come in.

Bezzanna, sitting very, very quietly, with her chin in her hand, looked up at him, and smiled wanly, and

gave the empty chair beside her a touch. Jimmy took the back of it with his hand, but rested one knee upon it, and remained standing.

"The end of things," returned the king. "I'm glad you came in, Dymp. I would have sent for you. Polecon, I think you had better stroll out now, and, afterward, you too, Grisophal. It will not do to congregate too thickly here to-night, nor to remain too long. Don't go, Calamaz. Remain here and keep near to the front of the rail, so that you may be recognized. As long as you are with us it may seem that you are receiving the congratulations you so richly deserve from your friends. Jimmy, I have sent men, in charge of Birrquay, to overtake and arrest the prince."

Jimmy waited quietly for more. He glanced involuntarily toward Bezzanna. She gave a tug at his chair, and he sat down.

"He has arms and ammunition," continued the king. "He has been making them secretly all winter, in the mountains behind his estate."

"I was afraid of those new men," replied Jimmy; "but that's spilled milk. We're up against it. I don't like to think of bloodshed, but we're in for it."

"And now," decided the king, emphatically; "I shall not wait for an invasion this time. If the men I have sent after him do not overtake him, I am going to get him myself."

"You are relinquishing a tremendous advantage," protested Jimmy. "If you wait for the prince to come on to your territory, there can be but one outcome to the battle, for we can blow the prince and all his followers into eternity."

"If I wait for the prince to come on to my territory one minute after I know that he has been engaged in these treasonable preparations, I am not fit to be king of Isola," was the retort of the king.

"Go to it," agreed Jimmy. "The choice of which army to wipe out is up to you, and I'll have to congratulate you on picking the best one. I know your type. You'll ride just ahead of the band."

"Naturally," agreed the king.

"Then Teddy and I claim the privilege of riding each side of you."

"You may," consented the king, granting him the high favor immediately; "but Teddy may not. He is the seed of Isola's royalty."

"Great Scott, must I be the crown prince again!" protested Teddy. "I am as tired of it as Betty is of being the crown princess. It steps in the road of all the fun there is."

"I wouldn't exactly call this fun, except from a professional standpoint," observed Dymp Haplee. "I guess that any man who starts on that expedition can just about figure his number of chances of safety on the toes of a one-legged mule."

Jimmy turned to him with sudden briskness.

"Dymp, you're in a better position than any one in Isola to feel the public pulse," he said. "Onalyon has lost a great deal of his prestige, has he not?"

"He never was popular," returned Dymp. "He won a large following through the panic and nothing else, but I am quite sure that now the only ones on whom he can absolutely rely are his black heads of the south mountains, who have been hereditary supporters of his family since the day of Xantobah."

"They're a reckless lot," declared old Polecon. "They're responsible for nearly all the fights I've had at my rolling-mills, and they'll make a bad lot to tackle."

"I do not think that he is relying so much on numbers as on more armament," suggested the king. "We have not increased our number of guns, knowing that we would have no need of them, but I understood from Grisophal that he has two thousand of them, and I fancy that to be about the extent of the forces he anticipates bringing against us. Calamaz, I shall rely on you for an early morning meeting of the cabinet at the palace, and Jimmy and Teddy and myself will spend the most of the night on a plan of invasion."

"I don't like it," declared Jimmy. "I hate it. I have a horror of needless killing, which amounts al-

most to a passion. I would not have you turn back one moment from the immediate crushing of Onalyon, for I know that you would cease to be a king at that moment, but I know that whatever action we do take is going to fill the bed of your river with a color that will stain the water of your outermost reef. I know that no matter what strategies we devise, thousands of your best and strongest men will flood your soil with their life blood, thousands of homes will be fatherless, and thousands of your defenseless women will be forced to take up the manual labor which the men deserted to kill and be killed; and it sickens me."

The king turned on him a countenance livid with pain.

"It is for them I must do this," he stated. "The longer it is put off now, the more disastrous it will be, and there is no help for it; none!"

Grisophal came hurrying into the balcony, his usually stern features set in a savage snarl.

"Did they capture the prince?" demanded the king, rising.

"No. He was armed," reported Grisophal, commanding himself with difficulty.

"Anybody hurt?"

"Birrqay! He is dead!"

Birrqay! Dead! The word seemed to have no meaning to Bezzanna. Why, not over an hour ago

he had told her how pretty she was. She had known Birrquay ever since she was a baby, known and loved him. She was sorry now that she had ever ridiculed his funny nose. Birrquay! Dead! Why, she was responsible!

CHAPTER XXV

BEZZANNA SACRIFICES HERSELF FOR ISOLA

IT was true that Birrquay was dead. The king, and Jimmy, and Teddy had seen him, but Bezzanna was glad that she had not. She wanted to remember him, if she could, as being still alive and happy, and still absurdly conscious of his nose, but as just having gone away, and she tried piteously to make it seem that way, as they drove home in the big torpedo; but no, he was dead!

It had promised to be such a happy night, and, even now, the moon, almost at the full, was shining as serenely down on the peaceful meadows, freshly tufted with delicate green, and on the trees, still clothed in the freshness of their first tender leaves, as if there had been no pain or sorrow or misery in all the world, and no murder in the hearts of men.

The gay scene at the theater, its life, its light, its animation, and the equally brilliant scene at the restaurant all came back to her in a confused and kaleidoscopic tangle of brightness, and she tried to lay hold on these fleeting pictures, and make them

fill her mind to the exclusion of everything else, except the triumph of Jimmy. She liked to think of that, and she cast a look of pride at the broad back of him, up there with the driver.

There was Calamaz, too. She feared that she had not taken enough joy in the triumph of Calamaz. Somehow, she felt to-night that she wanted to draw all her friends closer to her, and not be quite so neglectful of any of them ever any more. She had so many friends, good, kind, true, trustworthy friends, friends who had always loved her and would go to any length to serve her, or to save her, now, if they could, from the misery which she had a wide-eyed fear was drawing near to her. There was jolly Polecon, and sentimental Calamaz, and stern Griso-phal, and light-hearted Dymp Haplee, and funny-nosed Birrquay, and—

Birrquay! It frightened her to have him work his accusing way gradually around to her, no matter where she set her train of thought. It must be that the matter had some more intimate connection with her than she liked to dwell on. She was not a coward! Let her look it in the face.

In just how far was she responsible? If she had not refused the prince, Birrquay would be still alive. But she had to refuse the prince. She could not marry him. She did not love him, and, moreover, since the moment of brutality he had exhibited to

her in the box at the theater, she hated him! She abhorred the very thought of him, and the bare touch of his hand upon her own would fill her with as much shrinking horror as if a loathsome snake had crawled upon her. Unconsciously, she shuddered, and rubbed the back of her hand again and again with her handkerchief.

Why, it was the prince who had killed Birrquay. He was responsible, not she. She was relieved to make that discovery. The prince would have to be punished. That was it. He must be brought to task for having killed her friend. The king and Jimmy would go over there and get him. But they might be hurt, too; no, killed! Dymp had said so. She caught her breath sharply at that thought, and, reaching out, she put her hand upon the king's shoulder to reassure herself. He reached up and caught her hand, and squeezed it, and patted it, and turned around and smiled at her. She wished that there was room for Jimmy in the tonneau. He seemed so far away, up there in front, out of the protection of her presence, as it were.

What a big, and strong, and wise man Jimmy was, and how little of cruelty there was in him, with all his power. Maybe that was why Jimmy did not want this terrible thing that seemed to hang over Isola, like that big black cloud that was now hiding the moon. Hadn't he said something about the river

running with blood? They were turning a bend in the road, and she looked down at the stream that was now so important to Isola. Wharf lights had been placed there recently, and the gleams they cast upon the oily water were red, blood red!

Why could she never escape from that hideous suggestion? Why should she though? She suddenly accused herself. The death of Birrquay she could not have avoided, because she did not know, but all these other thousands of deaths would be on her account. Well, she could not avoid that either, now, for it was too late. She had not known the awful consequences that might ensue upon her refusal to marry the prince, and now that it had gone so far, her conscience should be more lenient with her. Even if things are one's fault, one should not be held so miserably to account when one has been innocent of evil intention.

Could nothing be done to avert this terrible disaster? Was it too late? Why, no. The answer came so easily, and so naturally as to be absurd in its simplicity. She might marry the prince! She had known that all along, she suddenly discovered, and she smiled grimly at herself; also she smiled grimly at the impossible solution.

They passed a neat little cottage at the roadside. It had a trim little garden, with roses growing everywhere in wild profusion, and covering the tiny little

porch, and even running up the little gable of the house, to nod saucily at the friendly moonlight from the very roof-tree. Yontay lived there, a big, round-headed, always-laughing fellow, who was foolishly devoted to Jimmy at the shops. He had a fragile little wife in that cottage, and little children, too; a boy, and a wonderfully beautiful little girl with round eyes and round cheeks and round little legs and arms, and tousled curly hair, who was frantic with the worship of Bezzanna's own beauty, and always came running to the roadside with a rose, plucked by her own chubby fingers. Yontay would go to the war, too; and he might be killed, and if he were, what would become of the fragile little wife, and the little boy, and the chubby little girl with the tight curly hair? Of course, Bezzanna could take care of this family, but she could not take care of all the families in the kingdom. She really should marry the prince, and, at the recurrence of that thought, she once more smiled at its impossibility.

Why, it would be like going away to be dead—like Birrquay. No, it would be worse than that, for Birrquay could not suffer any more.

She tried to think of all the things that might be different if she were to accept that impossible solution, but the first change she thought of, aside from her own physical and moral and spiritual tragedy, was so important that she could get no further. She

would be away from Jimmy, always, and she could not get along without Jimmy. He was different from her other brothers. She did not love him more, not at all, but it was different, somehow. That was as near as she could explain it.

As they entered the gates of the palace park she looked down into Isola. It was a beautiful picture, as it lay sleeping under the moonlight, dotted here and there with pretty homes. She had always loved this view of the valley—and to-morrow they might strew it with dead, like Birrquay!

When the king kissed her good night at the door of her room, she told him that he need not stay up late with Jimmy and Teddy to plan a campaign.

"Why not?" he asked her, looking down into her clear and untroubled eyes, and pinching her pallid cheeks to bring the color back to them, as he had a joking habit of doing. "You are very much fatigued, Bezzanna. I fear that the excitement of the night has been too much for you. I do hope you have good rest."

"I am going to marry the prince," she told him, with a feeling of mild surprise, as she discovered that she had known this all the time.

When the king returned to the library he found old Polecon there with Jimmy and Teddy. As young in spirit as any of the gallants of Isola, he had enjoyed the entire evening's dissipation, theater and

restaurant and all, and now, at three o'clock in the morning, after having seen his women folk safely home, the grandfather of Toopy, with a pair of particularly bright eyes in his seamed and purpled countenance, was ready to finish the night.

The king shook hands warmly with his old friend, and sat down by the table, looking moodily out at the window, while Jimmy resumed his explanation of certain plans he had for the invasion.

Polecon turned to him presently and laid a bony hand upon his arm.

"You can't stand the pace like us young fellows," he laughingly bantered.

"I am worried," responded the king. "It is a family matter, and yet, after all, it is a matter of state. The Princess Bezzanna insists that she is going to marry Onalyon."

Jimmy felt a painful clutch at his heart, as if a hot brand had been placed upon it.

"What did you tell her?" he asked, clearing his throat, for a spasmodic contraction there had rendered his voice husky.

"That I forbade it," replied the king, raising his head and compressing his lips.

Polecon turned on him sharply.

"Why?" he demanded.

"Because it is too late. I can allow neither the

prince's treason nor the death of Birrquay to go unpunished."

"Pride and revenge," commented Polecon. "We are face to face with sacrifice now, and it is only a question of choosing. Shall you sacrifice your resentment that a man has armed himself against you, and shall your cabinet, in whose hands this latter matter lies, sacrifice their desire for vengeance, or shall we sacrifice thousands of lives?"

The king was silent. He was struggling with himself and his responsibilities.

"One life would do it!" declared Teddy savagely. "If I could only lay hands on Onalyon—"

Jimmy, who was very quiet, stopped him with the barest trace of a touch.

"You, a human being like your subjects, even though a king, are responsible for their welfare, their happiness, and their right to live," went on Polecon. "If there is any justice in the great apparent chain of incidents that we call human events, you are permitted to be ruler over a hundred and fifty thousand fellow human beings because you are more wise, more powerful, more just, more kind, and more above the ignoble passions. You have no right to the purely personal emotions of pride and revenge, when these are weighed against the happiness of your people. You have the solution to our

threatened national disaster in your own hands. If the princess will marry Onalyon, let her do so."

"I fear him on the throne," persisted the king.

"Our friend Jimmy has answered that objection for us," responded Polecon. "We will pull Onalyon's teeth before he assumes the reins of government, if that time ever comes, by giving the people a constitution with which they may protect themselves. I have read the document Jimmy drew up, and think it marvelous for its wisdom, its justice, and its safety. I would have urged its adoption before this, except that we are safer in your judgment than in the protection of any mechanical system."

The king was deeply touched by the beautiful and sincere compliment, and expressed his gratitude with becoming humility.

"There is one other objection," he presently stated, aware that he was urging the one that was the strongest with him. "The princess does not love Onalyon."

"Suppose she does not?" demanded Polecon. "It is the sacrifice of one woman as weighed against the sacrifice of a nation. It should be her privilege to make that sacrifice. She is the crown princess."

The king, in his distraction, turned suddenly to the adviser who had never failed him.

"Jimmy, what is your opinion?" he asked.

"I positively refuse to advise you in the matter,"

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replied Jimmy, trying to conceal the fact that his teeth were set and that his jaws worked stiffly.

"Why—" The king, watching Jimmy's countenance, broke off abruptly, and a look of mingled pain and fear came into his own eyes. "What is this plan of action you were discussing when I came in?" he wanted to know.

The morning had well advanced, and they were deep in the discussion of a long since perfected but concealed device of Jimmy's, which had appalled them all by its destructiveness, when the door opened and the princess came in. She was straight and slender, in the white robe of Isola, her wide eyes burned like coals of fire, and there were deep dark circles under them, while her face was wax-like in its pallor.

"Why, Bezzanna!" cried the king, rising to meet her, and then he stopped, aghast at the change the night had wrought in her.

"You haven't been up all night?" she protested, and her voice, low, but steady and musical, had in it a strange new note of sweetness, which brought the tears to the eyes of the king, and to Jimmy's.

"We have been discussing strategy," Polecon told her, eying her keenly.

"There will be no need of it," she assured him. "There is to be no war, since I am to marry the prince."

"You shall not!" cried Teddy hotly.

"I must," insisted the princess gently. "I have already given him my word. I have just telephoned him."

CHAPTER XXVI

BEZZANNA RUNS FROM A STARTLING SECRET

THE Princess Bezzanna passed through the busy general offices on her way to visit Jimmy, wondering dully why she should feel so conscious of her spiritless appearance before a big roomful of employees, too rushed to notice her, anyhow. About her rose the hum of a score of typewriters, and added to these was the intensity of nervous energy emanating from half a hundred Jimmy-imitating clerks; and the atmosphere was so distressing to her already tired nerves that she almost wanted to run for the haven of Jimmy's door. When she reached it she was so anxious to shut out all this tensi-ty that she went straight in without stopping to discover whether he had a conference or not; but, to her dismay, Jimmy was not there.

She hesitated a moment and then tried the knob of a big door that led directly from the private office into a department of the experimental shop—but it was bolted; and she sat in his big revolving chair, thankful for its roomy comfort. Somehow it reminded her of Jimmy himself.

The telephone bell rang, and out of mechanical impulse, she reached out her hand to take down the receiver, but she drew it back with a smile, for this was business. It rang again, but once more she resisted temptation. Still, the message might be very important, and maybe she should find out what it was, and tell somebody. If it rang again she would. She looked about her for some means of occupation. It seemed difficult to keep from thinking to-day.

A copy of that afternoon's paper lay on the desk, slightly crumpled, and the first thing that met her eye as she picked it up, was the announcement of her engagement to the prince, a largely displayed article, with portraits of herself and Onalyon. The telephone bell rang most insistently, but unheeded. She had not yet seen the paper, and she read the article carefully through, then turned wearily from it to read, with increasing bitterness, the diplomatically-framed lie of Birrquay's death. He had been shot by an accidental discharge of firearms. Somehow, she felt responsible for this miserable falsehood, too, and she was filled with the resentment of undeserved shame.

Her brow contracted as she realized that Jimmy had been reading this marriage notice. She did not like to think of that. Her going away would be a tremendous blow to Jimmy, and a reminder of this sort would hurt him. He would miss her

dreadfully, she knew, as she would him. It wasn't a thoroughly perfect world, after all; and she had always thought it so gay and happy.

The door of the experimental shop opened at last, and Jimmy came abstractedly in, locking the door behind him.

"You're so mysterious about it that I shall have to see what you're hiding in there," she called to him, resolved to be her happy self again. She was to be with him such a little time. As he turned, however, the bright smile, with which she had meant to greet him, faded instantly, for he was so haggard that he startled her.

"Can't let you in there, Betty," he returned, with jauntiness equal to her own. "It's a state secret, and a surprise for you, and a shock for the natives. There's nothing like shocking the natives now and then. It keeps them looking for another one."

"That sounds like an American idea," she laughed, studying his countenance with panic-stricken anxiety. Was he ill, or was he just so very sorry that she was going away by and by? She preferred to think the latter. It gave her more nearly to a thrill of happiness than she had believed it possible for her ever to know again.

The telephone bell rang, and she made a move to vacate his chair, but he motioned her to sit still, and leaning on the desk with one elbow, he answered.

He was near enough for her to touch him, almost without reaching, but she did not. He was so busy that she did not dare to disturb him. His coat spread upon the arm of the chair, and she put her hand upon that, and patted it gently, listening with pride, meanwhile, to the brisk and masterful way in which he disposed of the questions of business policy so important that only he could answer them. His face, however,—that was what fascinated her. She could not keep her eyes from it, nor the concern out of them, and when he turned he caught her searching gaze, and smiled reassuringly.

"I have a slight headache to-day," he told her.

"You need rest," she chided him. She felt stirring within her the mother instinct to make him go somewhere and lie down, and let her cover him up for a nap. He looked so very worn, and it hurt her.

"I have been working rather hard," he confessed, taking a basket of letters from an entering boy; "but the only way to keep from worrying about overwork is to work a little harder. Do you mind if I call in my stenographer and get off two or three rather important letters?" and he reached for a button on his desk.

"If I may stay," she smiled. "I didn't come on any particular errand. I just wanted to be with you."

"You can't come often enough, nor stay long enough," he assured her as he pressed the button.

"I feel timid about bothering you, since your business interests have grown so enormous," she chatted, absorbed in a new distress. Was it possible that she saw some gray hairs over his temple, or was it just a reflection of the light? She wanted to reach up to see but she decided not to do so.

"A man who can't conduct a business and entertain a lady at the same time, wouldn't get past a clerkship in America," he stated. "If the lady interferes with his business, he gives up the business."

Confound it, why did Bezzanna keep staring at him so! She was not looking too chipper herself, that she need pay so much attention to his fagged-out appearance, and he was afraid she might discover something that he wished to keep hidden from her forever. It would do no good to her or to him, under the circumstances, and her eyes were so very penetrating. He was afraid of her.

A lanky boy came in with a note-book in his hand, and hesitated when he saw the princess, but, seeing he was expected to take dictation, he drew up his chair to the side leaf of the desk, and Jimmy, poking his hands in his pockets, frowned intensely at the boy; for he was out of patience with certain of his correspondents.

The savage manner in which he lit into those correspondents, and flayed them alive with sarcasm and irony was a joy to Bezzanna, but she was sur-

prised, when he was through, to hear him order the letters typed and held until morning.

"I thought you were in a hurry to get those letters out to-night," she puzzled.

"Out of my system," he amended. "I always dictate my especially sassy letters just before closing time. In the morning I tone them down before I send them."

"That's like the old Jimmy," she laughed.

He winced, and walked away to look out of the window. He seemed so forlorn, so alone and hopeless as he stood there that she could not bear it any longer. She was compelled to comfort him, and, walking across to him, she laid her hand on his shoulder.

"Jimmy," she said softly.

He turned to her with eyes that were full of agony, and reaching up to his shoulder, took down her hand and held it, stroking it gently.

"Don't be so unhappy," she pleaded. "I need you to be jolly, and smiling, and your old bright cheerful self."

"I can't," he said. "I try to, but I can't, Bezzanna. I'm doing my best to be your reliable Jimmy, but I'm sure that you're going to a life of endless distress, and it is too much to ask me, knowing that, to be happy."

"No one has any right to suppose that I'm going

to a life of endless distress," she reproved him, practising on a pose she would have to assume before the rest of the world, but failing miserably in her first attempt. "Oh, Jimmy, tell me I haven't made a mistake! Tell me that I have done the right thing! You said yourself that you didn't want a war, and you ought, for my sake, if for no other reason, to approve of what I have done. You want me to marry the prince, don't you?"

"No!" he thundered, overcome at last by the storm of protest which had raged so furiously within him, and in the eyes that he bent down on her there glowed the fire which he had so long repressed.

She had been about to ask him a faltering reason, but looking into his eyes, she could not, and suddenly there flamed into her own, born of the knowledge which she had deliberately hidden from herself for a year, an answer to that unspoken appeal!

For a long instant they stood so, breathless in the revelation that had come to them, then, with a sigh, which would have been a groan had he not held it in check with his splendid will, he bent his head down to her hand, and kissed it tenderly, and lowered it gently to her side.

She was shaken to the very depths of her soul, and she stood, for a moment, in absolute bewilderment, overwhelmed by the flood of emotion which

had burst in upon her, then suddenly she turned and fled, and Jimmy did not call after her nor follow her.

She hurried out through the offices, and across the yard into the gardens, and as soon as she was safely hidden from view, she ran. She did not know where she was going, nor care. She wanted to be alone, all, all alone, to fight out this great wonderful battle.

Some drops of rain fell about her, but she did not pay any attention to them, nor notice that the sky had become heavily overcast since she had gone into the office. Nothing mattered to her now, but the great overmastering fact that she loved Jimmy; loved him with all the strength of her fervid soul; loved him better than all the world put together; loved him so that she would rather die with him than to live without him! She had always loved him, she knew that now, even before he came to her out of the storm, and the great, the glorious, the overwhelming thing about it was that Jimmy loved her, in the same deathless fashion: loved her with all his gentleness and all his strength!

It was a glorious world! A world full of dazzling delight; a world of singing, and laughter, and dancing, and music; of flowers, and of birds, and of sunshine, and of shaded groves, with long avenues of bended trees where lovers might walk.

CHAPTER XXVII

WHO FOUND HER? WHY, JIMMY!

DINNER was late that night at the palace, for this had been a day of much excitement, and even when it was announced, the king and Aunt Gee-gee and Teddy were the only ones to respond to the summons, and the king looked about the table disconsolately. It seemed so very empty.

"The Princess Bezzanna is probably asleep," he suggested, turning to watch the rain pelting against the windows; "and if she is I would not have her disturbed; but Jimmy mustn't cheat the rest of us in sleep."

"I beg your pardon, but Mr. Jimmy is in his office," advised old Amyah, from his confidential station behind the king's chair. "He telephoned some time ago, begging to be excused, as he was extremely busy."

"Very well," replied the king resignedly. "You might ask Bezzanna's maids if she is awake."

"I do not think the Princess Bezzanna is in her apartments," ventured Amyah with a look of dis-

tress. "I went up myself to announce dinner, and the maids told me she had not been in since before the storm."

"She may have slipped into one of the many vacant rooms to be alone, as she sometimes has a fancy to do so, and may have dropped asleep," suggested Aunt Gee-gee. "She had best be located."

"I know where she is, I'll bet," declared Teddy. "She's with Jimmy. She probably intended to come across to the palace when he telephoned, but the storm has increased so frightfully that he very likely made her stay. Did you send any lunch over to Jimmy?"

"Yes, sir," replied Amyah.

"Were there any pickles with it?"

"Yes, sir; pickles and American pie."

"Then she stayed!" exulted Teddy. "I'll prove it to you."

He went to the telephone himself. A very tired voice answered him.

"If Bezzanna's with you, tell her we're having some ice-cream," said Teddy.

"Bezzanna has not been here since five o'clock," answered Jimmy, more animatedly. "Where is she?"

"She's probably asleep somewhere," replied Teddy.

But she was not. A thorough search of all the

chambers failed to reveal her, and amidst the growing anxiety that ensued, Teddy had another brilliant idea.

"She's over at Toopy's," he confidently asserted, and started to find out.

"Don't phone," warned Aunt Gee-gee. "She would have sent us word if she had intended to remain there."

Teddy looked at the telephone hesitantly.

"I have to find out where she is," he insisted, and started again toward the telephone.

"Let me do it, then," offered his aunt. "I am equally anxious, but I scarcely think it wise to alarm the neighbors with a hint of her disappearance on a day when her engagement has just been announced." And she called up Toopy.

"I want you to come over to-morrow, and find a minute to talk with me, alone," she said. "I want to get up a little surprise on Bezzanna."

"I'll come over to-night," offered Toopy at once, fairly gasping with eagerness and curiosity.

"You mustn't come in this storm, child," laughed Aunt Gee-gee, very naturally indeed. "I shouldn't have an opportunity to tell you to-night, anyhow."

"What's it to be like?" inquired Toopy, her voice high-pitched with anticipatory excitement.

"I mustn't tell you over the phone."

"Oh, I see," returned Toopy, almost whispering,

in the aid of secrecy. "Bezzanna's likely to pop in on you. Will nine o'clock in the morning be too early?"

"I'm afraid I don't get my thinking cap on before ten," replied Aunt Gee-gee, already scrambling for a clever idea in the surprise line.

When she came back from the telephone, both the king and Teddy were on their feet.

"Not there," guessed the king, reading her face. "Then, unless she is in the cellars, the gables, or in the tower, she is outside somewhere. She may have been hurt." And the frantic search began.

Teddy had just come bounding down from the tower when the telephone bell rang.

"Is Betsy there?" snapped the anxious voice of Jimmy.

"No!" blurted Teddy, on the verge of tears. "She's lost!"

A sharp click in his ear was the only answer he had to that, and he knew that Jimmy was on his way out into the rain.

His conjecture was flawless, for Jimmy had not even paused to snatch his raincoat and cap on the way to the door, outside of which he found himself in the midst of one of the wild equinoctial storms that always raged at this season. Before he had crossed the workshop yard, a score of lights were bobbing about the palace grounds, for the king was

now thoroughly alarmed, and had started everybody available on the search. The palace park itself was of enormous extent, thickly wooded in portions, and covered here and there with thick underbrush. At the rear the park ran back into the mountains, where occasionally, even yet, were caught some of the small panthers which had originally infested Isola. There were many summer-houses in the grounds, in which Bezzanna might find refuge, and among the rocks were numberless little nooks and overhung shelters, and it was to these that the king first directed the search.

Their shouting and the intensity of their voices struck dismally on the ear of Jimmy; for he fancied that he knew better than any of them the reason of her disappearance, and his conscience tore fiercely at him as he struck off across the gardens, avoiding the lights of the searchers as much as possible, for there was no use in researching already traversed ground.

He had not kept faith with himself. He had been miserably weak when he meant to be strong. He had let out the secret that he had meant so carefully to guard, and had surprised Bezzanna into a knowledge of her own heart, which had far better have been left undiscovered since nothing but misery to both of them could come from the revelation. He was a traitor, and worse than that, a cad!

There was no depth of self-revilement which he did not touch as he breasted that raging storm. He was glad that the rain beat fiercely in his face, that the wind whipped angrily at his garments, that the lightnings crackled and flared at him, and that the thunders rolled, in mighty peals, from one end of the vault of Heaven to the other, as if they were bent on the destruction of the very firmament itself; for these things fitted with his own Titanically tormented mood.

The pent-up love, which had been so long repressed in him, had burst its dam, and surged its mad course through his virile body and his virile mind and his virile soul, in full sweep and sympathy with this lawless riot of the elements. For hours he had writhed, in an agony of spirit, possessed by a great want, which had cried out to him to overturn, to destroy, to slay, if need be, to have his will, and to take, as his right, that great gift which nature had so evidently designed for him. He had paced the floor of his office with the mad feeling that its walls alone bound him in from the possession of all that his whole being craved, with a force which must destroy him if it were denied. He had sat at his desk, with his head bowed on it, and his arms outstretched, and his fists clenched until the nails had sunk into his palms, trying to stem the resistless flood of love that had surged upon him!

But he had not succeeded. He had only intensified the great longing that had well-nigh driven him mad, and it had brought on him a delirium of emotions, in which he alternately cursed and exulted. Yes, he had been a traitor, to her, to himself, and to his present world; but on the other hand, he loved, and was loved, and that was the defiant answer to anything—to everything!

So it was that his spirit mocked at the storm, exulted in it, welcomed it, recognized in it a brother to his own great rage. If the Princess Bezzanna were out in it, well and good. She was no weakling, either to be injured or frightened by an upheaval of nature such as this, filled as it was with the untamed wildness to which so much within both Bezzanna and himself answered with leaping blood. He hoped and believed that she had taken refuge from her own cataclysm in the abysm of this tempestuous night, and that he would find her in it.

Buffeting fiercely at the storm, he had passed through the gardens, not knowing whither he was bound nor paying any attention to his direction, and now he found himself among winding, rocky declivities, rushing waters leaping about his feet, madly thrashing branches battling overhead, and fitful gusts of rain-pelting wind dashing at him from every direction, and swirling about him in miniature cyclones as they were diverted from their course,

and turned and twisted and baffled by the many facets of the surrounding rocks.

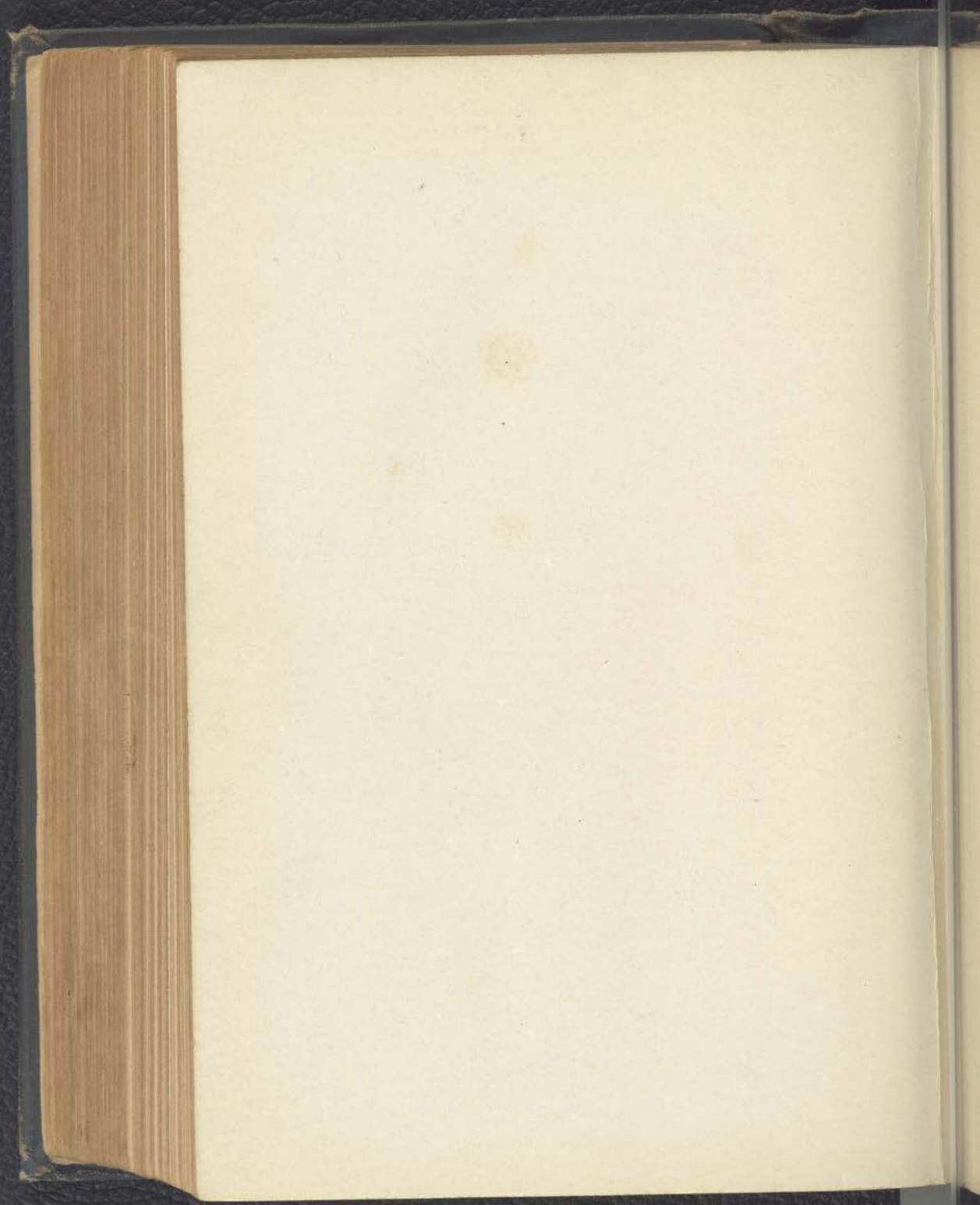
It looked an unpromising way, but he had no thought of turning back, and so he strode on, his feet slipping, now and then, along the insecure footing, until a low sullen roaring apprised him, at last, of where he was—in the ravine leading down, through the cliffs, to the sea! He had been blind not to have known this path before, but now that he recognized it, he urged his already hastening footsteps until he emerged upon that wonderful panorama of the storm-tormented reefs, miles upon miles of rolling and foaming froth, leaping, here and there, in tortured white-capped columns under the fitful glare of the lightning, as if in a mad effort to escape from the agony of being battered and beaten and slashed amid the tangle of sharp and cruel rocks, through which he had come alive.

He smiled exultantly as he looked upon this furious commotion, and running along the dangerous cliffside ledge, with no more care than if it had been a level path, he leaped to the rock-strewn beach and hurried along it toward the forbidding point, which breasted its sharp edge to the violent sea.

He even laughed as he ran toward it, for he knew, now, knew that, as unconscious of her destination as he, she would, in the overwhelming bewilderment of the knowledge that had flooded



It looked an unpromising way.



upon her, hasten, by blind instinct, to be alone with this great mystery and herself, in the place where she had found him, on a night like this, just a year ago!

As he turned the knifelike edge of that impregnable rock that rose straight up from the sea, clasping its inequalities with all the strength of his hardened muscles, a great flare of lightning overspread the sky, and in its vivid blue glow, he saw, above the shelving beach in the black mouth of the low cave, a flash of white.

"Betty!" he called, and the vibrant timbre of his voice would have carried through the commotion of a dozen tearing storms and raging seas such as this.

"Jimmy!" called an exultant voice in answer, and then, as he scrambled quickly to the beach and gained the edge of the ledge below the cave: "Oh, Jimmy; you've been so long in coming!"

CHAPTER XXVIII

A CHAPTER OF NOTHING BUT SILLINESS

WHAT time they held in that first, long, half-swooning embrace, lips glued to lips and breast held to breast, they could not know, but when the first transports of their ecstasy were passed, and the peaceful calm of a child that has been forgiven and soothed had come upon them, they looked toward each other, through the darkness, with grave eyes, as the dawning of realization came to them.

"Now what are we to do?" asked Bezzanna, surprised that she should be so little worried about the disasters which hovered over them, and she pressed all her finger-tips successively on his cheek.

He caught that hand and kissed each of those soft finger-tips, and drew them up in a little bunch, and kissed them all together.

She immediately held up the other hand.

"Well, to begin with," he said, between pauses of performing that new duty, "of course you can't marry the prince."

"Certainly not," she happily agreed, pulling down

his ear to blow in it. "I'm so glad that's settled. And we are not to have any war. You'll fix that some way."

Jimmy drew a mighty breath.

"To be sure," he promised. "When there's any little trifle like that you want done, just mention it."

She laughed lightly and nestled against him, burrowing energetically with her shoulder until it just fitted under his armpit. She was silent for a little while, just enjoying her joy, and looking out at the tumbling white breakers, in the intermittent glare of the lightning. Presently she asked, as by an afterthought:

"How are you going to do it, Jimmy?"

"What?" he inquired, drawing her a little closer, there being still an infinitesimal fraction of an inch between them.

"Why, stop the war!"

"Oh, yes; the war," he repeated. "I'm always forgetting about that war," and he paused to tilt back her head and kiss her, with apologies for having neglected it so long. It had been almost a minute. "I'm afraid I'll have to have time to think of that. It might seem a simple little trick to you, but you must remember that I haven't had much practise in stopping wars."

"You stopped one," she reminded him. "You owe me an apology."

"So I do," he admitted. "I forgot to kiss you again. Here it is, and the next one, and a couple of little ones for good measure. The war I stopped, Betty, was only a musical comedy one. We have real powder in our guns now."

"You'll find some way," she confidently assured him. "You couldn't before, I know, but now, you see, you just have to. I'm so happy, Jimmy, I don't want to go home, or do anything but just stay right here with you; but I suppose we'll have to go home sometime; and, when we do, I'm not going to stop to put on dry clothing until I telephone the prince that there isn't any engagement, and never will be."

Jimmy's laugh upon that lacked mirth entirely.

"That strikes me as an excellent way not to begin stopping the war," he grimly commented, oppressed by the thought.

"Oh, I mustn't do it!" she disconsolately agreed. "It would precipitate matters at once, wouldn't it?"

"There's only one thing in favor of that plan," he thoughtfully considered. "It would mean an invasion by the prince, instead of by our forces, which would result in killing the right people, if any are to be killed."

"Oh, there mustn't be any," she immediately insisted. "We mustn't have anybody killed. Unless," she added naively, "unless it should just be the

prince himself. Couldn't we manage that some way?"

This time the merriment was in Jimmy's laugh, and she laughed with him, in childish glee, and just for the pure joy of laughing.

"I have no mad passion for war," he informed her; "but I am even less enthusiastic about murder. Another thing, Bezzanna," and now he turned very grave indeed: "not even the death of the prince will make it any easier for us to marry."

"Jimmy," she cried, overwhelmed by that remembrance. "I was so happy I forgot that, and I've known about it for a year. Oh, Jimmy! Jimmy! Jimmy!" and throwing her arms around his neck, she suddenly burst into a flood of tears, holding to him convulsively, as if she feared they might take him away from her, even here.

"Listen, dear," he urged, stroking her hair, the hair that he had always loved so much, and from which he had for so long withheld his hungry hands. "There is no happiness in all the world which I crave so much as having you to be my wife, but if that is impossible, the next happiness is to know that you love me, and to have you near me, so that I can see you and hear the sound of your voice every day; so if we can only prevent your marriage to the prince, without plunging Isola into years of mourn-

ing, we must be content, for a time, with just the glance, and the word, and the occasional touch of love. The contemplation of that alone is Heaven for me, now, after having been so starved through this long year."

The princess betrayed a startling touch of wisdom and penetration.

"It won't last, Jimmy," she stated with quiet conviction, pulling a kiss from his lips with her fingertips and eating it greedily. "We'd stand it just so long, and then we'd go mad, and I'd end up in Wahanita's tower."

"Great Scott, don't!" yelled Jimmy, from whose mind there was never absent the haunting image of that grim monument. "I'd rather see the Old Boy himself over my shoulder than to hear that horrible tower mentioned. I'm going to have it down some time, if I have to dynamite it myself; but in the meantime, I guess I'd better let it stand as a reminder to Jimmy. The only safety I see, Betty, is for me to move away from the palace. I should have my business headquarters in the city now, anyhow."

"And leave me here alone?" she indignantly protested. "Why, Jimmy, you're silly. I'd be furiously angry with you, if I didn't love you so much; and, oh, Jimmy, I do love you!"

It took them fifteen minutes to recover from the

spasm that ensued on this, and after that was over, the princess set herself to extremely sober thought.

"I know!" she suddenly cried, delighted with the happy idea that had come to her. "I know how we'll fix it! You'll just have to figure out some safe way for us to be married."

"It's a wonder I hadn't thought of that myself," he cheerlessly responded. "The only drawback I see to your happy thought is that you, being the crown princess and subject to death if you marry a commoner, and me, being compelled to remain a commoner for six generations, the solution seems at least unfeasible, if not impossible."

"Impossible!" she retorted. "Why, Jimmy, there's nothing impossible. Before you came here, I had a long list of things I wanted, and they called me silly, Onalyon and my own brothers, too, and called me a girl, and as good as told me to keep quiet because I wanted impossible things. Then you came, Jimmy—Wait; you must kiss me for that—Thank you; now the other eye; now both eyes. I love you, Jimmy! Doesn't that seem funny? And you love me; but that doesn't seem funny at all."

"Then I came, and brought them all to you, and more," he finished for her. "I remember the list of your absurdly impossible wants; glass, and matches, and electric lights, and the telephone, and—" He suddenly stopped with a breathless in-

spiration, and then he laughed aloud. "Come on, Betty darling, we must hurry right home. I want to show you something," and rising to his feet, he pulled her up to him and clasped her in his arms.

"I don't want to go home," she observed five minutes later. "We can't be alone there. I don't like so many people fussing about all the time; do you?"

"They are a nuisance," he laughingly agreed. He was in high spirits now, and when he jumped from the cave, he cracked his heels together before they hit the ground, in the sheer joy of life. "However, we need them and they need us.

"By Jinks, I forgot about the king and Teddy and Aunt Gee-gee and old Amyah and everybody else! They're frantic about you, Betty, and I'm miserably selfish. I should have let them know as soon as I found you."

"Why, we haven't been here long," she protested, throwing herself plump down into his arms, with perfect confidence in his muscle and equilibrium. "Anyhow, they shouldn't worry about me. Nothing has ever happened to me. My goodness, Jimmy, are they out in all this storm? Come on, we must hurry. They'll get wet all through."

"We'll have a wringing party when we get home," he gaily assured her. "Betty, there's no way I can help you around that point, but you go first, and if you fall in I'll get you out."

"We can't be any wetter than we are," she cheerfully replied. "There's a bad hole under this rock, though, Jimmy, I know all about and you don't; so if I slip in, you mustn't come after me unless I don't come up."

"Don't stay down over ten or fifteen minutes, then," Jimmy warned her, and it flashed grimly across his mind that not more than a quarter of an hour ago, he would have believed that possibly their drowning together might be the simplest way out of their dilemma, after all. Now, however, everything was different, and he watched each step of her dainty feet and each shifting of her adorably modeled hands in an agony of fear, followed as closely behind her as he could, without interfering with her perfect freedom, and resolved that her splash in the water should only be one second ahead of his own. Once, as she made the difficult turn at the point, he thought that he heard her foot slip, and he so nearly lost his own balance that he gave a sharp "Hah," and she laughed.

"Wouldn't it be funny if I had to jump in after you!" she called to him, above the voice of the wind, and then he saw the white of her gown disappear around the edge of the point.

They toiled up the rocky ravine as light-heartedly as children, laughing at each other when they slipped, and clutching each other, in the darkness,

and pausing at every such clutch to waste eternities in blissful embraces, which had become so necessary to their very existence. Why, that was the only normal way to live; lips to lips and heart to heart! Their whole beings mingled in an ecstasy, which no poetically-conceived paradise could by any possibility bestow.

On the level ground at the head of the ravine, Jimmy took her in his arms, and kissed her sadly.

"We're back in the world now," he said. "The hardest task we ever had to do is in front of us."

"I know," she answered, pouting against his shoulder. "We must try to do without kisses. Of course, we can meet around corners, and in dark places, but there will be lots of times when we can't. I don't believe we can get away with it, Jimmy."

"We'll have to!" he insisted, panic-stricken at the consequences of discovery. "The best thing we can do is to lay in a supply beforehand," and he did so, with great enthusiasm and a splendid attention to detail. Perhaps all this was silly of them, and foolish, and mawkish, maybe, but they liked it, and it was distinctly their affair. If they stopped a dozen times across the gardens, to lay in other supplies, nobody knows, because it was very dark through there.

There was no one at the palace to receive them but old Amyah, and when he saw Bezzanna he

dropped before her and clasped his arms about her limbs, and buried his feeble old gray head against her knees, and sobbed.

The only way they could restore him was by bringing him back to a sense of duty.

"We must call in the searchers," urged Jimmy. "Did they leave you any instructions as to a signal, in case Bezzanna was found?"

"They left me no instructions for anything, sir," responded Amyah, with the tears streaming down his cheeks and circling slowly around Bezzanna, to feast his eyes upon her from every angle, and make sure that all of her had come back. "I've kept big pots of broth hot, and gotten the bathrooms ready, and laid out dry clothing for every one; but all the maids, and even the Princess Zheneezha, finally went out to hunt you. They left me all alone!"

"We must put a light on top of the tower," decided Jimmy; "or wait; I'll sacrifice my Fourth-of-July surprise, Betty. Run on across to the shop with me, if you're not afraid of getting wet."

She laughed, and they hurried over through the rain to the experimental shop, where, after carefully laying in a good store of supplies, he switched on the lights. "The big stunt I wanted to show you will have to wait until to-morrow," he said. Wiping his hands and putting a dry oilskin over his wet clothing, he opened a metallic bin and drew from it a box

of small canisters, wrapped in blue and red and green, and with orange labels.

"Fourth-of-July lights," he explained. "I hadn't intended to burn these for four months yet, but we deserve a celebration to-night, and when they see these lights, and these Roman candles and sky-rockets and flowering bombs, from the top of the tower, they'll come running home; for they'll know that nothing could put all that glorious radiance against the sky but the return of the Princess Bezzanna!"

CHAPTER XXIX

BEZZANNA IS BETROTHED TO THE PRINCE

THE Princess Bezzanna, meekly obedient without but a tornado of disobedience within, dressed herself very carefully for dinner that evening, because the prince and his mother were to be their guests at the informal family betrothal ceremony, preceding the grand affair of state that was to take place within two weeks. She was in a particularly rebellious frame of mind because she had not seen Jimmy since the early morning, when, after five stolen delicious minutes in her sitting-room, he had hurried away to the mines, to be gone until late at night. The king had, with smiling courtesy, invited him to be back in time for dinner, but Jimmy had pointed out to him the impossibility of it, and while Bezzanna had appreciated his delicacy in the matter, she was angry with him for being gone.

The prince and his mother had been in the palace fully twenty minutes before Bezzanna came down to receive them, and when she swept into the red drawing-room, the prince gave an involuntary gasp of admiration, for he had never seen her so daz-

zlingly beautiful as in this rich black lace robe, her entire costume relieved by a single ornament, a little shield of rubies and diamonds and sapphires, which she wore as a brooch. Never had he seen her cheeks aflame with such an exquisite play of fleeting color, nor her eyes so sparkling with vivacity, nor her perfectly-formed head poised so superbly on her graceful neck.

He sprang at once to his feet, and kissing her hand, led her gallantly to his mother, who kissed her dutifully on the forehead; then he seated her at the other side of him.

"You are always beautiful, Bezzanna," he observed, "but I do not remember ever to have seen you in a more becoming costume!"

"I thank you," she said with prim stately dignity, which, in conjunction with that well-known but now for-so-long-absent flash of the devil in her eyes, had Teddy puzzled beyond measure, while Aunt Gee-gee took on a worried look which she never lost the entire evening.

"It is most charming, indeed," admitted Onal-yon's mother, glancing across at her with every appearance of appreciative delight, and delicately measuring swords; for now her own contest for supremacy was to begin. "But really, child, isn't solid black too somber for an occasion of this sort?"

"Do you think so?" inquired Bezzanna, very sweetly indeed, but still with that stately graciousness which annoyed the older woman so much, since stately graciousness was her own most effective, and therefore constant pose.

The king looked at Teddy, and met a puzzled stare in return. Only the royal family and Jimmy knew that black had just been decided on as the official color for state mourning, and that devil snap in Bezzanna's eyes, as she saw them exchanging this glance, increased almost to the point of conflagration.

"Very few people can wear black," sweetly observed Aunt Gee-gee, who was most effective in it, with a carefully veiled glance of malignity at Bezzanna's future mother-in-law, who was too sallow to attempt it. "It takes a skin of the clear transparency and velvety smoothness of Bezzanna's to carry it."

"Betty can wear any color," asserted Teddy proudly. "Jimmy says she could drape herself in a rainbow, and carry it with the modest effect of a gray mist."

The wavering flush on Bezzanna's cheeks deepened. The prince frowned. He did not like the mention of Jimmy, for a multitude of reasons unnecessary to mention.

"That's an odd brooch you're wearing," he ob-

served, to change the subject. "Rather an unusual color combination, isn't it?"

"The finest combination in the world, Jimmy says," returned Bezzanna, recovering her queenly graciousness immediately. "Red, white and blue. It's an American shield. Jimmy gave it to me."

"Terrific storm last night, wasn't it?" immediately remarked the prince.

That was a good safe topic, and, barring the fact that the king and Aunt Gee-gee and Teddy were constantly compelled to refrain from mentioning the fact that Bezzanna had been lost in it, they made the storm last until dinner-time. Conversation seemed a particularly difficult thing to manage in this gathering, especially since Bezzanna, who was so vivacious to the eye, insisted on maintaining a queenly condescension, which drove Onalyon's mother to the exact verge of madness. If Bezzanna was mocking her, there would be trouble in the Onalyon household about twenty-four seconds after the homecoming of the bride! Even the prince discerned, with panic, the dawning of this, and it made him uncomfortable and awkward, for the first time in his life. He talked about the storm as much as possible, and among them all, not one guilty flash of lightning escaped.

At dinner it was the same.

"How I do miss Jimmy," stated Aunt Gee-gee, in

a lull. "He is so seldom absent that when he is not at the dinner-table it almost seems as if some of the lights were out." Glancing carelessly toward Bezzanna, she caught a sudden piteous look in that young lady's eyes that made her stop abruptly.

"Everybody misses Jimmy," declared the king, looking speculatively at the prince's chair. It was usually Jimmy's. "Isola should erect a monument to him."

"That's some happy thought, eh, Betty?" exclaimed Teddy with immediate enthusiasm. "I'll get busy with a subscription list to-morrow. We'll start it with a whoop right here. Of course you'll be in on it, Onalyon?"

"With pleasure," choked the prince. "You remember those two tall pines below the flat rock at my place, Bezzanna? They were struck by lightning last night. I think that storm did more damage than any we have had for years."

Aunt Gee-gee sighed, and with a glance of martyrdom at Bezzanna, whose eyes were dancing, took up the burden of the poor threadbare storm again. It was the only subject that seemed safe. What on earth, however, had come over Bezzanna?

A moment later she was still more puzzled. There was the rush of wheels and the exhaust of a motor on the drive, and from that moment Bezzanna was as restless as a mouse in a trap. She turned her

head at every slam of a door, at every footfall in the corridor, at the entrance of every servant.

Not until after dinner, when they had retired to the green parlor, did Bezzanna resume her newly acquired stateliness and composure. She led the way to that room herself, and paused before the entrance.

"I'm going to show you the most wonderful thing in Isola," she explained, turning to their guests, while Aunt Gee-gee and the king and Teddy grinned discreetly. "I've kept it a secret for three months, till I could master it enough to show off. Jimmy made it for me."

Aunt Gee-gee looked at her with slowly saddening eyes. There was a new note of softness in the way Bezzanna said Jimmy.

The princess threw open the doors and revealed a huge, queerly-shaped article of furniture, made of highly polished black wood, inlaid with a delicate edging of mother-of-pearl.

"It's a grand piano," Bezzanna informed them, as she swept toward it and raised the lid.

She seated herself at the bench, and, a moment later, the rattling strains of *Dixie* were vibrating in the room. She looked, with a contraction of her brows, toward the windows after she had started it. They were closed. She played a trifle louder. Aunt Gee-gee opened the windows. The princess softened the playing, and put more expression into her work.

Before she had finished, some footsteps, quite unlike those of the servants, passed along the terrace outside and paused just beyond the flood of light from the windows. No one noticed the footsteps but Bezzanna and Aunt Gee-gee. The princess played brilliantly that night, what little she knew, until the footsteps again resounded on the terrace, and died slowly away.

The prince was charmed, but thoughtful. Even now, in his own palace, there were too many evidences of the superiority of Jimmy. Onalyon's mother was charmed, but discreet in her confession of it. It must take ages to learn to play that instrument, and it required supple fingers, she reflected, as she watched the flash of Bezzanna's graceful hands over the keys. Was she to have this jangling thing in her own house?

The prince leaned gracefully upon the end of the piano, and admired the sinuous grace of Bezzanna's shapely arms. They were his, and the knowledge brought up in him an exultation which was in part cruel. He thought that he understood the motive through which Bezzanna had consented to give herself to him, and there grew in him an anger that she had not been prompted by love. He was surprised, consequently, when, finishing *When Jimmy Comes Marching Home* with a slam, she looked up at him with a care-free smile, her fingers, at the same time,

straying into the soft strains of *The Merry Widow* waltz.

Dazzled and bewildered, and his foolish senses thrown completely at sea, the prince produced from his pocket a plain gold bracelet clasped with a goat's head, and reached down for one of the slender hands.

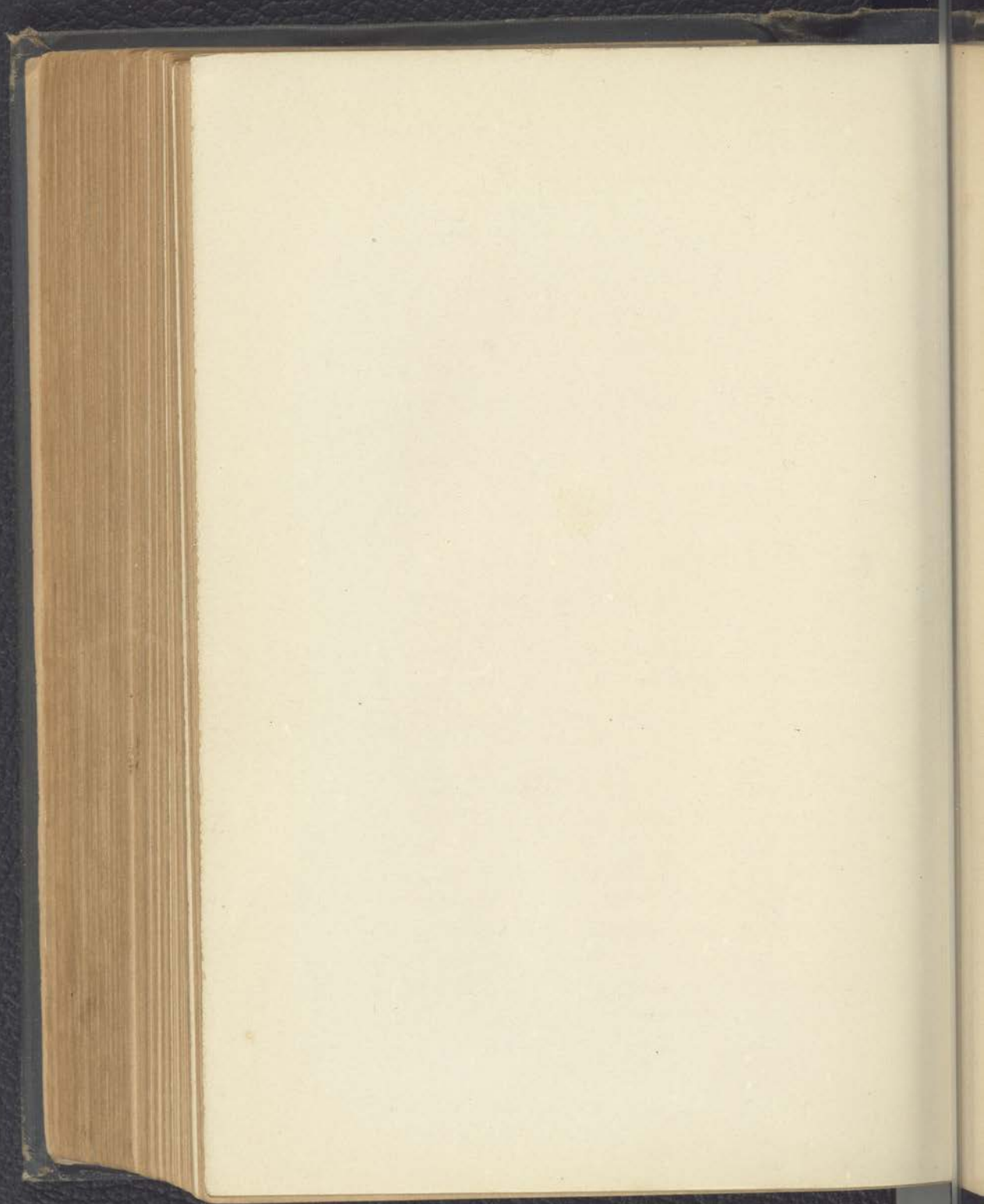
The music stopped abruptly. Bezzanna paled as she arose. The feverish gaiety, with which she had hoped to carry through this evening, had suddenly deserted her.

