

both admired it openly. While she was looking at it, Captain Yorke passed down the hall.

'Come in, Captain Yorke!' said Mrs. Pomeroy. 'I want you to see my cross, too. Elizabeth thinks it very pretty.'

Elizabeth laid the cross on the table, and picked up her shopping bag, which she had dropped into a chair. Just then some one called Mrs. Pomeroy.

'After all, I'm afraid you will have to look at it another time,' she said regretfully. 'I have to attend to some of the decorations, and shall need your assistance.'

They all left the room together. Mrs. Pomeroy locked the door and put the key into her pocket.

An hour later the whole household was thrown into confusion and consternation by the report that the emerald cross was missing. Mrs. Pomeroy telephoned for a detective, and had guards stationed outside the house, at the same time giving orders that the ball should proceed as though nothing had happened.

Late in the evening it was whispered among the guests that the cross had been found. Elizabeth noticed different persons turn and look at her, and she was conscious of feeling uncomfortable without knowing why. Gradually she became aware that some of the guests were purposely avoiding her. But no hint of the truth dawned upon her until the next morning. At an early hour Mrs. Pomeroy knocked and entered her room, closing the door behind her. Her mouth was set in a straight line, and her eyes wore a look Elizabeth had never seen before. She wasted no time, but plunged at once into her subject.

'After what has occurred, there can be no further pretence of friendship between us, Miss Morley,' she began, in her most pompous manner. 'My nephew will hardly wish to marry you now. Out of regard for his feelings, I shall not prosecute you, though—'

'Prosecute! What do you mean by using that word in connection with me?' Elizabeth cried, lifting her head proudly. 'Will you kindly state what I have done to deserve this?'

The gentle dignity of the girl's manner surprised and irritated the older woman.

'You know what it means,' she said angrily. 'The detective found my cross in your shopping bag, where you secreted it, and—'

Even Mrs. Pomeroy was alarmed by the sudden pallor that overspread the girl's face as she sank down in sudden white helplessness. But her heart did not relent.

Harry was furious. He would not believe a word the detective said; and he and his aunt quarrelled outright. Elizabeth proudly released him.

'When my innocence has been established, we may talk about it,' she told him; when he pleaded for an early marriage, and no persuasion could move her from that determination. That was nearly three months before, and the mystery was as much a mystery now as in the beginning.

Janet chattered gaily as they trudged along the narrow roadway winding upward and ever upward, between jagged walls of solid rock. She called her sister's attention to the wonderful old castles rising above the high walls, with great turrets and towers etched against the blue of the sky.

'Look, Elizabeth! There are even the narrow diamond-paned windows,' she cried, clasping her hands in sheer delight. 'It is a perfect picture of an old grey, lichen-stained castle.'

At each turn of the winding road some new beauty burst into view. Elizabeth forgot the gnawing pain at her heart, and was thrilled at the grandeur and beauty of the scene. It is rather a stiff climb up Williams Canon, but the nature-lover is fully repaid for any fatigue he may experience. Both Janet and Elizabeth were passionately fond of Nature in all her moods. They scarcely realised that they were tired, so thrilled and awed were they by the wonderful panorama unrolled before their view.

'If you are not too tired,' Janet said, after they had visited the Cave of the Winds, 'we will follow this trail,' indicating a narrow, steep path leading over the mountain. 'The guide told me it leads to Manitou through Ute Pass, past the Rainbow Falls.'

'It looks pretty steep,' Elizabeth said doubtfully.

'See! that lady and gentleman are going back that way,' said Janet, eagerly. 'Shall we follow them?'

They climbed up the narrow trail. The view from the top was magnificent. They stopped to admire it, remaining longer than they realised. When they started to go down on the other side, they looked for the couple who had preceded them, but could see nothing of them.

'We shall soon overtake them,' Janet said cheerfully, hastening her steps.

But they reached the smooth burrow trail, and there was still no sign of them, or of any other living creature.

Janet was frightened. She was not naturally timid, but the thought of being alone in the mountains appalled her. To add to her alarm, the sun suddenly disappeared behind a bank of clouds, and a sharp peal of thunder, accompanied by a vivid flash of lightning, warned them that a storm was approaching.

She looked in vain for shelter, in case the storm should overtake them. The smooth, narrow trail wound downward between a high wall of solid rock on one side, and a sheer precipice on the other. At the bottom of the precipice a mountain stream dashed madly over the gaily colored boulders obstructing its way, forming tiny cataracts and miniature falls in its headlong flight. The shallow stream widened and deepened, its low murmuring changing gradually into a roar, as they neared the falls. The high wall on the left gradually receded, and a small cabin, dilapidated and half in ruin, but offering a shelter from the approaching storm, appeared before them.

'Let us run!' Janet cried breathlessly.

But Elizabeth held back.

'How do we know how many wild animals may be hiding in that hut,'—she was beginning, when a terrific crash of thunder followed closely by a flash of lightning, cut short further hesitancy.

They had barely entered and closed the door, when the rain came down in torrents. It was one of those sudden storms peculiar to the Rockies, severe while they last but of short duration. In a few minutes the sun was shining again, the water running in small rivulets down the mountain side.

With a sigh of relief Janet opened the door, and was about to step out into the bright sunshine, when a low moan from the farther corner of the hut startled them both.

'What is it?' Elizabeth exclaimed, clutching Janet's arm, but dropping it in amazement when she heard her own name spoken in a weak, supplicating tone.

'Miss Morley! It is I—Yorke. For the love of God don't leave me!'

'Captain Yorke!' Elizabeth was at his side in an instant. 'What does it mean? Are you ill or suffering?'

He was lying on the bare floor; there was no furniture in the hut; his face was pinched and drawn and flushed with fever.

'Water!' he cried feebly. 'For the love of God get me some water!'

Janet darted out, returning in an instant with her drinking cup full of clear, cold water. He drained it at a gulp.

'It is a taste of heaven!' he sighed. 'I am burning—burning—burning!'

They gathered from his broken, disjointed sentences that he had slipped and fallen over the side of the mountain two or three days before. Upon regaining consciousness, he dragged himself to the hut, where he had lain in a semi-conscious condition, hoping against hope that some one would find him.

After a hurried consultation, Janet started down the trail to fetch help, leaving Elizabeth alone with the wounded man. The sunlight streaming in through the open door, lay in a broad patch across the rough, uneven floor, lighting up every corner of the miserable hut.

For some time after Janet left them, Captain Yorke lay with closed eyes, utterly exhausted. Then, suddenly opening his eyes, and recognising Elizabeth watching over him, he cried in a low, broken tone, a look of wonder, almost of awe, crossing his wan features:

'There is a God—there must be a God!'

'Don't talk, please, Captain Yorke, it exhausts you,' Elizabeth entreated; but he did not seem to hear her.

'I never thought much about it,' he went on in a painful whisper. 'But I know now there is a God, and He has sent you to me that I may make restitution before I die.'

'Oh, please calm yourself!' Elizabeth said in terror. 'Help will soon arrive, and you must save your strength for the journey.'

She had not the faintest idea of the nature of the confession he was about to make; but shrank with innate delicacy to listening to that which must of necessity be painful and humiliating to him. He raised a weak hand protestingly, but lay with closed eyes for some minutes, as if gathering strength for the ordeal.

'I loved you the first time I saw you,' he began at last in a weak voice, looking past her to where the sun lay bright and warm on the mountain side. Though he was not looking at her, he felt her start and shrink. He caught his breath sharply between his teeth; but went on, his eyes still upon the sun-kissed mountain: