

Stewart Edward White



Secret Harbour

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Published by Good Press, 2022

goodpress@okpublishing.info

EAN 4064066357429

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CHAPTER I

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For the first time since his marriage Marshall found himself again in Vancouver and again strolling idly down the backbone of the peninsula on which that fortunate city is situated. As was the case two years before, the day was crisp with early spring. Coal Harbour gleamed blue on one side, and on the other the wide waters of English Bay twinkled under a singing breeze. Lion Peak rose high and snow clad across the way, and the masts of tall ships. Even the same birds, apparently, made the same cheerful remarks to him from the shrubbery of the tiny park through which his steps led him.

But, he reflected, the situation had most considerably altered since that former occasion. Then he had been sick to the death of a profound indifference; unable either to live or to die with any satisfaction to himself; at loose ends with the universe; with no future, with no past that he cared to remember, and the present gray. Now he was happily married to a woman whose possibilities, he felt, would suffice for the explorations of several lifetimes; each of his days rose with a song of invitation; and each seemed to reveal to him new energies of which he would never have believed himself capable. The beginning of the change, of the cure of his spirit, had taken place in this city; indeed, as he looked about him, he told himself it must have been on this very street. Yes; yonder was the square brick house where he had first met that queer, humorous, wise human entity who had called himself the Healer of Souls, and who

had led him forth into the series of adventures that had culminated in a complete cure and an equally complete wife. After which the magician had disappeared for foreign parts, leaving his sister and her husband to the manifold devices possible to youth and wealth.

Marshall crossed the street. He knew that the square brick house had been only a temporary abode; in fact, rented for the week; but his sentimental interest in it was strong. As he drew nearer he could mark no alteration. It was one of those houses ageless with commonplace. Its picket fence, its bit of lawn, its hydrangeas and geraniums, its brick squareness, its cupola atop, its wooden veranda, its prim lace curtains had not changed, would never change until the whole fabric should be overwhelmed by a commercial expansion that, in this quiet street, could not take place for many years. Even the corner where the Healer of Souls had displayed his fantastic business plate was now furnished with a similar brass sign; probably, Marshall supposed, of dressmaking or millinery, or some kindred respectable calling. Nothing was changed. It might have been two years ago.

Then, abruptly, he stopped short, his eyes starting from his head. He shut the said eyes tight: then opened them again to see if they insisted on the same report. They did. There was no doubt of it. The sign was of brass; it had been recently and sedulously polished; its lettering was unmistakable.

X. ANAXAGORAS HEALER OF SOULS

was the inscription it carried.

Marshall stood, electrified. It was unbelievable! He pushed open the gate, strode to the door, jerked at the old-fashioned bell-pull. Apparently the same maid admitted him to the same interior, ushered him into the same banal, commonplace "parlour." She took his card and disappeared. It seemed to him that her manner, even, was that of two years ago. She seemed to be suppressing an amusement for the sake of that rigid propriety appropriate to well-trained maids. The same echo of a closing door. The same breathless silence should have been broken by the ticking of the ormolu clock, which, however, continued fatuously to believe that it was twenty-one minutes past ten. These things could not be! They were of the past. Their elements had been long scattered. The house, after its week's tenancy, should have passed into other hands which must somewhere have left their impress. The maid should have quitted domestic service to sell things in some shop in Granville Street. Somebody should have wound or repaired the ormolu clock or chucked it disgustedly into an ash bin. A vanished episode that should live only in memory seemed to have been reconstructed from the invisible where memories dwell. An absurd wave of panic swept through the young man. He was seized with a sudden impulse to escape, to rush forth to assure himself that the *Spindrift* actually lay at anchor in Coal Harbour; that Betsy existed and was aboard her; that the last two years were realities, and that he was not in very truth and in actual body back in that other May morning.

The maid reappeared. Marshall arose and followed her to the same small consulting room at the back with the blue walls and the blue glass in the windows and the flat-topped desk and the two chairs. He seated himself in one of the latter and stared at the ornamental door opposite. After an interval of waiting he felt impelled to address the emptiness; and, strangely enough, after he had done so, he realized that he had used about the same words as before.

"I'm sufficiently impressed," he said. "Come in." Then he added, on his own account, "Don't be absurd, Sid. Explain yourself."

But he obtained no response. With a shrug he settled back to wait. The eerie feeling was passing. Another of his brother-in-law's eccentricities! Useless to try to force the issue.