"Bezzanna," said the prince, in a tone of strained formality; "it gives me more pleasure than I can convey to you in words, to place this token of my love upon the wrist of the most beautiful girl in Isola."

He opened the bracelet, but the hand which she held out to receive it, shrank, in spite of her, and the rage that he had felt against her since the night of the theater filled him with redoubled intensity. There had been a time when he had thought the love he bore for her was tender, and not of the body alone, but of the mind and the soul as well, but now he knew that there was nothing of the spiritual in his desire for her. He still longed madly to possess her, but it was in order that he might be her master; and the cruelty of his desire was so apparent in his face when he clasped the bracelet on her wrist that



The prince leaned gracefully upon the end of the piano.



a shudder ran over Bezzanna from head to foot. She had read, in the one startled glance into his eyes, a merciless greed of her, which would spare her no suffering and no distress, which would shred her of delicacy, of joy, of life! His brutally triumphant gaze, as he encircled her wrist with his burning palms, swept from her now colorless face to her smooth white neck, and her ivory shoulders, and her snowy bosom. Suddenly, with a flood of crimson anger and humiliation surging in her very brow, she jerked her hand away, and ran out of the door.

The prince was about to follow her, but Aunt Gee-gee intercepted him.

"You must let me go after her," she commanded him. "She is a girl, and timid." Her own eyes were flashing as she hurried out of the door and turned to the stairs. She was about to ascend them when she caught the glint of Bezzanna's white arm, at the rear of the lower corridor, reaching up for a scarf. She called her, and hurried back to her.

"Where are you going?" she asked.

"To Jimmy," replied Bezzanna brokenly.

Aunt Gee-gee watched her hurry out of the side door, and stood for two long minutes trying to collect her scattered intellect; then she returned calmly to the green drawing-room.

"The princess has borne up nobly through the evening," she announced; "but I fear that she is a

little overwrought now, and had best not come down again to-night."

The king half arose as if to go to the door, but he met Aunt Gee-gee's eyes and sat down again, also restraining Teddy, by a quiet touch.

In the meantime a small but intensely active figure, entirely in black, and wearing the black scarf which had been suspiciously handy, bounded through the general offices and stopped just outside the light from Jimmy's door.

"Jimmy!" she tearfully called. "Come out here in the dark!"

Jimmy came running from an inner shop somewhere and swept her up in his arms.

"Look!" she cried, overwhelmed with shame, and held up her wrist. "Whatever you're going to do you have to do quickly! I can't wear this! It will kill me!"

Jimmy unclasped the thing, and slipped it in his pocket.

"I'm making the final preparations right now," he assured her. "I'm oiling up, and I expect to be busy at it most of the night."

"I'm going to stay," she declared immediately.

"You mustn't," he told her, holding her too tightly, however, for her to be convinced that she had to go.

"You'll have to carry me, and I'll scream all the

way," she determinedly informed him. "Why, Jimmy, besides just being compelled to stay with you, I simply must know what you're going to do. You haven't told me yet, and we've been engaged ever since last night."

"I haven't had a chance," he defended himself. "Betty, are you willing to go away from here, and possibly never return?"

"And be married!" she exclaimed. "When? That's dreadfully selfish of me, Jimmy, but we have to go."

"Then wait a moment until I turn out the lights so we can pass through the office, and I'll show you something."

He led her through the darkened office and into the adjoining darkened shop, where, in the moonlight, which shone through the windows, she found herself standing beneath a great, dim, shadowy thing with wide stretching arms, a weird-looking structure, like a gaunt skeleton of some strange prehistoric creature!

"Jimmy, you're a dear!" she cried, turning impulsively to him and throwing her arms about his neck. "I never saw one before, at least not this close, but I know what it is. It's an air-ship!"

CHAPTER XXX

ONALYON SEES AN IMPRESSIVE EXHIBITION

PRINCE ONALYON arose to a lonesome world the next morning. Bezzanna took breakfast in her own apartments, and, though later on he heard her voice in the corridors, he had no glimpse of her. His mother and Aunt Gee-gee sat at the breakfast table and frankly glared at each other, while neither of them had a pleasant glance for him. Jimmy and the king and Teddy were alert enough, and sufficiently communicative, but they were very busy men, and their talk was all of commerce and manufacture and progress, and, somehow, he gathered the humiliating impression that he had been satisfactorily disposed of.

After breakfast, the king invited him to go over with them to the experimental shops, and he went soberly along, feeling, vaguely, like a stranger in a strange land.

The sight of the long busy shop, with its scores of interested men too fully occupied more than to

notice him, gave him the first dawning of an idea which he should have obtained long before; that his contest with the king had been, not merely a battle of personalities, but of knowledge; that he had against him, not only the apparently inexhaustible experience that Jimmy had brought into Isola, but the keen intelligence of men who were being trained to create. During the night he had regretted a hundred times that he had not struck his decisive blow, but now he began to have a shadowy fancy that perhaps he was lucky not to have done so. This feeling began to take substance and shape and form about the time that Teddy, with bubbling enthusiasm, had shown him a Gatling gun, and explained its exceptional utility and beauty of operation.

He wandered out of the shop shortly after that, and went back to the palace. The nervous activity of this place was depressing to him and, moreover, gave him a sense of uneasiness. There was too much mystery about it.

He wandered down to the gate of the palace park. A stalwart big fellow, of Department G, was pacing back and forth in front of it, in quite leisurely fashion, but stepping very firmly, nevertheless. He carried a gun over his shoulder, and he was a clear-eyed, smiling fellow with a red face, and an intensely happy disposition; but the prince did not

stay to talk with him. The king seemed to be protected excellently against surprise.

Toopy Polecon crossed the park ahead of him, and nodded, but she did not wait for him to catch up with her. Presently he saw her and Bezzanna on the top of the palace tower, but he had no impulse to go up there. He was a very lonely man, and he sat on the terrace, near one of the huge prancing goats, and looked down over the valley. He was thinking things over.

It was perhaps eleven o'clock when the king found him there, still thinking.

"I have a few moments of leisure now," said the king pleasantly. "I'd like to show you a little of the advance we've made in warfare in the last six months. Suppose you come up into the tower with me."

"With pleasure," agreed the prince thoughtfully, and he followed up into the tower, where a new balcony had been built out, glazed and protected against the weather, just below the top.

At the height of the window-ledge was an iron box, which the king unlocked. Raising the lid, he disclosed row upon row of small electric buttons, and on the lid was a map of the palace plateau and its approaches, covered with numbered red dots.

"Do you see that little clump of bushes, just to the side of the road as you emerge between the

hills?" asked the king. "Now touch your finger lightly to this button, but do not press. So. Now keep your eye upon the bushes, and press!"

The prince did so, and started back as a scream, in four excited feminine voices, came from the top of the tower. Amid a thunderous roar, the clump of bushes had gone straight up into the air, along with an enormous quantity of earth and stones, and when the cloud of dust had cleared away, there was a hole in the ground big enough to bury a street-car.

"It would have been very unlucky for any one to have been standing directly over that number twenty-seven spot," observed the king dryly; "or for any hundred men who had happened to be near it. This button, number forty-three, covers that big tree on the top of the hill yonder; the one with the withered branches," and he pressed that button.

The tree hurled itself upward, and fell headlong down the hill, its roots enveloped in a rain of stones and earth and saplings and the branches of other trees.

"Those are what Jimmy calls point mines," explained the king gently. "The whole hillside, which was covered with your army last fall, and all the plateau is planted with these deposits of explosives, which are safe from shock but keenly susceptible to the electric spark. Your army sat on them, and we

could have annihilated it, and you with it; but we don't care for bloodshed, Jimmy, nor myself, nor Teddy, nor Bezzanna, nor any of us. Now I shall show you a trench mine."

"Where shall I watch?" asked the prince, shudderingly interested.

"Oh, just any place," replied the king. "You'll see it," and he touched the button.

When the clouds had rolled away, a gash had appeared across the entire plateau, and the king closed the iron box and locked it.

"I've shown you this," he explained, "to convince you that there's no use in your trying to cope with Jimmy. If you find out everything he's done, he'll do something else. His resources are inexhaustible, because his is the best-trained brain in Isola, and he has spent but very few years of his life in doing anything which was ever done before."

The prince, considering the exercises of the morning closed, was about to go down the stairs to think it over again, but the king called him back for a final word.

"I have one more object lesson for you," he stated.

"We have only shown you one of our means of defense. We have others, but I shall keep them in reserve. Now I wish to show you one of our means of offense. You will only have to wait a minute or

two, I think; for the explosion of that trench mine was a signal."

He opened the windows and they stepped outside the glass enclosure. For a moment or two nothing happened; the plateau, with its recent scars, and the valley beyond lay before them, peaceful and serene, the mild air filled with the radiance of the spring sunshine.

Aunt Gee-gee and Onalyon's mother and Bezzanna and Toopy saw the marvel first, as their shouts of awe and delight attested, before the prince heard the low humming whirr; then, out from beyond the corner of the palace, emerged, gliding easily in the air, a gigantic, bird-like structure of frame and canvas, and, in the seat, swung below the broad spreading wings, with his hands on the lever and a look of intense preoccupation on his face, sat Jimmy. He did not even turn at the frantic shouts of Bezzanna!

The fragile-looking device, skimming high over the tree-tops of the palace park, glided toward the valley, slipping down the air on an incline, as if it had been a toboggan-slide; and circled the long oval of the plateau with two full sweeps, settling downward all the time, until it almost reached the ground; then, darting suddenly to the center of the plateau, it began a slow spiral rise, like a hawk sailing upward for a strike. When it had reached

a dizzy altitude, it seemed to hover, for a minute, and then moved slowly along the field, as if locating some particular spot. The king plucked Onalyon by the sleeve to attract his attention.

"Now watch the ground just below where he is hovering," he directed.

A round black object shot suddenly downward from the aeroplane, accelerating its speed to an almost inconceivable rapidity as it neared the earth, and when it struck, the resultant detonation was as if a volcano had suddenly burst forth.

The watchers on the top of the tower first shrieked, and then cheered, but Onalyon trembled, with a sickening knowledge of escaped peril.

"These air-ships," the king explained, "are not engines of war, but discouragers of it. We have three of them, and have been practising with them at nights, on the concealed plateau occupied by Department G. They were built originally for peaceful purposes, and it was not until we discovered that you were planning the slaughter of half of Isola that we determined upon their emergency use. A bomb would have been dropped upon your palace and one upon your powder magazine, but the destruction would have been so appalling that the action seemed inhuman. A much better use of the device is to show it to the only man who wants war. Do you think you want it?"

"No," decided the prince, shuddering.

"By the way, Onalyon, almost any one could pack up those guns for you and start the mover here, couldn't they?"

"I think so," agreed the prince, too thoroughly crushed even to deny that he had guns.

"You might telephone when you go down," suggested the king kindly.

"I shall," consented the prince, moistening his lips. "I had intended to do so immediately after the betrothal."

It occurred to him that he was a very lucky man not to have brought over his new army to crush the king, as he watched, with painful interest, the gyrations of Jimmy in the air.

That young man, his errand finished, spiraled easily in the direction of the palace, but before he sailed over to the Department G parade grounds, he came as closely down over the top of the tower as he dared, and dropped a shower of intensely colored confetti upon the ladies. It pleased three of them immensely!

CHAPTER XXXI

LITTLE KEEZAP SNEEZES

FOR four days, wagons from Onalyon's estate kept arriving at the king's palace loaded with guns and ammunition. These were followed, in the three succeeding days, by toiling centipede-legged strings of donkeys dragging the heavy cannon over hill and through valley. When they were all finished, the argus-eyed men of Department G announced themselves as satisfied with the count.

"Although, believe me, Jimmy," complained Corporal Jenkyay, with deep disgust written on his sun-bronzed features, "the king might better have left them at home; so Onalyon's army would blow itself up with them. There isn't a man in the company would use one of them to drown a cat with," and he tossed aside, with huge contempt, the one with which he had been illustrating his remarks.

"All right, Jenk," laughed Jimmy. "Stack them up to rust some place where they won't get mixed with ours."

"If the boys in the gun shop could hear you hint

that there was any chance of getting those rotten rifles mixed with ours, they'd mob you," declared the corporal, himself almost offended. "I hear you're going to try a high flight double to-day. Jimmy, I haven't asked you for anything like a big favor since I joined the service," and his voice became very pleading. "Will you take me along?"

"I will if you'll drill off a hundred pounds," returned Jimmy; "otherwise, I'll have to take my original choice—little Keezap. He'll at least let the thing off the ground."

That high flight double was worrying Jimmy a great deal, for even the best and strongest of the three machines had not been built for two passengers. He had tried several short flights with little Keezap, but, in each case, some slight defect due to overweighing had been apparent, and he had worked feverishly all week to remedy these defects, one by one, as they came up. It was quite important that there should be no accidents in the star ascension he had planned to make, and the time was growing short. Within another week was to occur the formal ratification of the betrothal, a grand fête at the palace attended by all the nobility, and, at its conclusion, the Princess Bezzanna was to go home with Onalyon, as his wife.

On this particular morning when Bezzanna called on him at the office, as she did whenever she had an

opportunity, he drew her into the private experimental shop where old Number Three stood waiting to be rolled out on its track, and closed the door. They went through the regular morning program, which consisted of a lot of silly actions and words, about which no one would care to hear.

"Well, if everything goes right, this is the day," he told her. "Are you all ready?"

"I've been ready for a week," she chided him. "I have that million dollars or so worth of jewels quilted into my coat, and that's every last thing you say I can take. Really, Jimmy, can't we find room for my crystal gown? I don't believe we can get another one as pretty, even in Paris."

"Why, it weighs more than you do," he laughed. "We may even have to leave that quilted coat behind, if little Keezap proves too heavy in the high flight."

"We mustn't do that," she objected. "We'll need money when we get outside of here."

"Not much," he comforted her. "I'll slip a loose diamond or two in my pocket, and trust to luck. All I need money for is to get a cable to the Eureka Manufacturing Company, and pay a preacher."

