The engine I am had been signaled half-speed ahead, and already a sailor with a coil of rope in hand was stationed at the forward gangway. have frequently seen river pilots make landings that were marvels of clever calculation, but I never saw any steering more accurately gauged than that by which MacLeod, here in the open sea, with the precarious swell and surge of ocean to combat, brought the yacht gliding within a bare three inches of the rolling dory's bow.

I was leaning over the rail as we came thus upon the castaway, and saw clearly enough for just a moment the huddled creature in oilskins, silent and motionless in the stern, with closed eyes and wet, dark hair matted upon his forehead. Then a sailor, dropping lightly into the boat, shut off my view for a little. There was a whir of flung line; an exchange of quick-spoken, and to me unintelligible, words between the sallor in the dory and a sailer standing beside me on the yacht's deck; and then, the line was taut and straining, and the dory, which had sheered off astern, was being brought up slowly alongside.

Now, I realized for the first time that our engines had stopped and that, mave for the roll, we were almost stationary.

They were lifting the flaherman aboard when Cameron, at length aroused by the unusual, strolled forward and joined me.

"There's your bit of wreckage," I observed, smiling.

"Poor devil!" he exclaimed, sympathetically. "He seems more dead then alive.

"He's breathing, sir," announced Brandon, the first officer, "and not much more. We'll take him below, and see what can be done for him,

He appeared to be about forty years of age, a somewhat shrunken, weather-beaten creature, with face deeply lined and half hidden behind possibly a week's growth of dark beard. It is not easy to read a man with his eyes closed, but I was far from prepossecond by what of this fellow's features was on view. Ordinarily should have given him scant heed, but today was no ordinary day, and my suspicions were superactive. Even the most trivial occurrences took on significance. And this was not a trivial occurrence. Certainly it was not Fishermen blown to sea in storms and overcome by exposure, and theret were common enough, perhaps, but within the past week there had been no storm; the weather had been as mild as that of June, with an August day or two thrown in. How was it possible, then, for this bit of flotsam to have come where it was and in the condition it

reasoning, but to Captain MacLeod I put the question without hesitation. "It does seem a bit odd, Mr. Clyde," be returned, judicially, "but you see

his mast and sail had gone by the board and his oars, too. It looks to me, sir, as if he'd been run down, maybe, and nigh swamped. Of course we can't tell till he gets his senses and lets us know."

Though this put the matter in new light, it did not by any means relieve my anxiety; and I asked Mac-Leod to have a sharp watch kept on the fellow, adding that I would come to him later for anything he might learn. I took care, too, to caution him to make no mention of the affair in the presence of Cameron.

It was not until after dinner that evening that I found opportunity again to question the captain. I came upon him in his stateroom, a comfortably commodious cabin, far forward on the apper deck. On his table was spread a chart, over which he was bending when I entered. A briarwood was gripped firmly between his teeth and the grateful odor of clean pipe smoke greeted me as I entered.

informed me, turning about in his swivel chair, "and I'm just trying to check up some of his statements by means of this chart here, and our

weather record." "And how do they check so far?"

asked, a little dubiously. "Quite to a dot, sir," was his an "There's no breakdown anywhere, so far. According to his story, he sailed out of Gloucester harbor on Monday morning. His name's Peter Johnson, and he lives in East Gloucesser. He says the wind was strong from but I know it seemed so to me. the westward, and he made the banks all right without mishap. But about soon, the wind died, and a thick fog same in from the northeast, chill and sopping, sir. He kept moving about, and finally in the thick of it lost his bearings. It had clouded over and after a little it began to rain. He made a try for Gloucester harbor, but must have sailed southeast instead of corthwest. Then the night came own, and the fog was like a dozen lankets, he says. His food was gone most of his water, but he said seen worse than that many s f just prayed for the fog to