At the end of five minutes the ornamental door opened to admit a young man clad in the white of a hospital surgeon. He entered briskly and, ignoring Marshall's eager start of welcome, seated himself on the opposite side of the desk.

"Sit down, Mr. Marshall," he commanded, authoritatively. "I am pleased to see you here again."

"What in the world are you doing here?" cried Marshall. "I thought you were in India!"

"I recently returned."

"But what in the world is all this flummery? And how are you, anyway? And why didn't you let us know? Betsy is here. We have the *Spindrift* down in the harbour. She'll be crazy to see you!"

But the Healer of Souls did not abate his extreme formality.

"I am, of course, aware of those facts," said he. "But let us first of all attend to the matter of this consultation." He drew a pad of paper toward him and poised his pencil.

"Good Lord, Sid, drop it!" cried Marshall, vexed. "I'm not consulting you. There's nothing the matter with me."

X. Anaxagoras listened impersonally and made a note on his pad.

"Ah!" he remarked, cryptically. "And then?"

"And then, what?" demanded Marshall. "Come, be human."

"You have stated that you are unaware of the fact that you require treatment," stated the Healer of Souls. "Then what, in your mind, is the reason for consulting me?"

Marshall surveyed him disgustedly.

"Well," he remarked at last, with elaborate sarcasm, "as you happen to be my brother-in-law, not to speak of being what I consider a pretty good friend; and as I haven't seen you for two years; and as I find you here when you're supposed to be consorting with Mahatmas somewhere in the Himalayas, I naturally came in to clasp your manly hand and invite you to have a drink. Then, too, you have a sister with whom, as far as I know, you are still on terms, and whom, also, you have not seen for two years. Anything significant and pathological in that?—You old idiot!" he added.

Again Anaxagoras made notes.

"I must ask you some questions," he announced, briskly, when he had finished. "Please reply as accurately as possible."

Marshall looked at him with affectionate amusement; then shrugged his shoulders.

"Shoot," said he, resignedly. Useless to combat Sid in one of his freakish moods. Might as well play up.

"No trace of the old trouble?"

"Eh?"

"The soul-numbness; the complete indifference. Feel a normal interest in life? Look forward to the future? Fully alive?"

Marshall laughed.

"Oh, that! No trouble in that respect! As you pointed out once, Betsy is capable of supplying that to a dead man; and I'm far from dead. Why, Sid——"

X. Anaxagoras cut him short.

"The treatment in that respect seems to be permanently successful. Happy?"

"As a clam!"

"Well, what are you going to do with it?"

"What?" asked Marshall, blankly.

"Your happiness; your aliveness."

"I don't believe I get you."

"What are your plans for a future?"

"We're cruising up the coast toward Alaska."

"And then, after that?"

"No plans."

"Does that satisfy you as a prospect?"

"There's always plenty to do," rejoined Marshall, slowly.

"And after that?"

"I—I hadn't thought."

"You have wealth; you have energy; you have happiness. Are you going to allow them to devour each other?"

Marshall's air of amusement had faded; but the struggle against taking a serious attitude toward an absurdity resulted in a suppressed irritation. Nevertheless, a door that had been closed seemed to have opened, disclosing new things.

"Shall you continue to be happy in that?"

X. Anaxagoras allowed a pause.

"And then what?" he repeated.

The young man did not reply.

"Business?"

"It does not interest me. I have sufficient money. There are enough people making things."

"Art? Literature? Music?"

"I have no taste or knowledge."

"Philanthropy? Politics?"

Marshall made a gesture of distaste.

"The pursuit of knowledge?"

"I'm a regular bonehead and you know it!" cried the young man, resentfully.

X. Anaxagoras leaned back in his chair.

"The case, as you see, is sufficiently serious," he enunciated, crisply. "Unused tools tarnish, rust, and decay. You have wealth, energy, and happiness. They are worth preserving. Your soul is not in disorder as it was before, but it soon will be. Preventive therapeutics are wiser than cures. Your position is dangerous. You have done well to seek this consultation at just this time."

"But I tell you I did not seek it!" rejoined Marshall, with a return of his exasperation. "It was pure chance!"

"In the web of life, if one looks deeply enough, there is no pure chance. A hunger of the spirit orients it unerringly toward its need, can we but recognize that fact." He arose. "Wait one minute," he abruptly finished, and disappeared through the ornamental door.

He was gone, not one minute, but five. At the end of that period he reappeared. He was now tweed-clad and carried a suitcase. His professional manner had vanished with his white hospital clothes.

"*Hiyu tillicum!*" he cried, clasping his visitor's hand. "That's Chinook 'for heap big friend.' How are you, anyway? And how have you been? And is Betsy flourishing? Have you room for me aboard the *Spindrift*?"

He led the way through the hall. Marshall, bewildered by this sudden change, followed him. At the front door he turned the key and pocketed it.

"Just a moment." He halted Marshall.

From his coat pocket he produced a screwdriver with which he proceeded carefully to detach the brass sign from the corner of the house. He tucked it under his arm and picked up the suitcase.

"All ready!" he cried, cheerfully.

"But—but——" stammered Marshall, waving his hand feebly at the house.

"Oh, that's all right. I just rented it for three days. The maid was only in for the day. All finished."

"But——" repeated Marshall, inanely.

"I knew you'd be along," said X. Anaxagoras.

CHAPTER II

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They strolled together down toward Granville Street in search of a taxi, X. Anaxagoras chatting cheerfully upon diverse but utterly irrelevant topics, Marshall nearly silent when he found he could pin his volatile companion down to nothing profitable in the way of personal information. The Healer of Souls seemed to discover of supreme interest and importance such subjects as liquor control; why in thunder there should be a bounty on the killing of eagles; how ling cod can swallow rock cod whole, spines and all; whether a senator or a representative is the lowest form of wit. He appeared to deem there could be no merit in discoursing on whence he had come and why; and what he was going to do about it; or in the exchange of any other personal gossip that should absorb those two years separated.

"Betsy will be surprised to see you," Marshall made a last attempt as they stepped into the taxi.

"Oh, not so very," X. Anaxagoras replied, easily.

They drove around the beautiful curve of Coal Harbour and through the natural lawns and giant cedars of Stanley Park until they had reached the quarters of the Royal Vancouver Yacht Club. Here they stood for a moment on the elevated platform before descending the incline to the floats. At the latter lay a long file of power cruisers of all sizes. Beyond, each at its mooring, rode dozens of said yachts—schooners, yawls, sloops—all trim and white and shipshape. They swung in double rows as though drilled, answering the vagrant suggestions of the breeze that hummed over the trees from the gulf. On the floats and on

the decks of some of the craft were young men in the most smeared of white dungarees happily doing the small and puttery things the amateur sailorman loves.

Out beyond the orderly rows of resident yachts lay a schooner longer than the rest. She, too, gleamed a dazzling white. Her spars twinkled in the sun as the wavelets twinkled below her; brasswork heliographed; the standing and running rigging stood taut as bowstrings; even at this distance it was evident that the canvas sail covers had been drawn and laced smooth and tight with a loving care, and that such gadgets as the handropes on the gangway overside and the covered rails of the after deck had been freshly whitened. Altogether a craft to delight the yachtsman's eye.

X. Anaxagoras lingered over her details. Astern floated the ensign; the truck on the foremast flew a burgee, on the mainmast a device which was evidently the owner's private signal. At the main starboard spreader had been hoisted a small square blue flag, indicating the owner's absence. All was as correct as a New Yorker going to church.

"The *Spindrift*" said Marshall, who had been watching his companion with pride. "Seagoing. A hundred horse power auxiliary."

"She's a pretty craft," agreed the Healer of Souls.

Marshall produced a whistle from his pocket which he blew shrilly thrice. Three white figures almost instantly appeared, dropped into a small boat tethered at the end of the mooring boom. One took its place at the stern. The other two seized long oars which they simultaneously raised

to a perpendicular; and then, as one man, dropped into the water.

"True nautical precision," commented X. Anaxagoras.

Marshall nodded in satisfaction, and the slight trace of anxiety with which he had watched these proceedings faded from his eyes.

"Two of my men were trained in the navy," said he. "These fellows know the proper thing when they see it." He nodded toward the dungaree-clad Royal members.

They descended the incline to the float, against which the boat made a smart landing. X. Anaxagoras searched in his pockets and finally produced a bundle of claim checks. From these he selected one.

"I wonder if your quartermaster, or bos'n, or chief steward, or chief hereditary manipulator of the royal washtub, or whatever you call him there in the stern sheets could see to getting this steamer trunk down for me. It's all I want. The rest of my plunder can stay in storage."

The faces of the three men remained wooden.

"Here, Benton; see to it," commanded Marshall, crisply.

He took the man's place in the stern sheets at the tiller lines. X. Anaxagoras seated himself alongside. The boat flew back across the frosted silver of the bay toward the *Spindrift*.

At the yacht two more white-clad figures first caught the boat's bow with a boathook, then steadied her while the passengers disembarked, then stood at attention while the latter ascended the short companion. At the instant Marshall's feet touched the deck the little blue absence flag fluttered down from the starboard spreader.

"Congratulations," murmured X. Anaxagoras. "Never seen it done better, even on the stage."

He glanced up and down the deck. It was a beautiful cream colour from scrubbing and holystoning. The coils of the standing rigging were laid down Bristol fashion.

"Even to the single modest pearl in the cravat," murmured X. Anaxagoras, cryptically.

Marshall had advanced eagerly to the companionway down which he was calling.

"Betsy! Betsy! Come on deck! We have a visitor!"

He stood aside, dramatically, to give full scope to the expected surprise. A young woman appeared. She was a slender, vivid-looking, and daintily built creature dressed all in white, with a mop of bobbed hair glowing with bronze glints, wide-apart humorous black eyes, and a whimsical mouth. She glanced toward X. Anaxagoras.

"Why, hullo, Sid," said she, calmly. "Where did you pop from? Are you visiting or just calling?"

She threw her arms around him with a quick pressure that belied the casual tone of her greeting and kissed him.

"I thought I'd visit awhile, if you'll invite me."

She appeared to consider for a minute.

"*Can* I invite you? You see I have to stop and think about these things so as not to make any horrible mistakes. It's terrible to make mistakes aboard a yacht, much more terrible than on shore. But now I remember: he's the supreme boss only when we are under way. When we're at anchor I can be boss. So I can invite you. I do."

"Don't be absurd!" ejaculated Marshall.

"It isn't absurd," she protested. "You've no idea"—she turned again to her brother. "You can have no idea. The poor little *Kittiwake* could give you no idea. 'Downstairs' or 'up on the roof,' instead of 'out back,' meaning astern. Such things are nothing, a mere nothing, to the mistakes possible in this maritime monarchy. It's a real yacht, Sid. It has been very difficult for me, but I am progressing. There's a certain unfittableness of my mind when it comes to the sort of a maritime monarchy that obtains aboard a real yacht. I'm always trying to wear tan shoes in a ballroom."

"Don't be silly," Marshall varied his admonition.

"Oh, I'm trying not to be; indeed I am!" she protested, humbly. "Even now I'm uncertain. Isn't there some sort of flag we should hoist now we have a visitor? or do we shoot the little brass cannon? There must be something: there always is something."

Marshall laughed in spite of himself.

"In case of a visitor you splice the main brace," he reminded her.

"Well, I know what *that* is!" she said, gratefully, and withdrew her head down the companionway in which she had been standing.

The men followed her into the cabin. It was, however, more like a room than a cabin. At one end was a practicable fireplace in which apparently glowed a genuine fire.

"It's warm and it's cheerful"—she followed X. Anaxagoras's eye—"but it's a fake. It burns electricity."

Fresh and dainty cretonne curtains shaped the ports into windows. Easy chairs fronted the fire. Books stood on racked shelves. Bright sofa cushions strewed the transoms. In

whatever direction one looked one was impressed anew with the feeling of a small but cheerful room in some bungalow by the sea.

"Aren't we comfy!" she cried.

"It isn't exactly a yacht's cabin, of course——" began Marshall, almost as though in apology.

"Yachts' cabins," broke in Betsy, swiftly, "have a choice of two sorts of curtains—if any. One is a ribbed, heavy, dingy stuff; and the other is a ribbeder, heavier, dingier stuff. The other furnishings are substantial and solid affairs designed by the original male yachtsman. He was a man of practical mind, devoid of imagination, and devoid of æsthetic values. He was, I will admit, ingenious. He had to be. You know," she confided to her brother, "this isn't like the *Kittiwake*."

"So I observe," agreed X. Anaxagoras, drily, seating himself in one of the comfortable chairs.

"No; the *Kittiwake* bobs around sometimes; but this one, when she's sailing, lives on a slant. Sometimes on one side; sometimes on the other. It's like living on the slope of a roof. So everything is fixed so it won't slide off. It's very ingenious; but it's not always pretty."