"That will be fun," she laughed happily; and then she saddened. "Oh, but we're selfish, Jimmy! I know I shall cry every night, when I think of brother, and Teddy, and Aunt Gee-gee, and Toopy,

and all my friends back here missing me so. Isn't there some way we could take them all along?"

"I'm afraid not, dear," he answered, sitting on a bench and taking her up in his big arms like a child. "Love is a selfish thing, at best, and claims everything for its own, and is ruthless, and merciless, and always gives pain to some one. That is why it was made so wide, and so deep, and so strong, Betty; to resist, and break all other ties, else there would be but very little marriage. Would you rather have us stay here, and be just the sort of longing lovers that we have been, and school ourselves to the long years of denial that must come?"

"Oh, no, Jimmy, we couldn't do that!" she quickly exclaimed. "We have to have each other. There is some power stronger than ourselves which seems to make that necessary, but, just the same, it's a nasty world to charge so much for happiness, and I don't like it," and with her head nestled on his shoulder and her soft hand stroking his cheek, she looked beneath the great wing of the aeroplane out of the window and across the valley.

"The prince?" she presently questioned. "Are you sure that he can not make trouble after we are gone?"

"There isn't a chance in a million," he reassured her. "For the present he is entirely disarmed, and, moreover, he is so thoroughly scared, and so thor-

oughly impressed with the fact that the king has mysterious and dangerous resources, the extent of which he can not guess, that I am positive he will never more harbor the thought of another attempt to obtain the king's throne. Teddy will reign when he is through, and I'll bet on Teddy."

"You win," she heartily agreed. "Kiss me, Jimmy, and let me go, and don't forget my bracelet. I was right at the door of the green drawing-room last night when I remembered that you had it in your pocket."

In the flights of the last few days, Jimmy had ventured out over the ocean and over the mountains back of the palace, eager to know what sort of land he might find beyond the jealous barriers of Isola, and for this reason his maneuvers had been best watched from the edge of the steep cliff beyond the gardens, and to-day the whole party trudged up there when Jimmy and little Keezap went to the aviation shed.

Jimmy was unusually exhilarated to-day, and as his helpers pulled the great wabbling machine out of the shed, he hummed a long since forgotten fragment of something that suddenly haunted him. The only worry he had was to remember what that song was, and, as he and Keezap mounted into the seats and adjusted themselves nicely to the positions

in which they had found the best balance, he was still trying to place it.

"Jimmy," said Keezap cheerfully, as he adjusted his muffler, while the men made a fifth and final examination of every tragically important rod and wire, "here goes to see what the moon's really made of. When we come down I want to run you another race like yesterday's, in the number two machine, for the figure eight and grape-vine twist record."

"You'll have to excuse me," laughed Jimmy. "I have a previous engagement after I come down from this flight. Keezap, do you suppose that, if anything happened to put me out of the game, you and the other fellows of Department G could build, and operate these air-ships for the king?"

"The boys of Department G will get away with anything you order them to do, if it takes a lung," asserted little Keezap, as he settled himself firmly and caught hold of his rods; for Jimmy was reaching for his starting lever.

The light little motor began its businesslike patting, and the big propeller blades began to revolve, gathering speed until it shook the flimsy framework so violently that it seemed as if it must drop to pieces.

"All ready?" inquired Jimmy, gripping his levers.

"I know what that song is," he delightedly announced, as the men ran back to release the clutch. "It's *My hat is off to you, dear Broadway*. That's the name of the finest street in the world, Keezap! I have a hunch that I'm going to see it soon. Let her go, boys."

That which held the quivering live thing were loosened, and it bounded away with terrific speed, taking the air long before it reached the end of its track, and soaring off above the plateau with the long graceful sweep of a buzzard sliding down the wind.

From the first minute, Jimmy could feel the grace and strength and perfect action of the machine as he never had before, and his heart leaped with exultation as he felt under him the swift obedience of that throbbing body, and realized the incomparable grace of her every curve, and dip, and soar. He spiraled upward in the broad space above the plateau, and when he had reached a sufficient height to be seen by those on the cliff, he swooped swiftly down over their heads with a long descending curve, like the dip of a roller-coaster, and upward again, and out to sea, with the cheers of the watchers ringing in his ears.

He described a sharp loop out above the reefs, and, shooting inland, took a straight course for the mountains back of the palace, and disappeared over their inaccessible tops—carrying a passenger!

The Princess Bezzanna was wild with delight. She shouted and clapped her hands and jumped up and down in her joy, like a child on its first glimpse of a long desired gift, then her mood changed and she ran to the king and Teddy, in turns, and kissed them and hung upon them, and whispered how much she loved them, that she would love them always, forever and ever, as long as she lived. She promised Toopy a beautiful gift, that she had wrapped up and addressed to her, in the palace; nor would she tell that it was the beautiful toilet cabinet which Jimmy had given her; then she ran back to where old Amyah stood beneath the trees, watching her, like a collie which is afraid it might be sent home, and surprised him into a trance by shaking both his hands warmly and patting him on the snowy head. Then she ran back to the others to creep up to them, more unobtrusively than before, and kiss them all over again, and whisper her ever, ever, everlasting love. She had buttoned her quilted coat as she ran back to them; for now she would be able to take it along, and all the gems which were quilted into it, since little Keezap had not proved too heavy. After Jimmy had come down, she was to slip over to the shed, and climb up on the seat with him, and be up in the air before the prince could say Jack Robinson; then they would sail away to that wonderful America, and be mar-

ried in one of the great dim churches, and be happy ever after, except for the grief of her love for those she had left behind!

Meanwhile, Jimmy, venturing farther out beyond the mountains than in any flight he had yet made, beheld a beautiful green country, dotted with orchards and meadows, and with little white specks of houses shining out from amid the trees, but better than all these was a little low, black line that crept along the landscape, half hidden in a streamer of gray smoke, which puffed and rolled from its forward end. He could almost have cried in his joy at the sight of that railroad train! It would carry him away to a busy port, and then, in a very few days, with Bezzanna on his arm, he would set foot on Manhattan Island again, and bundle Bezzanna in a taxi, and tell the driver just to whiz up and down Broadway until the gasoline gave out!

Satisfied, he turned back, and paused once more before he turned into the shed, in preparation for his next flight, to swoop low over the cliff and show Bezzanna how safe they two would be.

At that most important moment little Keezap, who had been suppressing the desire for half an hour, sneezed violently, and jerked off his cap. With a muscular impulse quite independent of his mind, he grabbed for it with a mighty lurch.

The cap reached the ground first, and it was not

hurt in the least; but the machine, jerked so unceremoniously from its course, plunged headlong into a quite inactive tree, and crumpled up like a house of cards, allowing little Keezap to hang suspended in a tangle of broken branches and splintered rods and twisted wires and torn canvas, from which it took half an hour to extricate him, with so many scratches that he looked like a Hamburg steak.

Jimmy was not so fortunate. He plunged clear of the machine, and broke off several branches, and dropped to the ground, with a severe contusion of the head and enough bruises and sprains and minor dislocations to satisfy him for a lifetime.

That, however, was not the worst of the damage for the Princess Bezzanna, seeing him dumped so unceremoniously among them, and lying there so still, forgot entirely that she was supposed to be engaged to Prince Onalyon, forgot, in fact, everything in the world but that this was Jimmy, and she ran to him, with a shriek, and threw herself to the ground beside him, with no care as to whether there would be a war or not, and kissed him, and called him her darling Jimmy, her lover, and her husband!

CHAPTER XXXII

ONALYON DECIDES THAT HE WAS MISTAKEN

WHILE the gardeners and the men of Department G were picking little Keezap out of the tree, with pruning-knives and saws and plyers and wire-snippers, and the frightened servants were bearing the still unconscious Jimmy to the palace, attended by the Princess Bezzanna, who insisted on carrying one hand, Prince Onalyon was indulging in several varieties of a malady that has never been so well described as by the phrase conniption fits. He had been declaring, with vehement gestures and in vociferous tones, to all who might listen, and to the world in general, that he had been tricked, humiliated, and disgraced, and that his revenge, when he took it, would be something so dire that the foul fiends would be glad to sit around humbly and take lessons.

It was Teddy, who, abating his initial agonized anxiety about Jimmy, first became aware of the prince's active demonstration, and his first thought-

less action was to stride hastily over and clutch Onalyon securely with both hands, just underneath the black beard, and shake him till his tongue stuck out.

"If you use any more hasty language of that sort, I'll simply scramble you," he threatened, with a tone and a look which no human being could mistake for exaggeration; and then, obeying the commands of a stern inward necessity, he choked the prince again.

Onalyon accepted Teddy's earnest attentions with a much better grace than might have been imagined. He did, indeed, make a foolish demonstration with a bright and shining knife, but after Teddy had taken it away from him, and politely handed it back, and slapped his face for not concealing it sooner, the prince concluded that he was too much of a gentleman to engage in public rowdyism. It occurred to him, also, that he really ought to explain his attitude in the matter.

"Did you see what she did?" demanded the prince.

"Of course I did," returned Teddy. "What of it?"

"But did you hear her?" insisted the prince. "She not only kissed him, before my very eyes and before everybody, but she called him her lover, and her sweetheart, and her husband!"

"It's a lie!" and Teddy nailed him. He was on

top when they hit the ground, and he bumped the prince's head several times to obtain a solid and secure resting-place for it. "Did you hear her say it?" he demanded.

"Yes," wheezed Onalyon. "Let me up!"

"After a while," promised Teddy. "I'm not tired yet," and he took some more exercise. "Did you hear her say it?" he demanded.

"Yes!" and Onalyon made a sudden flop.

Teddy was beginning to be out of breath the next time.

"Did you hear her say it?" he demanded, pausing to wipe the perspiration from his brow.

"No," acknowledged Onalyon, finally convinced that he had been mistaken.

The king, who had been directing the retreating forces, returned just as Teddy was getting up to brush off his palms.

"What's the fuss?" he inquired. "If there hadn't been so many rival attractions you two would have been making a disgraceful spectacle of yourselves."

"You won't believe it when I tell you," explained Teddy, so mad that he almost frothed at the eyeballs. "Onalyon has been criticizing Bezzanna."

"He has?" protested the king incredulously, and he bent on Onalyon brows that were darkly knotted. "What did he say?"

"Nothing," hastily swore the prince.

Teddy, at last able to grin, looked at Onalyon in mock amazement.

"Didn't you criticize our sister?" he asked.

The prince studied his reply very carefully. It was a delicate matter to decide whether to repudiate his criticism, or to deny Teddy's assertion that he had made it.

"Well, no," he finally faltered; "that is, I don't think I did."

"Then I apologize," granted Teddy, with great politeness, and Onalyon breathed a sigh of relief. He had answered correctly. "He did not criticize her," Teddy informed the king.

"I'm glad it's all a mistake," returned the king; "but I am afraid, Teddy, that, under the circumstances, you must have been hasty," and he surveyed, with interest, the prince's rapidly swelling nose. "We must remember that the prince, until now, has been our guest," and he put his hands affectionately on Teddy's shoulder.

Teddy's eyes snapped as he sought those of the king.

"Is Onalyon going to leave us?" he asked in a tone of splendidly assumed regret.

"He is going home," the king informed them both. "I have a little parting gift for him," and he handed Onalyon a plain gold bracelet clasped with a goat's head.

The prince threw the bracelet on the ground and stamped on it, and strode off, cursing, in the direction of the palace. The king and Teddy breathed sighs of relief, then looked at each other doubtfully as they turned to follow, more slowly.

"Well, we're up against it," observed Teddy soberly. "What are we going to do?"

"I don't know," answered the king, sadly puzzled. "As our friend Jimmy would say, Bezzanna has spilled the beans."

"I'm for it!" maintained Teddy stoutly. "The only thing I could be sore about is that she didn't let us in on it."

"I don't believe you quite appreciate the full extent of the disaster, however," worried the king.

"I don't see any disaster," objected Teddy. "Onalyon has no ammunition, no arms, and no army. He's the grand giggle of Isola right this minute, and he couldn't get following enough to make a track in the snow."

"No," considered the king. "We have nothing to fear from Onalyon. He will never be able to bother us again."

"Then where's the disaster?" persisted Teddy. "It looks to me like the grand tableau. I'm glad it all happened, because, between you and me, I intended to snake Onalyon outside and drop him off the cliff the night before the wedding, anyhow."

"You have a hasty temper," chided the king. "Remember that self-control is the first mark of a gentleman. I don't mind confessing, however, that I had figured on something of the sort myself, after Aunt Gee-gee told me of the manner in which he looked at Bezzanna on the night of the betrothal. I hadn't thought of the cliff, though. I'll have to hand it to you for having a superior idea. I had thought some of tying him to an air-ship, and starting it."

"How wasteful!" reproached Teddy, and suddenly the two brothers stopped and shook hands solemnly, then came as near to a giggle as real men can. "Let's hurry," urged Teddy. "I want to see how Jimmy is."

"He's still alive, and that's enough for me," responded the king. "All he needs is one breath to start on."

"He's a star!" enthusiastically commended Teddy. "You know, I'm tickled stiff that Bezzanna picked him. I wonder when they found it out."

"The night Bezzanna was lost," answered the king gently. "They told me about it, both together, that night in my sitting-room, and I gave him our sister. They were to have flown away forever, as soon as Jimmy returned from this trial."

"She's a sneak!" declared Teddy indignantly. "I never gave her away in my life."

"I forbade her to tell you," the king defended her against Teddy's righteous wrath. "If too many of us knew, even a glance might betray us, and the atmosphere of the whole house would be suspicious; but, through this accident, all my desires for Bezanna's happiness have miscarried, and I do not know now how we shall protect her and Jimmy."

"Great Scott!" suddenly exploded Teddy, and he stopped, and turned pale. "They can't marry! It would mean death to both of them. By George, we'll set that absurd law aside!"

"It is impossible," replied his brother sadly. "There are some things that even kings can not do. That provision is in the ancient charter, to which royalty owes its very existence, and every noble, as he comes of age, is required to sign it, and to swear to uphold it with his life. When any provision of that charter fails, royalty fails."

"It ought to, if it upholds such fool things as that," declared Teddy. "I won't sign it."

"You probably will," returned the king, smiling dully. "But that does not help us out of our present dilemma."

Teddy was soberly silent for a moment, and then a happy idea struck him.

"I know!" he said joyfully; "we can let them marry secretly. They'll both stay right on at the

palace, and we won't ever have to lose either our Betty or our Jimmy."