And the next thing that happened was what I suspected, sir. He heard a steamer's whistle. He had his sheet out and was running before the wind, and that steamer coming upon him out of the fog, caught his boom, ripped out his mast and nearly capsized his dory. When she righted, the steamer's lights were fading into the fog again, his boat was half full of water and his oars were washed away. Well, sir, to make a long story short, he must have caught a current that carrfed him well out beyond Cape Cod. and then slewed him around the southermost end of Nantucket island. I questioned him about lights and fog signals, and making due allowance for his condition, his yarn works out pretty straight. He'd been drifting about for three days when we picked him up and was half dead of thirst and hunger. But he's come around better

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And then I interrupted him. "Three days without water?" I ques-

than might be expected, and-"

"And without food. Yes, sir," "When did he tell you this story?"

"About six o'clock, sir." "Could a starving man recover that quickly?"

"The average healthy man can go ten days without food or drink."

"He might, sir," MacLeod answered

"What have you done with him?" "He's in the seaman's quarters, for-'ard, sir."

"See that he's kept there, Mr. Mac-Leod," I told him. "I'd feel better if you put a watch on him tonight. Tomorrow we'll run in to Gloucester and look up his people and friends."

"Very good, sir."

"Thank you." I thought of having a look at Peter Johnson, myself, for I was somewhat curious to study that face again when it was sentient, and had eyes open, but on second thought I decided to wait until morning. It seemed silly to suspect this seemingly honest but unfortunate fisherman.

We had not been speeding so well during the afternoon; there was some trouble reported from the engine room, and it was a question whether we had made over fffteen knots an hour since two o'clock. I know that at ten o'clock that night, when the moon went down, we were somewhere east of Nantucket, and directly in the path of the transatlantic liners.

The night was balmy as a night in springtime, and Cameron and I in light overcoats sat on the after-deck. watching the moon slide slowly below the dark horizon line. Our chairs were close together, facing the lee rail; his the farther astern. We talked of many things, I remember. He was always interested in my work, and especially in my ambitions to make The Week a power for national good; and, To Cameron I gave no hint of my I remember that we discussed several projects I then had in mind for bringing about reform in high places. But the subject which then interested me most, and regarding which I still experienced a vague, unreasoning uneasiness, he had avoided throughout the day and evening, with what seemed to me studied intent

> The sudden cessation of hostilities on the part of those whom he had been given every reason to look upon as his implacable enemies, was certainly strange enough to have invited endless debate; and I marveled that, after having accepted my falsehood as truth, he had not chosen to go over with me the whole marvelously perplexing business.

His mind, I knew, was relieved by what I had made him believe, or he would not now be the man he was: but despite that, it appeared to me, it would be most natural for him, on this day of all days—the twenty-first of the month—to question, at least, my previously emphatically stated

conclusions. There had been a moment of silence between us, and these reflections were dominant with me, as six bells, ring-"He's come around, Mr. Clyde," he ing out musically, announced that midnight was but an hour distant. At that instant, while in time to the bell's strokes, there echoed in my brain the words: "Know then, that before the morning of the eighth day hence-" Cameron, lowering his cigar, turned to me with:

"Clyde, I wonder if you have for-

gotten what day this is!" I don't know why, coming at just that particular functure, the question should be more upsetting than if it had come at some other time of day,

For a little space my tongue refused its office. There was a lump in my throat which demanded to be swallowed, and I made a pretence of coughing to hide my plight. At length answered, a bit lamely:

"No, I haven't forgotten. Wednesday, the twenty-first of Octo-

He returned his cigar to his lips and smoked in silence for a full minute. Then, he said, quietly: "It's seven days since that empty

envelope came." "Yes," I returned. There was another slight pause and

"I have been thinking that possibly you were wrong about the significance of that empty envelope. Possibly enigmatical persons intended that absence of a definite threat to imply the inconceivably terrible."

