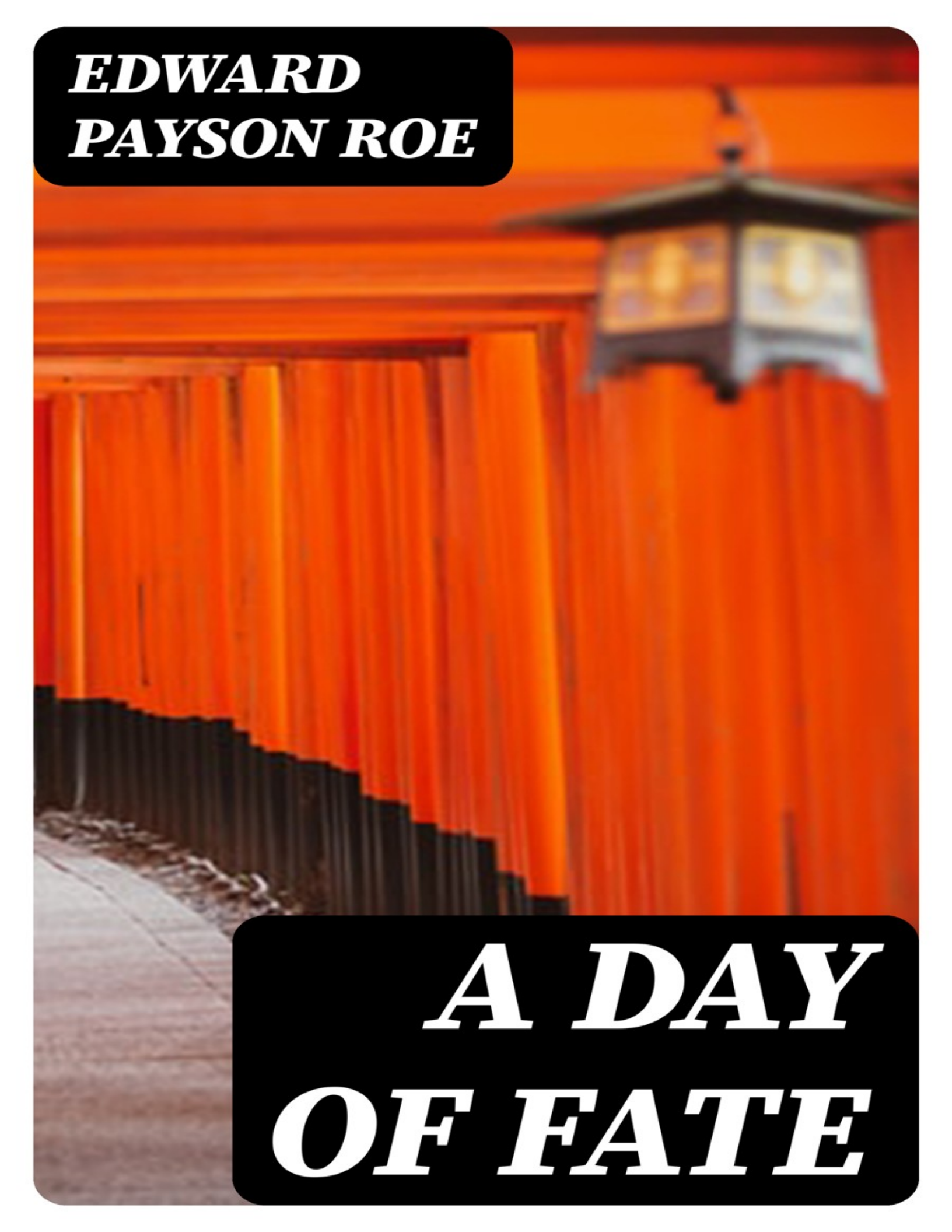




***EDWARD  
PAYSON ROE***

***A DAY  
OF FATE***

**Edward Payson Roe**

# **A Day of Fate**

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"Some shallow story of deep love."  
—Shakespeare

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***BOOK FIRST***

# CHAPTER I

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## AIMLESS STEPS

"Another month's work will knock Morton into 'pi,'" was a remark that caught my ear as I fumed from the composing-room back to my private office. I had just irately blamed a printer for a blunder of my own, and the words I overheard reminded me of the unpleasant truth that I had recently made a great many senseless blunders, over which I chafed in merciless self-condemnation. For weeks and months my mind had been tense under the strain of increasing work and responsibility. It was my nature to become absorbed in my tasks, and, as night editor of a prominent city journal, I found a limitless field for labor. It was true I could have jogged along under the heavy burden with comparatively little wear and loss, but, impelled by both temperament and ambition, I was trying to maintain a racer's speed. From casual employment as a reporter I had worked my way up to my present position, and the tireless activity and alertness required to win and hold such a place was seemingly degenerating into a nervous restlessness which permitted no repose of mind or rest of body. I worked when other men slept, but, instead of availing myself of the right to sleep when the world was awake, I yielded to an increasing

tendency to wakefulness, and read that I might be informed on the endless variety of subjects occupying public attention. The globe was becoming a vast hunting-ground, around which my thoughts ranged almost unceasingly that I might capture something new, striking, or original for the benefit of our paper. Each day the quest had grown more eager, and as the hour for going to press approached I would even become feverish in my intense desire to send the paper out with a breezy, newsy aspect, and would be elated if, at the last moment, material was flashed in that would warrant startling head-lines, and correspondingly depressed if the weary old world had a few hours of quiet and peace. To make the paper "go," every faculty I possessed was in the harness.

The aside I had just overheard suggested, at least, one very probable result. In printer's jargon, I would soon be in "pi."

The remark, combined with my stupid blunder, for which I had blamed an innocent man, caused me to pull up and ask myself whither I was hurrying so breathlessly. Saying to my assistant that I did not wish to be disturbed for a half hour, unless it was essential, I went to my little inner room. I wished to take a mental inventory of myself, and see how much was left. Hitherto I had been on the keen run—a condition not favorable to introspection.

Neither my temperament nor the school in which I had been trained inclined me to slow, deliberate processes of reasoning. I looked my own case over as I might that of some brother-editors whose journals were draining them of life, and whose obituaries I shall probably write if I survive

them. Reason and Conscience, now that I gave them a chance, began to take me to task severely.

"You are a blundering fool," said Reason, "and the man in the composing-room is right. You are chafing over petty blunders while ignoring the fact that your whole present life is a blunder, and the adequate reason why your faculties are becoming untrustworthy. Each day you grow more nervously anxious to have everything correct, giving your mind to endless details, and your powers are beginning to snap like the overstrained strings of a violin. At this rate you will soon spend yourself and all there is of you."

Then Conscience, like an irate judge on the bench, arraigned me. "You are a heathen, and your paper is your car of Juggernaut. You are ceasing to be a man and becoming merely an editor—no, not even an editor—a newsmonger, one of the world's gossips. You are an Athenian only as you wish to hear and tell some new thing. Long ears are becoming the appropriate symbols of your being. You are too hurried, too eager for temporary success, too taken up with details, to form calm, philosophical opinions of the great events of your time, and thus be able to shape men's opinions. You commenced as a reporter, and are a reporter still. You pride yourself that you are not narrow, unconscious of the truth that you are spreading yourself thinly over the mere surface of affairs. You have little comprehension of the deeper forces and motives of humanity."

It is true that I might have pleaded in extenuation of these rather severe judgments that I was somewhat alone in the world, living in bachelor apartments, without the

redeeming influences of home and family life. There were none whose love gave them the right or the motive to lay a restraining hand upon me, and my associates in labor were more inclined to applaud my zeal than to curb it. Thus it had been left to the casual remark of a nameless printer and an instance of my own failing powers to break the spell that ambition and habit were weaving.

Before the half hour elapsed I felt weak and ill. The moment I relaxed the tension and will-power which I had maintained so long, strong reaction set in. Apparently I had about reached the limits of endurance. I felt as if I were growing old and feeble by minutes as one might by years. Taking my hat and coat I passed out, remarking to my assistant that he must do the best he could—that I was ill and would not return. If the Journal had never appeared again I could not then have written a line to save it, or read another proof.

Saturday morning found me feverish, unrefreshed, and more painfully conscious than ever that I was becoming little better than the presses on which the paper was printed. Depression inevitably follows weariness and exhaustion, and one could scarcely take a more gloomy view of himself than I did.

"I will escape from this city as if it were Sodom," I muttered, "and a June day in the country will reveal whether I have a soul for anything beyond the wrangle of politics and the world's gossip."

In my despondency I was inclined to be reckless, and after merely writing a brief note to my editorial chief, saying that I had broken down and was going to the country, I

started almost at random. After a few hours' riding I wearied of the cars, and left them at a small village whose name I did not care to inquire. The mountains and scenery pleased me, although the day was overcast like my mind and fortunes. Having found a quiet inn and gone through the form of a dinner, I sat down on the porch in dreary apathy.

The afternoon aspect of the village street seemed as dull and devoid of interest as my own life at that hour, and in fancy I saw myself, a broken-down man, lounging away days that would be like eternities, going through my little round like a bit of driftwood, slowly circling in an eddy of the world's great current. With lack-lustre eyes I "looked up to the hills," but no "help" came from them. The air was close, the sky leaden; even the birds would not sing. Why had I come to the country? It had no voices for me, and I resolved to return to the city. But while I waited my eyes grew heavy with the blessed power to sleep—a boon, for which I then felt that I would travel to the Ultima Thule. Leaving orders that I should not be disturbed, I went to my room, and Nature took the tired man, as if he were a weary child, into her arms.

At last I imagined that I was at the Academy of Music, and that the orchestra were tuning their instruments for the overture. A louder strain than usual caused me to start up, and I saw through the open window a robin on a maple bough, with its tuneful throat swelled to the utmost. This was the leader of my orchestra, and the whole country was alive with musicians, each one giving out his own notes without any regard for the others, but apparently the score had been written for them all, since the innumerable strains

made one divine harmony. From the full-orbed song from the maple by my window, down to the faintest chirp and twitter, there was no discord; while from the fields beyond the village the whistle of the meadow-larks was so mellowed and softened by distance as to incline one to wonder whether their notes were real or mere ideals of sound.

For a long time I was serenely content to listen to the myriad-voiced chords without thinking of the past or future. At last I found myself idly querying whether Nature did not so blend all out-of-door sounds as to make them agreeable, when suddenly a catbird broke the spell of harmony by its flat, discordant note. Instead of my wonted irritation at anything that jarred upon my nerves, I laughed as I sprang up, saying,

"That cry reminds me that I am in the body and in the same old world.

That bird is near akin to the croaking printer."

But my cynicism was now more assumed than real, and I began to wonder at myself. The change of air and scene had seemingly broken a malign influence, and sleep—that for weeks had almost forsaken me—had yielded its deep refreshment for fifteen hours. Besides, I had not sinned against my life so many years as to have destroyed the elasticity of early manhood. When I had lain down to rest I had felt myself to be a weary, broken, aged man. Had I, in my dreams, discovered the Fountain of Youth, and unconsciously bathed in it? In my rebound toward health of mind and body I seemed to have realized what the old Spaniard vainly hoped for.

I dressed in haste, eager to be out in the early June sunshine. There had been a shower in the night, and the air had a fine exhilarating quality, in contrast with the close sultriness of the previous afternoon.

Instead of nibbling at breakfast while I devoured the morning dailies, I ate a substantial meal, and only thought of papers to bless their absence, and then walked down the village street with the quick glad tread of one whose hope and zest in life have been renewed. Fragrant June roses were opening on every side, and it appeared to me that all the sin of man could not make the world offensive to heaven that morning.

I wished that some of the villagers whom I met were more in accord with Nature's mood; but in view of my own shortcomings, and still more because of my fine physical condition, I was disposed toward a large charity. And yet I could not help wondering how some that I saw could walk among their roses and still look so glum and matter-of-fact. I felt as if I could kiss every velvet petal.

"You were unjust," I charged back on Conscience; "this morning proves that I am not an ingrained newsmonger. There is still man enough left within me to revive at Nature's touch;" and I exultantly quickened my steps, until I had left the village miles away.

Before the morning was half gone I learned how much of my old vigor had ebbed, for I was growing weary early in the day. Therefore I paused before a small gray building, old and weather-stained, that seemed neither a barn, nor a dwelling, nor a school-house. A man was in the act of unlocking the door, and his garb suggested that it might be a Friends'

meeting-house. Yielding to an idle curiosity I mounted a stone wall at a point where I was shaded and partially screened by a tree, and watched and waited, beguiling the time with a branch of sweetbriar that hung over my resting-place.

Soon strong open wagons and rockaways began to appear drawn by sleek, plump horses that often, seemingly, were gayer than their drivers. Still there was nothing sour in the aspect or austere in the garb of the people. Their quiet appearance took my fancy amazingly, and the peach-like bloom on the cheeks of even well-advanced matrons suggested a serene and quiet life.

"These are the people of all others with whom I would like to worship to-day," I thought; "and I hope that that rotund old lady, whose face beams under the shadow of her deep bonnet like a harvest moon through a fleecy cloud, will feel moved to speak." I plucked a few buds from the sweetbriar bush, fastened them in my button-hole, and promptly followed the old lady into the meeting-house. Having found a vacant pew I sat down, and looked around with serene content. But I soon observed that something was amiss, for the men folk looked at each other and then at me. At last an elderly and substantial Friend, with a face so flushed and round as to suggest a Baldwin apple, arose and creaked with painful distinctness to where I was innocently infringing on one of their customs.

"If thee will follow me, friend," he said, "I'll give thee a seat with the men folks. Thee's welcome, and thee'll feel more at home to follow our ways."

His cordial grasp of my hand would have disarmed suspicion itself, and I followed him meekly. In my embarrassment and desire to show that I had no wish to appear forward, I persisted in taking a side seat next to the wall, and quite near the door; for my guide, in order to show his goodwill and to atone for what might seem rudeness, was bent on marshalling me almost up to the high seats that faced the congregation, where sat my rubicund old Friend lady, whose aspect betokened that she had just the Gospel message I needed.

I at once noted that these staid and decorous people looked straight before them in an attitude of quiet expectancy. A few little children turned on me their round, curious eyes, but no one else stared at the blundering stranger, whose modish coat, with a sprig of wild roses in its buttonhole, made him rather a conspicuous contrast to the other men folk, and I thought—

"Here certainly is an example of good-breeding which could scarcely be found among other Christians. If one of these Friends should appear in the most fashionable church on the Avenue, he would be well stared at, but here even the children are receiving admonitory nudges not to look at me."

I soon felt that it was not the thing to be the only one who was irreverently looking around, and my good-fortune soon supplied ample motive for looking steadily in one direction. The reader may justly think that I should have composed my mind to meditation on my many sins, but I might as well have tried to gather in my hands the reins of all the wild horses of Arabia as to curb and manage my

errant thoughts. My only chance was for some one or something to catch and hold them for me. If that old Friend lady would preach I was sure she would do me good. As it was, her face was an antidote to the influences of the world in which I dwelt, but I soon began to dream that I had found a still better remedy, for, at a fortunate angle from my position, there sat a young Quakeress whose side face arrested my attention and held it. By leaning a little against the wall as well as the back of my bench, I also, well content, could look straight before me like the others.

The fair profile was but slightly hidden by a hat that had a perceptible leaning toward the world in its character, but the brow was only made to seem a little lower, and her eyes deepened in their blue by its shadow. My sweet-briar blossoms were not more delicate in their pink shadings than was the bloom on her rounded cheek, and the white, firm chin denoted an absence of weakness and frivolity. The upper lip, from where I sat, seemed one half of Cupid's bow. I could but barely catch a glimpse of a ripple of hair that, perhaps, had not been smoothed with sufficient pains, and thus seemed in league with the slightly worldly bonnet. In brief, to my kindled fancy, her youth and loveliness appeared the exquisite human embodiment of the June morning, with its alternations of sunshine and shadow, its roses and their fragrance, of its abounding yet untarnished and beautiful life.

No one in the meeting seemed moved save myself, but I felt as if I could become a poet, a painter, and even a lover, under the inspiration of that perfect profile.

## **CHAPTER II**

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### **A JUNE DAY-DREAM**

Moment after moment passed, but we all sat silent and motionless. Through the open windows came a low, sweet monotone of the wind from the shadowing maples, sometimes swelling into a great depth of sound, and again dying to a whisper, and the effect seemed finer than that of the most skilfully touched organ. Occasionally an irascible humble-bee would dart in, and, after a moment of motionless poise, would dart out again, as if in angry disdain of the quiet people. In its irate hum and sudden dartings I saw my own irritable fuming and nervous activity, and I blessed the Friends and their silent meeting. I blessed the fair June face, that was as far removed from the seething turmoil of my world as the rosebuds under her home-windows.

Surely I had drifted out of the storm into the very haven of rest and peace, and yet one might justly dread lest the beauty which bound my eyes every moment in a stronger fascination should evoke an unrest from which there might be no haven. Young men, however, rarely shrink from such perils, and I was no more prudent than my fellows. Indeed, I was inclining toward the fancy that this June day was the

day of destiny with me; and if such a creature were the remedy for my misshapen life it would be bliss to take it.

In our sweet silence, broken only by the voice of the wind, the twitter of birds beguiling perhaps with pretty nonsense the hours that would otherwise seem long to their brooding mates on the nests, and the hum of insects, my fancy began to create a future for the fair stranger—a future, rest assured, that did not leave the dreamer a calm and disinterested observer.

"This day," I said mentally, "proves that there is a kindly and superintending Providence, and men are often led, like children in the dark, to just the thing they want. The wisdom of Solomon could not have led me to a place more suited to my taste and need than have my blind, aimless steps; and before me are possibilities which suggest the vista through which Eve was led to Adam."

My constant contact with men who were keen, self-seeking, and often unscrupulous, inclined me toward cynicism and suspicion. My editorial life made me an Arab in a sense, for if there were occasion, my hand might be against any man, if not every man. I certainly received many merciless blows, and I was learning to return them with increasing zest. My column in the paper was often a tilting-ground, and whether or no I inflicted wounds that amounted to much, I received some that long rankled. A home such as yonder woman might make would be a better solace than newspaper files. Such lips as these might easily draw the poison from any wound the world could make. Wintry firelight would be more genial than even June sunlight, if her eyes would reflect in into mine. With such

companionship, all the Gradgrinds in existence would prose in vain; life would never lose its ideality, nor the world become a mere combination of things. Her woman's fancy would embroider my man's reason and make it beautiful, while not taking from its strength. Idiot that I was, in imagining that I alone could achieve success! Inevitably I could make but a half success, since the finer feminine element would be wanting. Do I wish men only to read our paper? Am I a Turk, holding the doctrine that women have no souls, no minds? The shade of my mother forbid! Then how was I, a man, to interpret the world to women? Truly, I had been an owl of the night, and blind to the honest light of truth when I yielded to the counsel of ambition, that I had no time for courtship and marriage. In my stupid haste I would try to grope my way through subjects beyond a man's ken, rather than seek some such guide as yonder maiden, whose intuitions would be unerring when the light of reason failed. In theory, I held the doctrine that there was sex in mind as truly as in the material form. Now I was inclined to act as if my doctrine were true, and to seek to double my power by winning the supplemental strength and grace of a woman's soul.

Indeed, my day-dream was becoming exceedingly thrifty in its character, and I assured ambition that the companionship of such a woman as yonder maiden must be might become the very corner-stone of success.

Time passed, and still no one was "moved." Was my presence the cause of the spiritual paralysis? I think not, for I was becoming conscious of reverent feeling and deeper motives. If the fair face was my Gospel message, it was

already leading me beyond the thoughts of success and ambition, of mental power and artistic grace. Her womanly beauty began to awaken my moral nature, and her pure face, that looked as free from guile as any daisy with its eye turned to the sun, led me to ask, "What right have you to approach such a creature? Think of her needs, of her being first, and not your own. Would you drag her into the turmoil of your world because she would be a solace? Would you disturb the maidenly serenity of that brow with knowledge of evil and misery, the nightly record of which you have collated so long that you are callous? You, whose business it is to look behind the scenes of life, will you disenchant her also? It is your duty to unmask hypocrisy, and to drag hidden evil to light, but will you teach her to suspect and distrust? Should you not yourself become a better, truer, purer man before you look into the clear depths of her blue eyes? Beware, lest thoughtlessly or selfishly you sully their limpid truth."

"If she could be God's evangel to me, I might indeed be a better man,"

I murmured.

"That is ever the way," suggested Conscience; "there is always an 'if' in the path of duty; and you make your change for the better depend on the remote possibility that yonder maiden will ever look on you as other than a casual stranger that caused a slight disturbance in the wonted placidity of their meeting hour."

"Hush," I answered Conscience, imperiously; "since the old Friend lady will not preach, I shall endure none of your homilies. I yield myself to the influences of this day, and

during this hour no curb shall be put on fancy. In my soul I know that I would be a better man if she is what she seems, and could be to me all that I have dreamed; and were I tenfold worse than I am, she would be the better for making me better. Did not Divine purity come the closest to sinful humanity? I shall approach this maiden in fancy, and may seek her in reality, but it shall be with a respect so sincere and an homage so true as to rob my thoughts and quest of bold irreverence or of mere selfishness. Suppose I am seeking my own good, my own salvation it may be, I am not seeking to wrong her. Are not heaven's best gifts best won by giving all for them? I would lay my manhood at her feet. I do not expect to earn her or buy her, giving a quid pro quo. A woman's love is like the grace of heaven—a royal gift; and the spirit of the suitor is more regarded than his desert. Moreover, I do not propose to soil her life with the evil world that I must daily brush against, but through her influence to do a little toward purifying that world. Since this is but a dream, I shall dream it out to suit me.

"That stalwart and elderly Friend who led me to this choice point of observation is her father. The plump and motherly matron on the high seat, whose face alone is a remedy for care and worry, is her mother. They will invite me home with them when meeting is over. Already I see the tree-embowered farmhouse, with its low, wide veranda, and old-fashioned roses climbing the lattice-work. In such a fragrant nook, or perhaps in the orchard back of the house, I shall explore the wonderland of this maiden's mind and heart. Beyond the innate reserve of an unsophisticated womanly nature there will be little reticence, and her

thoughts will flow with the clearness and unpremeditation of the brook that I crossed on my way here. What a change they will be from the world's blotted page that I have read too exclusively of late!

"Perhaps it will appear to her that I have become smirched by these pages, and that my character has the aspect of a printer at the close of his day's tasks.

"This source of fear, however, is also a source of hope. If she has the quickness of intuition to discover that I know the world too well, she will also discern the truth that I would gladly escape from that which might eventually destroy my better nature, and that hers could be the hand which might rescue my manhood. To the degree that she is a genuine woman there will be fascination in the power of making a man more manly and worthy of respect. Especially will this be true if I have the supreme good-fortune not to offend her woman's fancy, and to excite her sympathy; without awakening contempt.

"But I imagine I am giving her credit for more maturity of thought and discernment than her years permit. She must be young, and her experiences would give her no means of understanding my life. She will look at me with the frank, unsuspecting gaze of a child. She will exercise toward me that blessed phase of charity which thinketh no evil because ignorant of evil.

"Moreover, while I am familiar with the sin of the world, and have contributed my share toward it, I am not in love with it; and I can well believe that such a love as she might inspire would cause me to detest it. If for her sake and other good motives, I should resolutely and voluntarily; turn my

back on evil, would I not have the right to walk at the side of one who, by the goodhap of her life, knows no evil? At any rate, I am not sufficiently magnanimous to forego the opportunity should it occur. Therefore, among the lengthening shadows of this June day I shall woo with my utmost skill one who may be able to banish the deeper shadows that are gathering around my life; and if I fail I shall carry the truth of her spring-time beauty and girlish innocence back to the city, and their memory will daily warn me to beware lest I lose the power to love and appreciate that which is her pre-eminent charm.

"But enough of that phase of the question. There need be no failure in my dream, however probable failure may be in reality. Let me imagine that in her lovely face I may detect the slight curiosity inspired by a stranger passing into interest. She will be shy and reserved at first; but as the delicious sense of being understood and admired gains mastery, her thoughts will gradually reveal her heart like the opening petals of a rose, and I can reverently gaze upon the rich treasures of which she is the unconscious possessor, and which I may win without impoverishing her.

"Her ready laugh, clear and mellow as the robin's song that woke me this morning, will be the index of an unfailing spring of mirthfulness—of that breezy, piquant, laughing philosophy which gives to some women an indescribable charm, enabling them to render gloom and despondency rare inmates of the home over which they preside. When I recall what dark depths of perplexity and trouble my mother often hid with her light laugh, I remember that I have never yet had a chance even to approach her in heroism. In my

dream, at least, I can give to my wife my mother's laugh and courage; and surely Nature, who has endowed yonder maiden with so much beauty, has also bestowed every suitable accompaniment. Wherefore I shall discover in her eyes treasures of sunshine that shall light my home on stormy days and winter nights.

"As I vary our theme of talk from bright to sad experiences, I shall catch a glimpse of that without which the world would become a desert—woman's sympathy. Possibly I may venture to suggest my own need, and emphasize it by a reference to Holy Writ. That would be appropriate in a Sunday wooing. Surely she would admit that if Adam could not endure being alone in Eden, a like fate would be far more deserving of pity in such a wilderness as New York.

"Then, as a sequel to her sympathy, I may witness the awakening of that noble characteristic of woman—self-sacrifice—the generous impulse to give happiness, even though at cost to self.

"As the winged hours pass, and our glances, our words, our intuitions, and the subtle laws of magnetism that are so powerful, and yet so utterly beyond the ken of reason, reveal us to each other, I detect in the depths of her blue eyes a light which vanishes when I seek it, but returns again—a principle which she does not even recognize, much less understand, and yet which she already unconsciously obeys. Her looks are less frank and open, her manner grows deliciously shy, she hesitates and chooses her words, but is not so happy in their choice as when she spoke without premeditation. Instead of the wonted bloom on her cheek

her color comes and goes. Oh, most exquisite phase of human power! I control the fountain of her life; and by an act, a word, a glance even, can cause the crimson tide to rise even to her brow, and then to ebb, leaving her sad and pale. Joy! joy! I have won that out of which can be created the best thing of earth, and the type of heaven—a home!"

At this supreme moment in my day-dream, an elderly Friend on the high seat gave his hand to another white-haired man who had, for the last hour, leaned his chin on his stout cane, and meditated under the shadow of his broad-brimmed hat, and our silent meeting was over. The possessor of the exquisite profile who had led me through a flight of romance such as I had never known before, turned and looked directly at me.

The breaking of my dream had been too sudden, and I had been caught too high up to alight again on the solid ground of reality with ease and grace. The night-editor blushed like a school-girl under her glance, at which she seemed naturally surprised. She, of course, could imagine no reason why her brief look of curiosity should cause me confusion and bring a guilty crimson to my face. I took it as a good omen, however, and said mentally, as I passed out with the others,

"My thoughts have already established a subtle influence over her, drawing her eyes and the first delicate tendril of interest toward one to whom she may cling for life."

## CHAPTER III

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### THE SHINING TIDE

As I was strenuously seeking to gain possession of my wits, so that I could avail myself of any opportunity that offered, or could be made by adroit, prompt action, the stalwart and elderly Friend, who had seemed thus far one of the ministers of my impending fate, again took my hand and said:

"I hope thee'll forgive me for asking thee to conform to our ways, and not think any rudeness was meant."

"The grasp of your hand at once taught me that you were friendly as well as a Friend," I replied.

"We should not belie our name, truly. I fear thee did not enjoy our silent meeting?"

"You are mistaken, sir. It was just the meeting which, as a weary man, I needed."

"I hope thee wasn't asleep?" he said, with a humorous twinkle in his honest blue eyes.

"You are quite mistaken again," I answered, smiling; but I should have been in a dilemma had he asked me if I had been dreaming.

"Thee's a stranger in these parts," he continued, in a manner that suggested kindness rather than curiosity.

"Possibly this is the day of my fate," I thought, "and this man the father of my ideal woman." And I decided to angle with my utmost skill for an invitation.

"You are correct," I replied, "and I much regret that I have wandered so far from my hotel, for I am not strong."

"Well, thee may have good cause to be sorry, though we do our best; but if thee's willing to put up with homely fare and homely people, thee's welcome to come home with us."

Seeing eager acquiescence in my face, he continued, without giving me time to reply, "Here, mother, thee always provides enough for one more. We'll have a stranger within our gates to-day, perhaps."

To my joy the Friend lady, with a face like a benediction, turned at his words. At the same moment a large, three-seated rockaway, with a ruddy boy as driver, drew up against the adjacent horse-block, while the fair unknown, who had stood among a bevy of young Quakeresses like a tall lily among lesser flowers, came toward us holding a little girl by the hand. The family group was drawing together according to my prophetic fancy, and my heart beat thick and fast. Truly this was the day of fate!

"Homely people" indeed! and what cared I for "fare" in the very hour of destiny!

"Mother," he said, with his humorous twinkle, "I'm bent on making amends to this stranger who seemed to have a drawing toward thy side of the house. Thee didn't give him any spiritual fare in the meeting-house, but I think thee'll do better by him at the farmhouse. When I tell thee that he is

not well and a long way from home, thee'll give him a welcome."

"Indeed," said the old lady, taking my hand in her soft, plump palm, while her face fairly beamed with kindness; "it would be poor faith that did not teach us our duty toward the stranger; and, if I mistake not, thee'll change our duty into a pleasure."

"Do not hope to entertain an angel," I said.

"That's well," the old gentleman put in; "our dinner will be rather too plain and substantial for angels' fare. I think thee'll be the better for it though."

"I am the better already for your most unexpected kindness, which I now gratefully accept as a stranger. I hope, however, that I may be able to win a more definite and personal regard;" and I handed the old gentleman my card.

"Richard Morton is thy name, then. I'll place thee beside Ruth Yocomb, my wife. Come, mother, we're keeping Friend Jones's team from the block. My name is Thomas Yocomb. No, no, take the back seat by my wife. She may preach to thee a little going home. Drive on, Reuben," he added, as he and his two daughters stepped quickly in, "and give Friend Jones a chance. This is Adah Yocomb, my daughter, and this is little Zillah. Mother thought that since the two names went together in Scripture they ought to go together out of it, and I am the last man in the world to go against the Scripture. That's Reuben Yocomb driving. Now thee knows all the family, and I hope thee don't feel as much of a stranger as thee did;" and the hearty old man turned and