"It won't do," replied the king. "I had thought of that myself, but it would be impossible to keep the matter a secret for very long, nor would Jimmy sanction it. One day I should be called before the council of nobles."

"I know the rest of it," Teddy quickly stopped him, and he trudged on silently for a while. "I don't see any way out of it, then, but for them just to keep on being sweethearts," he decided. "It's lots of fun just to be sweethearts."

The king laughed.

"It seems so to you now," he said; "but the time will come when that won't be enough. When a strong man becomes thoroughly in love, that passion becomes the center around which his entire universe revolves, and to which every other consideration in life must irresistibly gravitate. It is in exactly this way that Jimmy and Bezzanna love, and they can not be kept apart. I don't think you can quite comprehend, yet, how large such a love can be."

"Why not?" demanded Teddy indignantly. "Haven't I Toopy?"

"I apologize," laughed the king. "In the meantime, Teddy, we still have our dilemma, and it is a tragedy to which there is no end; for I shall never

consent again for Bezzanna to take a seat in an airship."

"Keezap says it was his fault," defended Teddy. "He sneezed."

"And Bezzanna might forget and wave us another good-by," the king reminded him. "No, Teddy, there is no way out of our difficulty. Jimmy and Bezzanna can not marry, nor can they live without."

"Poor Betty!" sighed Teddy.

They stopped suddenly, as they rounded the corner of the palace. Onalyon's coach of state, and his liveried attendants replaced by a dozen stalwart khakied and rifled men of Department G, stood in front of the terrace. Onalyon, with his hat in his hand, was waiting by the steps to help his mother in, his usual suavity overshadowed by nervous haste. She was on the top step bidding good-by to Aunt Gee-gee, and the two worthy ladies were conducting a stubborn contest in chin tilting.

CHAPTER XXXIII

THE WORST HAPPENS. A GERMAN CALLS

JIMMY opened his eyes to find, sitting beside him, a uniquely-designed patchwork of court-plaster, which bore a certain vague resemblance to a human countenance.

"Hello, sport!" hailed the apparition cheerfully, talking out of the limberest corner of its mouth.

Jimmy stared at the weird visitor in astonishment for a moment, and then he grinned.

"Why, it's Keezap, the sneezing demon of the clouds," he laughed. "I thought they were still gathering you up."

A swift light step had swept across the room, to the accompaniment of a silken swish. A cool little hand was laid on Jimmy's brow, and another one patted his pillow.

"You must lie quiet, Jimmy, and not talk very much," ordered the anxious voice of Bezzanna.

"Why not?" demanded Jimmy. "Is anybody sick?" and looking up into the depths of her brown

eyes, and smiling fondly into them, he reached for the hand on his forehead and drew it slowly down over his face.

It hurt little Keezap's neck to do it, but he turned away his head, and in that moment Jimmy deposited a rapturous kiss in the exact center of the pink little palm. Watching Keezap, she quickly pressed the other one to his lips, then dropped velvety kisses on his forehead, and eyes, and chin, and the tip of his nose, and planted a final warm one upon his mouth.

"You're to be quiet for another day," she told him, with the religious adherence to schedule so annoying in conscientious nurses.

"If he isn't out pretty soon the boys of Department G 'll come and get him," represented Private Keezap, deeming it time to turn around again. "They're wild to see you, Jimmy, and they have a lot of schemes to get you two away from here."

"We two?" repeated Jimmy, glancing quietly at Bezzanna, and they both blushed.

"Sure," declared little Keezap. "We know all about it. All the men in the shops know, and they're crazy with joy. There isn't a man among us who wouldn't set off fireworks in the nitro factory if the princess thought it would be fun. And you know what we'd do for you, Jimmy; so if you and the princess want to be married, you just go ahead, and

the Department G boys will go out and exterminate the entire nobility. They're none too popular, anyhow."

"I'm afraid your plan is a trifle radical," objected Jimmy with a smile. "There are a hundred of the nobles, and some of them have large families."

"And some of them are regular fellows," added Keezap, hunting a spot in the crisscrossed bandages where he might stir up his intellect by scratching his head. "There are other ways, though. The boys are figuring that they might blast a passage out through the reefs."

"It would take all the resources of Isola, and five years of time to do it," replied Jimmy.

"We might tunnel under the mountains," suggested Keezap hopefully.

"Same answer," smiled Jimmy. "I'd have started on that six months ago if there had been a chance."

"We'll build a bigger air-ship," offered little Keezap desperately. "If that won't do you, Jimmy, I'm afraid we're at the end of our string, for we've covered earth, water and air."

"We're at the end of our string, then," Jimmy sadly assured him; "for an air-ship won't do, until we invent some way of hitting the ground easier. I've promised the king never to try that method again, and I'm not so keen about it myself. When I left America, the aviators in the cemetery out-

numbered those in the air about four to one. I don't mind taking a chance myself, but for Bezzanna—" He stopped and patted the hand which lay in his own.

Keezap had been looking out of the window in distressed speculation, but suddenly his unbandaged eye took on a look of keen amazement, and, rising painfully but hurriedly to his feet, he hobbled over to the window on one crutch, Bezzanna hurrying after him, and propping the other one under his arm.

"What is it?" demanded Jimmy, half rising.

"Jimmy!" screamed Bezzanna. "Lie down!" and hurried to make him do so.

"Air-ships!" gasped Keezap. "Three—no, four!"

"Coming this way?" asked Jimmy, who did not know that Bezzanna was pushing him. He put his arm around her shoulders, though, and patted her for being there.

"Lickety-split!" replied Keezap, his voice thrilling with excitement.

"The prince couldn't have obtained air-ships," mused Jimmy, and even Bezzanna straightened up at that horrible suggestion.

"No!" returned Keezap scornfully. "He couldn't get anything any more. These air-ships have strange flags painted on their wings, and one of them is the American flag!"

Jimmy lay down, very much exhausted.

"Get me a fresh drink, won't you, Bezzanna, please?" he begged.

"Tell me the truth," she demanded, looking him in the eye. "You're going to get up."

"I was going to fight it off, but since you mention it I think I'll have to," he told her.

"I'm so afraid you'll hurt yourself," she worried, and ran to the window. She suddenly clapped her hands. "It's a race, Jimmy, and the American ship's in the lead!" she cried. "I'll get you that drink right away," but before she went she laid his clothes on the chair beside his bed, and kissed him, and rumbled his hair. "I'd have to get up myself if I was dying," she confessed, and ran away.

Jimmy was leaning against one embrasure of the window and Keezap against the opposite one, and they were holding to each other for support when Bezzanna came in, without the water.

"It's glorious!" she exulted, standing behind Jimmy and putting her arms around him to hold him up. "They're coming right over the palace. Oh, look! One is having an accident!"

The rear one had indeed suddenly tilted sidewise, and now it dropped straight down toward the earth, and Bezzanna uttered a scream of horror. Before it reached the ground, however, the machine righted itself and descended in a long low sweep, appar-

ently into the river. The others came swiftly on, passing the palace so near that the whirr of their motors could be heard. They watched for a long time, and finally the missing machine rose into the air and resumed its journey.

The telephone bell rang, and Dym Haplee was overjoyed to hear Jimmy's voice.

"Why, old Yankee Doodle!" yelled Dym; "I heard you were laid away in camphor for a month to come, but I might have known better. What do you know about these air-ships?"

"It's an international race," explained Jimmy, "and the American's in the lead."

"Of course it would be," agreed Dym sincerely. "But what about the others?"

"The second one was French, the third English, and I'm not able to make out yet the one that dropped and is now coming toward us."

Dym laughed.

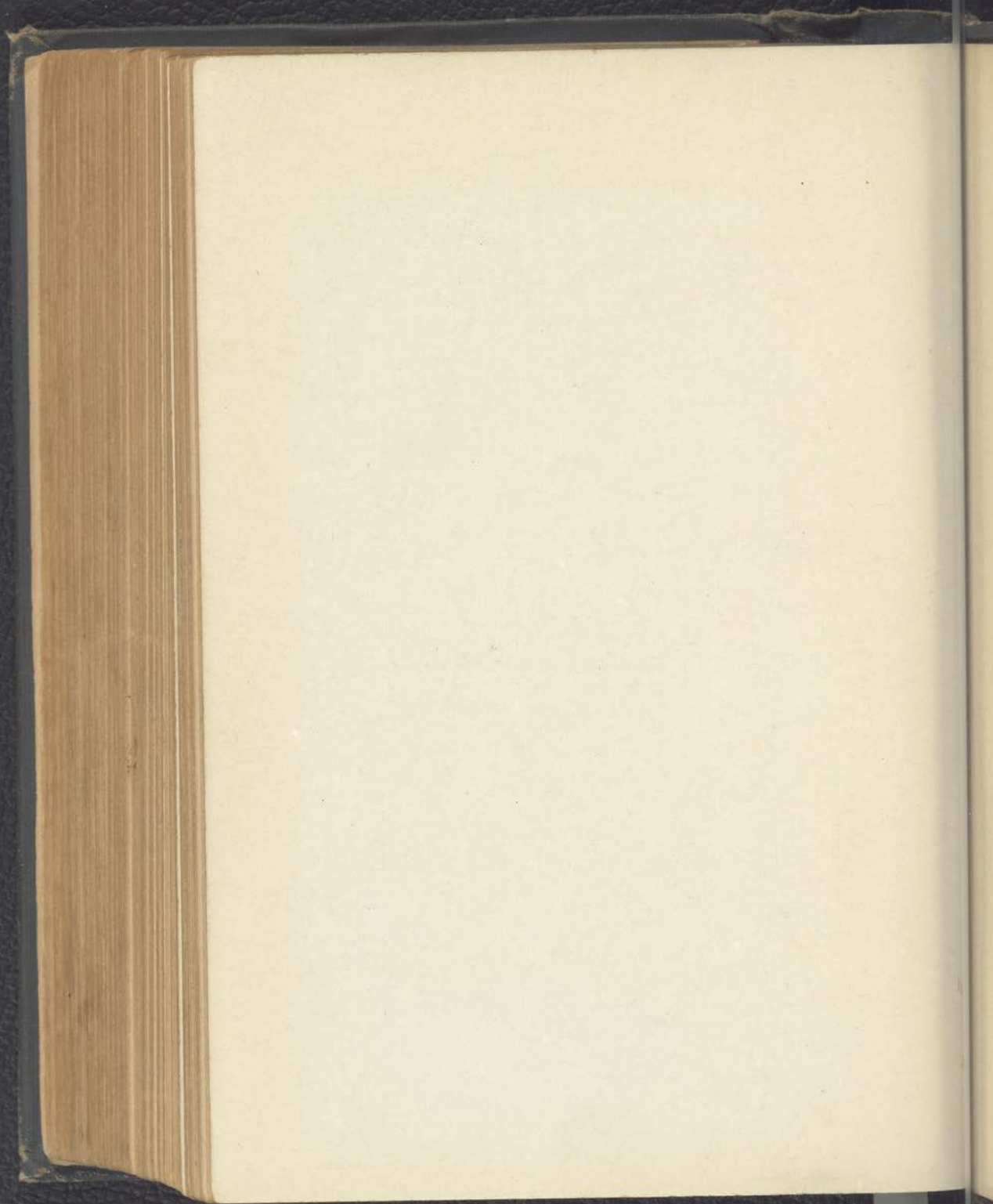
"The aviator was a puffy-faced fellow, with yellow hair and a yellow mustache which stuck straight up, and he talked a language, at first, that sounded like a saxophone gargling its throat."

"German," guessed Jimmy with a chuckle. "Could you make out what he wanted?"

"Oh, yes, he spoke a little American, too. He asked for gasoline and beer, and he went away angry."



They were holding to each other for support.



"That's because he didn't get the beer," decided Jimmy. "Is that all he had to say?"

"He asked a lot of questions," responded Dymp. "He wanted to know the name of the place, and the name of the ruler, its religion, population, resources, and why we had never heard of beer. Say, Jimmy, are you strong enough to hold the phone, and give me an interview? I want to know where all these countries probably are in their relation to the location of Isola, their rulers, population and resources."

"I'll write the interview myself," offered Jimmy, "and send it down to you, with a photograph of an air-ship."

"Good boy!" applauded Dymp. "By the way, Jimmy, you want to see my slashing editorials this afternoon, on the selfishness of the nobility and the fool laws in the royal charter."

"Stop it, you anarchist," ordered Jimmy. "We've had distraction enough for the week before the opening of the second baseball season. Your editorials, in the last three days, along that line, have been too dangerous to strike a match near."

"The mission of the *Daily Isolian* is to protect the oppressed," declared Dymp solemnly. "If we get the oppressed stirred up enough, I ought to get some good news out of it."

The king walked in as Jimmy was hanging up the receiver.

"It seems that you've started an air-ship craze all over the world, Jimmy," he remarked pleasantly, as he shook hands with Keezap, and slipped his arm about Bezzanna's waist.

"There isn't a joke in me," declared Jimmy. "Your peaceful isolation is gone. A man, out of the world which is greedy for territory and which recognizes no law but strength, has gone away to say that you are here; and rich. I wouldn't give a canceled postage-stamp for your kingdom."

CHAPTER XXXIV

JIMMY SAVES ISOLA, AND BEZZANNA PICKS OUT THE WEDDING MUSIC

AT two o'clock in the morning, old Amyah pounded on the king's door and heard the almost simultaneous thump of feet on the floor.

"Fire?" demanded the king, appearing in the doorway with a chemical extinguisher in each hand.

"No, sir," replied Amyah. "Mr. Jimmy wants to see you. I tried to get you on the telephone, but when I am first awakened I always have trouble with the switchboard."

"Is anything wrong?" asked the king, setting down his fire-extinguishers and grabbing an armful of clothes.

"No, sir," returned Amyah, rubbing his gray head in perplexity. "He was laughing when I left him. Lord Haplee had just been talking with him over the telephone, about half an hour before, and I had dropped asleep again by Mr. Jimmy's bedside."

"I told you that job was too much for you," said

the king kindly, as he followed down the hall; "but you would insist on having it."

"Mr. Jimmy has been very good to me," mumbled Amyah, apologetically, and returned to the king's room to straighten up his bed, so that it would be fresh when he came back to it.

Jimmy was still laughing when the king arrived, and with a sublime disregard of his still aching bruises, he had pushed the library table under the big central light, and was spreading upon it writing materials and some papers.

"I have some startling news for you," he stated. "Wahanita's tower has just been blown up! Dymp Haplee tells me you couldn't find enough of it to sand the floor of a bird cage. Do you mind if I dress?"

"Certainly not," assented the king with mechanical graciousness, but plumped into a chair, still hugging his armful of clothes, and batted his eyes, while he thought over this act of vandalism.

"Does he know who did it?"

"A mob, variously estimated at from one to five thousand people," stated Jimmy, pulling on his socks. "Dymp says it's the power of the press. He's tickled stiff."

"I don't understand it," puzzled the king, rising, and pulling on a pair of trousers he had found in the bunch of clothing he had brought along. "It is an act of public defiance."

"Well, it seems to be a little touch of sentiment on the part of the people," asserted Jimmy diffidently, dragging his own trousers on over his pajamas, and stepping neatly into his slippers with the same motion, which betrayed him as a man who had reduced the conservation of energy to a fine art. "It appears that your devoted subjects obtained the idea, somehow, through the *Daily Isolian*, that the princess was in danger, so they just got up a little impromptu demonstration to show her great popularity."

A lanky figure, in gray trousers and blue pajama waist, and wearing one black and one brown slipper, bounded in at the door.

"What's the trouble?" he demanded, trying to scramble into a coat which had one sleeve turned inside out. "My telephone bell rang."

Old Amyah pulled his beard.

"The tower of Wahanita has been blown up," stated the king, as one still unable to comprehend his own news. "Five thousand people were concerned in it. It's a public protest against any interference with the marriage of Bezzanna to Jimmy."

"Shake!" shouted Teddy, gripping Jimmy's hand heartily, after which he made another frantic attempt to find the missing sleeve hole.

"They're becoming civilized. I have to tell Bezzanna this right away!" and he started for the door.

He was met on the way by the young lady in

question, who, hurried as she was, had on an exquisite morning robe of bewildering pink, which rippled with lace so flimsy that it seemed like flashing froth, and there was a perfectly-tied ribbon bow in her hair; however, a frill of dainty white peeped forth from beneath the hem of her robe.

"Jimmy!" she cried, rushing up to that stalwart young man as he struggled with a collar button. "Are you ill? My telephone rang."

Old Amyah wrung his hands.

"Only overcome by the great news, Betty!" gleefully chortled Teddy. "The tower of Wahanita has been blown up. Over five thousand people took part in it!"

"Glorious!" ejaculated the princess, clasping her fingers behind Jimmy's neck, and beaming up at him with seraphic eyes. "I hated that thing."

"Wait a minute!" pleaded Jimmy. "You people travel so fast that you make a subway express look like a Central Park victoria. You don't give me a chance to tell the news," and bundling Bezzanna into a big chair, as if she had been an armful of feathers, he sat on the arm of it, after slipping on his lounging robe. "The rest of it is serious. The people are pouring into the town, armed with their pikes and spears and crossbows, and have declared that they intend to wipe out the entire nobility. They are forming themselves into a huge army, and

intend to clean up Onalyon's side of the river first. The people have been figuring. Onalyon poisoned their minds against us in the first place, and a large majority of the nobles brought them out here to unseat the king. They saw how easily they could have been killed. Onalyon planned another war, and a number of the nobles, still remaining true to their hereditary traditions, joined him in that. Onalyon came over here, and sent for all his guns and ammunition. They figured two things: first, that the prince had seen something about a hundred degrees more destructive than they had been shown; and second, that the nobles had been willing to sacrifice a few thousand of them to pass the time away. Moreover, they got the idea that the princess was going to sacrifice herself to save them, and they've gone Bezzanna-mad! They're wearing pink ribbons for a badge. They intend to wipe out the entire nobility system, with the exception of the princess, whom they intend to make a queen, with me as a sort of side partner, I believe."

The king was much distressed. He paced agitatedly up and down the room, unconscious of the fact that his movements were seriously hampered by his having straddled one suspender.

"We shall have a worse slaughter than that with which Onalyon threatened us. We shall be compelled to kill thousands in spite of ourselves."

"You don't need to lose a man!" announced Jimmy exultantly, taking the head of the table and resting his knuckles upon it, in the argumentative oratorical fashion of a statesman who is sure of his ground. "Dymp Haplee is calling up the nobles as fast as he can get the numbers, and warning them to get some bricks and mortar themselves up in the northeast corner of the cellar. They're so scared by this time that none of them has called you up yet. They'll begin inside of half an hour, and by that time you can tell them exactly what to say."

A plump lady in a lavender kimono, but wearing a green sash which betokened extreme agitation in one so particular about colors, bustled into the room, and blinked. Old Amyah, who had so far stood his ground and endured his humiliation, shriveled, and broke for cover at last.

"Didn't my telephone bell ring?" asked Aunt Gee-gee. "I thought maybe it did, and waited for it to repeat, and then I heard the voices, and came where I saw the light. What on earth is the matter?"

"Wahanita's tower has been blown up by five or ten thousand people, maybe more," announced Bezanna, to whom all other news was as nothing.

"Over ten thousand—maybe fifteen!" gasped Aunt Gee-gee, and dropped speechless into a chair to puff.

The king had rescued his suspender by this time.

"But how are we going to save Isola from her tragedy?" he asked. "There is no time to be lost."

"Proclaim a republic!" declared Jimmy triumphantly. "That's what you want, anyhow. Believe me, Thanks Old Scout, I've watched this king business all over the world with a keen commercial eye, and believe me, Thanks Old Scout, it's a dying industry. The only way I see for a king to earn the love of his people is to fool them, by passing them his throne before they take it away from him."

"Proclaim a republic," repeated the king, dazed.

"How can we do it?" asked Teddy, for whom that idea had an instant fascination.

"Call up the nobles, and tell them that's the only way to save their bacon," explained Jimmy. "They'll consent to anything to-night, and the council will meet here in the morning to ratify it. In the meantime, tell them to spread the news to any mob which happens their way. We'll telephone Dymp Haplee to get out an immediate extra, and have the Hello Company telephone to all its subscribers to inform the neighbors. By morning all Isola will know that it is a republic, and has a say in every important and unimportant matter. They'll have a constitution, a legislature, a senate, laws, lawyers and lawsuits, and the people will enter upon a new zest of life. We'll put this nation on a good, solid, substantial commer-

cial basis, and have a stirring election every two years; four years is too far apart for a new republic. The nobles who are popular will be elected to the first parliament, and that will give them a chance to frame up the original laws to conserve property interests. They'll enjoy the game. You have material enough in your council and in the board of trade to make corking good politicians, from ward heelers to grafting senators, and by the time we expose a scandal or so, the people will be so crazy about politics that they can't do without it. Of course, you and I are too busy to fool much with politics, but you'll be compelled to accept the first nomination for territorial governor, and you'll be elected by an overwhelming majority, too!"

"Territorial governor?" repeated the king. "I don't quite understand. I thought the chief ruler of a republic was a president."

"It is," admitted Jimmy, "but not the ruler of a territory."

"Aren't we to be a real republic then?" protested the king.

"Oh, no," Jimmy suavely informed him. "That wouldn't do at all. The minute this German aviator gets outside and announces the discovery of this nice little slice of rich land, the nearest kingdom will annex it, kingdom or no kingdom, republic or no republic, and then nobody will have any say about anything; but if you have previously annexed

yourselves to some other great power, and have an already existing government under that power, you're out of trouble."

"I see," replied the king, assimilating the idea. "That is why we become a territorial government."

"A territory of the United States of America!" repeated Jimmy firmly. "When any other nation walks in here, and sees the American flag flying over the court-house, it will apologize for the intrusion, borrow a light for its cigarette, back out, bowing, and go home and kick the dog off the doorstep."

"We might take that big American flag of yours from the workshop down into the city and hoist it to-morrow," mused the king. "I like this idea, Jimmy—I believe that a hundred and fifty thousand people can govern themselves better than one man can, no matter how wise and good he is."

"Ninety millions of people have proved it," declared Jimmy solemnly. "Gee, I've done a lot for Isola!" he added with vast pride; "I've made her a part of America!"

The telephone bell rang. Jimmy answered it, covered the transmitter with his hand, and turned to the king with a grin.

"It's Huppylac, Onalyon's right bower," he chuckled. "He's crazy. There's a mob of his own people coming up his drive with torches. I guess you'd better talk to him."

The king also grinned as he took the telephone, and he grinned all the while that he listened.

"There is only one way to save your bacon," he gravely announced. "Beat the mob to it, and proclaim that Isola now has a republican form of government, having been annexed, as a territory, to the United States of America, the most powerful nation in the world! Let every man in that mob know that he can vote for fool laws to rob himself with, and he'll go straight home and build a jubilee bonfire with the family spears. Be here at ten o'clock in the morning to meet with the rest of the council and ratify the republic."

"He fell all right," surmised Jimmy, as the king, after explaining a few more things, turned from the telephone, with a chuckle.

"He has rushed out to meet the mob," said the king.

"Let's get busy, then," observed Jimmy briskly. "We have three trunk lines running out here; one to the palace, one to the offices, and one to the factories. You take this one, Teddy will run over to the factory, and Betty and I will tend to the one in the office. We'll split the list into three takes, and begin calling up nobles."

"Fifteen thousand!" gasped Aunt Gee-gee, and went to bed.

After arduous sessions, which lasted until day-

break, they met again in the library to compare notes, and had eighty-seven out of a hundred. The other thirteen wouldn't believe the news, except Old Polecon, who believed it but intended to fight, if he had to fight alone!

"They'll have to hustle the finishing of that church," remarked Jimmy, as they sat happily around the table, framing a constitution as nearly as possible like that of the United States of America.

"That's right," laughed the king, fondling the shoulder of Bezzanna, who was looking up at Jimmy with beaming adoration. She was so proud of him! "You can be married now, without any fear of the nobles, since there are to be none."

"Right you are!" assented Jimmy, drawing Bezzanna closer to him. He was jealous of the king. "Why else do you suppose I took advantage of the psychological moment to spring the scheme of this blooming republic?"

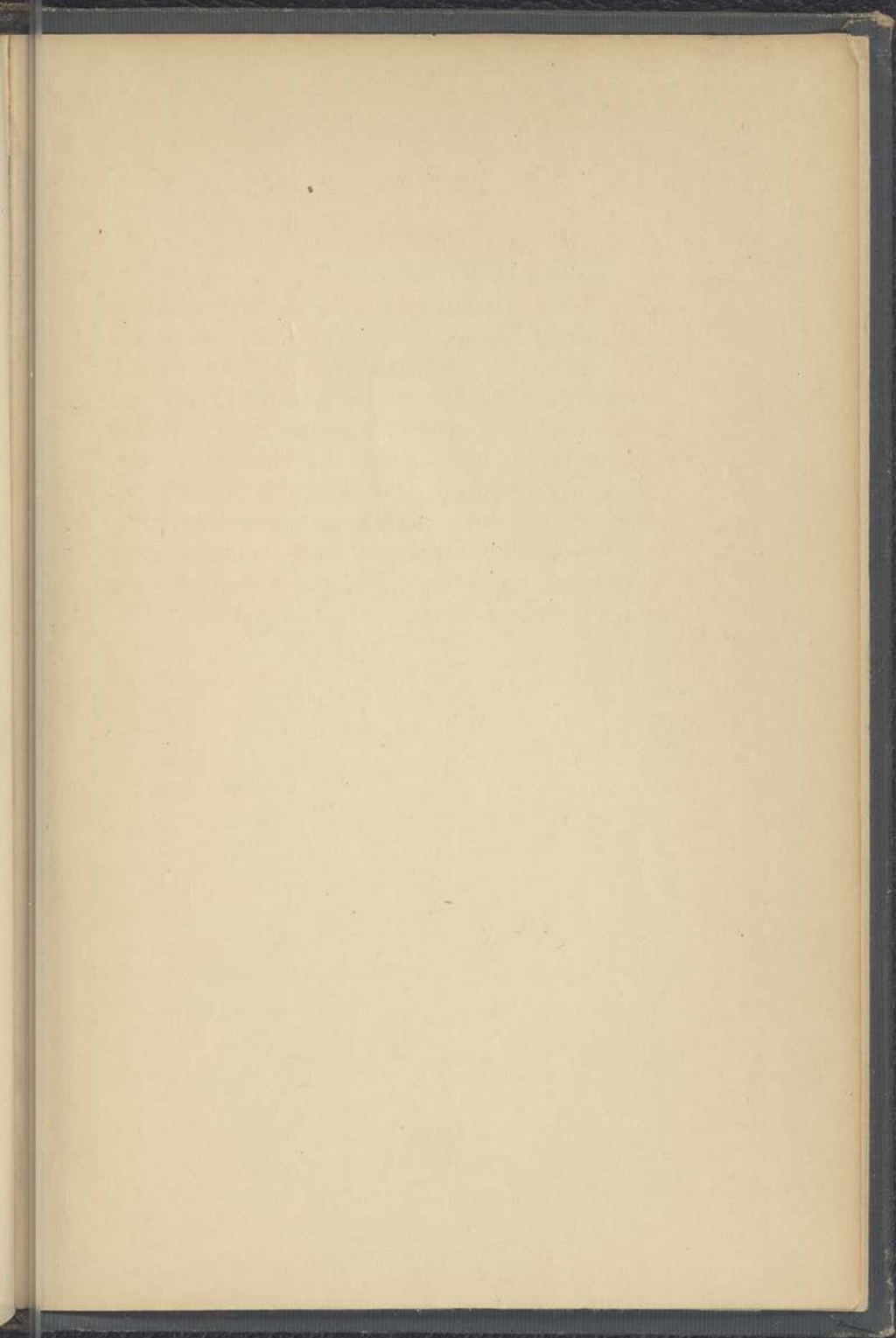
"I'll bet I know your wedding march," laughed Teddy jubilantly. "The band will play *Dixie!*"

"No," decided Jimmy with a far-away look. "I think that for this particular occasion we'll have another tune."

"I know!" guessed the beaming Bezzanna. "*The Star Spangled Banner!*"

ADDENDUM

This book has been written by the literary editor of the *Daily Isolian*, and cast into the sea, in the hope that the United States of America will equip an expedition to discover Isola. The second and present territorial governor, Jimmy Smith, desires to assure the United States of the devotion and loyalty of a hundred and seventy-five thousand patriotic, and prosperous, and progressive Americans. Also, he wishes to assure the Eureka Manufacturing Company of his safety. His infant son bears the name of that great concern—Eureka Smith!



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