Now that he had started to talk about it, I wished that he had continued his silence. I could not understand how I had convinced him before, knowing all the while that I was without truth to support me. Certainly, now, pervaded as I was with that grim disquietude, it would be even more difficult to carry conviction with my words.

"Whatever they intended," I ventured, yielding a fraction of a point, "it seems to me that they'll have some difficulty in carrying it out. There are no portraits here to mutilate and no mirrors to smash. For the previous performances there must be some more or less simple explanation. Neither you nor I believe in the supernatural; therefore the things that happened at Cragholt were brought about by natural means, seemingly inexplicable as they were. Now no natural means can be brought to bear to perform any such legerdemain on this yacht. You know that. There's not a man here, except that poor old fisherman, that we don't know all and everything about. So, I say, no matter what they planned; this time they are outwitted." And even as I said it, I saw clearly before my vision these words: "Bay not Heaven is high above! Heaven ascends and descends about our deeds, daily inspecting us wheresoever we are."

"Then you agree with me? You think something may have

"I wouldn't pretend to interpret their symbolism," I answered evasively. "The empty envelope impressed me as synonymous with saying, 'Nothing more at present!' Even now I think that if they had meant to continue they would have said so. I'm almost sure they would."

I was quite sure, of course, but dared not say so.

Cameron smoked on quietly for a while in a ruminative mood. Eventually he threw the end of his cigar over the rail, and leaned forward. "I don't know," he said perplexedly,

"I don't know." This I hoped was to be the end of the matter, for tonight at least; but presently he began to talk of those first two letters, to conjecture, to wonder, to dissect phrases, to dig out subtleties of meaning from euphemistic expressions. And then I knew that he had every word memorized, just as I had.

Seven bells had struck and we were still talking. But now and then there were pauses in our converse-intervals of silence of varying length-during which I sat with my gaze stretching out over the black waters and my hearing strained for any unusual sound. More than once during the evening I thought I had detected far off the pounding note of a motor boat's exhaust, but had put the notion aside as too improbable for entertainment. Now, faintly, I seemed to hear it again; not so distant, but muffled.

I got up and stood close to the rail. and listened with ear bent. Then I determined to go to my cabin for a night glass which I had included among my traps. But at that moment the sound, which I had made sure of, ceased, and I stood a second or two longer, expecting it to resume.

Altogether it was not over a minute or two that I stood there. It seemed much less than that. Then I turned with a question for Cameron. I wondered whether he had heard the sound

"I say, Cam-" I began, and stopped, startled, with his name half uttered. ilis chair was empty. He was not on deck. I ran to the saloon. He was not there. I flung open the door of his stateroom. He was not there, elther. I had the yacht searched for him. He was not on the yacht.

CHAPTER IX.

A Craft Without Lights.

Composure is second nature with me. I claim no credit for it; it is a matter of temperament rather than cultivation. But now my temperament was all awry, and my composure fled me. I was excited. More than that, was frantic, distracted, rattled, wanted to do a dozen things at once to get answers to a score of questions in a single moment. And the consequence may be imagined. For five-ten minutes, nothing was done whatever. Then the search-light was got into play, sweeping the waters on all sides, far and near; but with paltry result. Five or six miles astern we made out a power boat, similar to that which I had seen through the glass earlier in the day. To the eastward a steamer with two funnels was just coming into range. The white sails of a coasting schooner showed to westward. Trailing in our wake was our squalid salvage, the dory of the fisherman.

MacLeod, trained to coolness, retained his wits. Systematically he set to work. Likely and unlikely places aboard the yacht were looked into. Before I knew what he was about, we were going back over the way we had come with the searchlight swinging in a circle and a halfdozen sharp-eyed seamen scanning

every square foot of rolling wave. "I can't understand it," I kept re- have been spirited off this yacht if I'd peating aloud, with senseless iteration.

"I can't understand it." I was standing alone, well forward, leaning over the rail. Presently Mac-Leod laid a hand on my shoulder.