"If she had her own way she'd probably have window boxes outside the portholes," grumbled Marshall.

"It would be pretty," agreed Betsy, thoughtfully. "But don't be alarmed, darling. You can have the outside all your own way. In fact, you have the *right*, you know, to have everything your own way. When we're on the high seas, anyhow. You've no idea!" She turned again to her brother. "There's a book up there that tells about it. He is a Master, you see; and when he's three miles offshore he can bury

people, and hang people, and put them in irons, and marry people, and no one dares say him nay. I don't know whether he can divorce people: I'll look it up."

"You've developed into a regular chatterbox," was X. Anaxagoras's fraternal remark.

"Effervescence due to repression. When you're at sea, you've got to be nautical and single-minded and efficient. You don't talk; you bark. It's all 'squads right' and 'squads left' and 'by the right, fours, march'! No, that's not it: it's the other thing. 'Belay there!' and 'ready about,' and 'haul in the jib sheet.' If it wasn't for Rogg I'd believe they were all wound up at night with keys, like the ship's clock. Yachting, as it should be done, is *serious*, let me tell you."

"Who's Rogg?" asked Anaxagoras.

"You'll see him: he's our one weak spot, the blot on our perfect escutcheon. He's untamable nautically. But I've something in common with Rogg. He's a great comfort to me in my lonely and exalted state. He and I have the same perverted sense of humour."

"He's the stupidest man aboard," stated Marshall, half disgustedly. "I keep him because he's so good-natured."

"He often wears tan shoes in a ballroom," she told her brother. "It *is* mortifying—if you happen to mind."

"Oh, you'll be a yachtswoman in time," comforted the Healer of Souls. "I must say, you have a good opportunity here. I was never on a better-found craft. She is beautiful," he told Marshall, who flushed with gratification. "It takes a man to appreciate such things." His mouth quirked humorously. "There is one thing, however, if you'll pardon my mentioning it, that seems badly frayed and at loose

ends. Perhaps you have not noticed it, but I have. On a stranger's yacht, I should not have mentioned it; but here in the family—you *don't* mind, do you, old chap?"

"Of course not, I'm only too grateful. What is it?" cried Marshall, casting his eye about him uneasily.

"That main brace: it really ought to be spliced."

CHAPTER III

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Marshall dispensed the common hospitality that had to do with the main brace, then excused himself in order to see to the reception and stowage of certain stores which were reported to him as having arrived.

"I'm my own skipper," he said, "—wouldn't have much fun if I weren't. Benton's my mate, but he's uptown. Make yourself at home."

He departed, smiling indulgently to himself over the solved mystery of X. Anaxagoras's appearance. The rented house and the temporary mounting of the brass plate and the little drama of the consultation were so exactly what one might expect of his erratic brother-in-law. But when thought over, the affair required no great perspicacity. Given his knowledge that the *Spindrift* had dropped anchor in Vancouver, what more certain than that Marshall would, for the sake of old sentiment, be led to wander back up the street where he had first, drifted into the current of events that had brought him to a charming wife? And if he did enter that street, he could not have failed to see the brass sign. Of course, the Healer of Souls might quite well simply have announced himself aboard, sure of a hearty welcome; but

that simple procedure would have deprived him of his little comedy. The only mystery in the whole procedure—how did he know the *Spindrift* was due in Vancouver at all?—seemed to Marshall adequately cleared up by the casualness of the greeting when he and his beloved sister had met, presumably after an almost complete silence of a year. Evidently the silence had not been so complete as Betsy had led him to believe. She, in connivance with her brother, had been arranging for him this pretty and typical little surprise.

His complacency in this simple and obvious explanation would have been dissipated, however, could he have assisted unseen at the conversation which followed his departure.

"Now, tell me," Betsy broke out at once, "what are you doing here, and how do you happen to be here? I thought you were *ex communicado* in northern India."

"I am here to meet you, of course. I came to meet you because I am needed."

She took up the first point.

"But how in the world did you know we would be here? Lower California and big-game fishing were intended. We made up our minds for the North positively at the last minute."

"Perhaps," said X. Anaxagoras.

She stared at him.

"What do you mean?"

"Oh, anything you please. You see I've been consorting with Mahatmas, as you call it; and perhaps I have my little methods." He smiled at her mischievously. "Or then again,"

he added, after a moment, "it is barely possible that a weary voyager from the Orient, landing prosaically in San Francisco, learned on his arrival of the clearance of the yacht *Spindrift* for Canadian waters and at once took a swift train in pursuit. Who knows?"

She still stared at him with knit brows.

"Why didn't you come to us at once?" she demanded, after a moment. "Why all the old silly play-acting?"

"That was part of it," he replied, enigmatically.

"Part of what? Your usual impishness?"

"That I am needed."

"Do you know, Sid," she said, abruptly, after another pause, "there are moments—just moments—when you almost frighten me. At times you are so obviously the small boy playing with his toys, and dressing up in mysteries to delight yourself and annoy or impress silly people. And yet —"

"And yet you do not quite know, do you, little sister? In other words, I've got you going, too!" He laughed delightedly.

She did not respond to his amusement, but remained staring at him with puzzled eyes.

"What did you mean by that?" she asked, suddenly.

"By what?"

"That you were needed. Of course, we always need you, Sid darling; but I gather from your tone that you meant something more definite."

"Oh, quite. I find I am badly needed. I have already had a professional consultation with your husband and have satisfactorily diagnosed his case."

"My husband! Jerry?" she cried, amazedly. "What is wrong with him?"

"This." X. Anaxagoras waved his hand about him. "What this stands for."

"The yacht? I don't believe I understand you."

X. Anaxagoras looked at her keenly.

"Are you, too, affected? Do you, too, need my professional care? But no: you are merely a little dulled. Don't you see that this yacht is the epitome, the symbol of the 'proper thing'?"

"Why, of course she is. Yachts should be."

"Not Jerry's yacht. To have your yacht entirely the proper thing is a very desirable game to play, and may be played very seriously by the good player. But in this case it is a dangerous symbol of an inner state."

"Elucidate, wise one," she begged, dryly. "Do you mean we are going to get stupid and important-minded?"

"Jerry," the Healer of Souls obliged, stretching his legs out leisurely, "is a remarkably fine chap. He has all the natural aptitudes of heart and disposition to endear him to his fellows. He has good looks. He has energy. He has wealth in abundance. He has few or none of the deterrents. He even has good intentions. Altogether, he is a valuable and lovable character. I love him."

"So do I," said Betsy, a trifle dangerously.

"He has one danger point. He has been so well brought up that the herd instinct is unduly sensitive. I venture to say he would recoil with horror from the idea of wearing a tam-o'-shanter and a velveteen jacket."

"He would," agreed Betsy, emphatically, "and I would recoil with horror from having him do so."

"Oh, quite! I do not recommend it. Nevertheless, he recoils not from a good-natured desire to spare the feelings of his fellow man; nor from a modest reluctance to thrust his personality forward; but simply because of the fact that it isn't done, you know. Its unconventionality is an all-sufficient reason. Jerry is in danger of adopting permanently a conventional attitude of mind.

"The main brace," observed X. Anaxagoras, at this point, "seems to me dangerously frayed." He poured himself out a very small drink and reseated himself.

"At first blush," he resumed his dissertation, "the peril may not be evident to you. But absolute reliance on convention spoils initiative. The thoroughly conventional-minded man would have no initiative at all. He would always do the proper thing; and the proper thing is merely what has been already decided. It is a filming over, a crusting over of consciousness. Life is the awakening of consciousness."

He turned upon her and levelled an accusatory forefinger.

"You are in love with him," said he, "but, if I know my sister, you cannot be blindly in love. You are capable of being clear-eyed when once your eyes are opened for you. Be honest. Are you satisfied? Here is a young man with all the best ingredients of life ready to his hand. Yet he is doing nothing with them. Are you going to cruise about on the *Spindrift* for ever?"

"What do you want him to do? What should he do?" inquired Betsy, defensively.

"Something of his own."

"What?"

"I don't know; something of his own, I tell you. And he can't do anything of his own while he is completely occupied and busily engaged in the details of doing the proper thing by that station of life to which he has been called—whether it is aboard this yacht, or in social life, or even in some form of active life. Are you being honest, Sis? Do you see it?"

She hesitated, looked to right and left, then burst out:

"You *are* right, Sid—as usual in these matters. I suppose I've simply refused to face it; but deep down I must have been wondering about it. He is such a dear. It seems almost disloyal to admit it, but——"

"You don't want a tailor's dummy for a husband!" cried X. Anaxagoras, triumphantly.

"He'd never be that!" cried Betsy, at once in arms.

"Figuratively, my dear. Deny it if you can. Not naturally, I agree; but by force of training, by pressure of all the habits of early life which now are in danger of returning upon him and filming over his consciousness and hardening and forming an impermeable crust over his soul."

"Yes," agreed Betsy, thoughtfully, "he ought to do something. We *have* talked that over. But what?"

"Lord, I don't know! We haven't to decide that! That'll come along naturally enough once the crust is broken up to admit of its entrance. That isn't our job: that's his. What we've got to do is to break the surface."

"How?"

"Expose him to life."

"Do, for once, be practical and definite. What precisely do you intend to do? What do you want me to do?"

"That's the spirit!" cried the Healer of Souls, heartily.
"We'll pull him out, never fear!"

"You talk as though he had the smallpox."

"Worse; much worse. But as long as we are agreed and work together, everything will come out all right."

She surveyed him thoughtfully.

"I never can quite make you out, Sid. You always talk such moonshine; and yet somehow you always make me believe in it. Yet when I stop to think of it clearly, I can't put my finger on it."

"Don't think of it clearly. Just go ahead. It's always worked out pretty well, hasn't it?"

"Yes; it has always worked out. And why it has, I couldn't tell you."

"Then it is agreed. Good!"

"I don't even know what is agreed!" she cried, throwing out her hands in mock despair. "What are we going to *do*? Do you want me to talk to him?"

"Heaven forbid! We'll just go cruising and look for adventure. Life is adventure, you know."

She laughed skeptically.

"Adventure! Where? We've been cruising all over the world now for more than a year, and not the littlest thing has happened except a good time—oh, a very good time. I'm afraid, if you depend on that, we shall wait a long while."

"It's all in the expectation. Be ready for adventure and it comes."

She shook her head doubtfully.

"Remember, I've been consorting with the Mahatmas," he reminded her, with a mocking inflection.

"Tell me honestly," she begged, with a sudden seriousness. "You said you knew you were needed——"

He surveyed her with dancing eyes.

"Across the world the call might have come to me," said he. "For each deep need of the soul somewhere in Cosmos a complement exists, could we but touch it, could we but summon it. Or," he added, briskly, "it might be that I knew both you and Jerry even better than you know yourselves; and that I reflected to myself, 'Lo! two years have passed. Certain actions and reactions must by now have taken place, and such and such a condition must by now have ripened. I think it's about time I went to see about it.'"

"I never *have* been sure." She gave up the point in despair. "Sometimes things happen that fully persuade me you have powers I cannot understand; and sometimes——"

"Sometimes I'm a pretty good opportunist. Never mind me: think of results."

"The results have always been good," she acknowledged.

"Well, there we are! Now," pursued X. Anaxagoras, settling back even more comfortably, "though our exact means are necessarily obscure, the immediate objects are sufficiently plain. There are, as I see it, four prerequisite things to accomplish. First: destroy the symbol."

"The yacht!" she cried, aghast.

"You are quick witted," he approved.

"Destroy the yacht!"

"Oh, no: destroy the symbolism of the yacht. Make her not at all the proper thing in yachts. Muss her all up. Take the wooden backbones out of the crew. All that sort of thing. That's the first."

"How do you intend to do that?"

"I don't intend to do it. Circumstances must do it. We will simply and trustfully go forth to meet the circumstances. Somewhere they exist. I know it. They must exist, because we need them. The second thing to accomplish is to make Jerry like it."

"I don't believe——"

"You've *got* to believe," said X. Anaxagoras, authoritatively. "The third thing is that Jerry must commit a crime; and the fourth thing is that he must like it."

"A crime!" cried Betty, aghast.

"Oh, not a criminal crime, of course. Just a nice tidy crime. I think that part of it can be arranged. In fact, I have a good one all picked out."

"If you would not object to confiding in me?" murmured Betsy.

"Oh, not at all. I thought of kidnapping a Los Angeles real-estate man."

"Would you mind telling me why?"

"Oh, it seems a good sort of crime. Ought to make a lot of people happy, and all that sort of thing. Kidnapping is, I believe, discouraged by the law. Also marooning."

"He is to be marooned, then?"

"Of course. We should not want to keep a Los Angeles real-estate man on board for long."

"But why? There's no sense——"

"There is plenty of sense," interrupted X. Anaxagoras, blandly. "That will appear in the narrative."

"We should get into all sorts of trouble."