"We can't do anything more than we are doing, Mr. Clyde," he said in his matter-of-fact way. "For my part, I can't understand it, either; but since Mr. Cameron's not aboard, there's only one conclusion, and that is that

he's overboard. and since there was no one interested in throwing him there, then it seems very clear that he must have jumped."

"Jumped!" I cried, in irritation. 'My God, man! Don't I tell you that I was not three feet away from him, and only for a minute or two? How could he have jumped without my hearing him? How could he even have got out of his chair, without my hearing him?"

The captain shrugged his shoulders. "There's no other explanation," he decided, conclusively.

"You mean he committed suicide?" "Call it what you like, sir."

"But there was no reason for him to do such a thing," I objected. "I understand he's been pretty ill,

"He was ill, yes. But he was on the road to recovery." And then, with the realization that I was speaking of Cameron in the past tense, as though it were already settled that I should never see him alive again, a shiver of horror swept over me. I know Mac-Leod observed it, for he said:

"There's been a drop in the temperature, in the last half-hour. It'll be more comfortable in my cabin, sir, if you don't mind coming in, and talking the thing over a bit."

"Good Heavens, MacLeod," I exclaimed, turning on him with nervous savagery, "do you expect me to sit down and talk calmly at such a moment? I can't. It's all I can do to stand still here, for a minute at a time. I feel I must do something. It's torture to have one's hands tied this way."

"I think I know how you feel, sir. But walking the deck will do no good, and if you could calm yourself enough to talk it over quietly, we might get down to something that would guide us, so to speak."

"Guide us?" I repeated.

"Yes, sir. It's not impossible, you know, sir, that when he went over board he was picked up."

The light from his cabin porthole illuminated us both, and now as he looked at me he must have seen my perplexity.

"You said yourself, sir," he explained, "that you thought you heard the exhaust of some sort o' craft not far away."

It was this reminder, I think, which brought back my wool-gathering wits and steadled me to a perception of the real importance of the captain's plea. Of one thing, at least, I was assured Cameron was not a suicide. How he could have gone over the taffrail without my seeing or hearing him, I should never be able to understand. But gone he was, and it lay upon me to discover by whose assistance this marvelous disappearance was accomplished. And so it came about that, controlling my futfle unrest, I was presently seated in MacLeod's swivel chair, while he, from a place on the side of his berth, fired pointed questions at me, which I either answered as best I could or returned in kind.

"Now maybe it's none of my business, Mr. Clyde, but in view of tonight's occurrence I think it's pertinent to know why there was such a thorough inspection of the Sibylla before we sailed, and such a lot of caution regarding the crew." That was the first of his volley, and for a moment it staggered me. I recognized, however, that this was not a time for quibbling, and as MacLeod had been for years a staunch soldier in Cameron's army of employees, I saw no harm in letting him know the truth.

"I'll tell you," I returned, frankly, "but it's not to go any further. In the past nine weeks Mr. Cameron has been receiving a series of threatening anonymous letters. The last one came a week ago today; and in it this was named as the date for the climax."

"Climax?" he repeated, questioning-"Yes. Today, the letter stated, Mr.

Cameron would disappear." The calm, phiegmatic young captain did not start. He simply narrowed his

eyes in thought. "That's odd," he said, gravely "damaed odd." And then, after a second's consideration, he asked: "Was that-but of course it was-why he took this cruise?"

"No," I told him. "That was not his reason; though it was mine."

I did not mean to be enigmatic, bu suppose I was, for MacLeod showed plainly enough that he failed to un derstand.

"You see," I went on, in elucidation, "Mr. Cameron did not know about this last threat. He was ill when the letter came, and we kept it from him It was evident to me that the captain disapproved, but he held his

"What were the previous threats?" he asked, presently.

"Nothing definite," I answered. "Simply that on certain fixed days the writers would demonstrate their power."

"And did they?" "Most marvelously." Again MacLeod was silent for a space.

"Under the circumstances, Mr Clyde, don't you think it would have been better if you'd told me about this?"

"Mr. Cameron was very anxious that no one should know." The captain compassed his right

knee with his locked hands. "All the same," he said, "he'd never a' known what was in the wind."

This statement annoyed me, and I resented it. "What could you have done?" I asked. "I was with him almost con-

tinuously." There came a strange, half-meditative, half-bold look in the man's eyes, and I was wondering what it portended, when, quite ignoring my question,

he began speaking:

misunderstanding between you and me, sir. This is too serious a business to be bungled because I am only captain of this yacht and you are the owner's friend. So, if I speak plainly, sir, you'll understand why, and not think me disrespectful."

I smiled to reassure him, still puz-

zled, and added: "Go straight ahead, captain. You

are perfectly right." "Well," he began, "I'll tell you, Mr. Clyde. Your story, as you told it to me, has some weak points in it. You say, for instance, that you were with Mr. Cameron almost continuously. Now I'm not mentioning the little while you were in here, early in the evening, but during the last quarter of an hour before you gave the alarm, you weren't with him, either."

I stared at the speaker for an in-

stant in absolute dumb amaze. "I don't know why you say that," said, at length, more hurt than angered. "I told you that from the moment I last spoke to him, seated beside him there on the after-deck, until I turned from the rail and found him gone, not more than two minutes elapsed. And that was God's

truth." "You said you were listening for what you thought sounded like a motor boat, didn't you?"

"I did." "And you were leaning over the taffrail, looking for it, weren't you?"

"I was."

"But you didn't see it?" "No, I didn't see it; and I couldn't

hear it after the first few seconds." The captain had fixed a gaze on me that seemed aimed to penetrate to my soul's fiber. After my answer he was

silent a moment. Then he said: "Where were you, Mr. Clyde, when that boat-motor, tug, or whatever she was crossed within ten feet of

the dory we are towing?" Had he struck me in the face could not have been more dumfound-

"What do you mean?" were the only words that came to me.

"I mean that the craft you have been talking about came up and went astern of us, ten or twelve minutes before you gave the alarm that Mr. Cameron had vanished under your eyes. I was on the bridge and saw it myself-just a black shape, without lights, and her exhaust muffled, just as you say. You tell me that you and Mr. Cameron had been sitting there for three hours, at least; that you heard seven bells strike; that it was not more than fifteen or twenty minutes after this that you got up and went to the rail, and that you only stood there two minutes."

"I told you all of that, and every word is the truth," I insisted, vehemently.

"And yet," he retorted accusingly, "and yet—eight bells had struck before you gave the alarm."

I had not thought of the time. my panic it had not occurred to me, of course to ascertain the hour and minute. But Captain MacLeod knew. At sea they work by clock. At eight bells the watch had changed.

"My dear fellow," I exclaimed rising, "you certainly cannot for a moment suspect me of complicity."

He stood up, too; imperturbable. "I just want those things explained,

that's all," was his reply. "And i can't explain them," I told him, candidly. "You say you saw the boat. I didn't. You say it was after midnight when I came to you. may have been. I don't know. may have been nearer twelve, when went to the rail. My impression is that it was not. I'll admit it is mysterious. The whole awful thing is mysterious."

My candor seemed to relieve him. "Well, Mr. Clyde," he said, with equal sincerity, "maybe I was out spoken, but I wanted to know what you'd say to the points that were puzzling me."

"You did perfectly right," I told him. "As you have said, there must he no secrets between us." And then, as I resumed my seat, I asked: "What about the fisherman? He hasn't evaded his guard, has he?"

MacLeod sat down again too. "He's in where I put him, now," he answered with a shade of reluctance, "but-I'm not sure; it's almost as mysterious as the other-but I could have sworn I saw him come up that for'ard hatchway and go sneaking aft while I was on the bridge."

"When was that?" I pressed, eager

"About a quarter of twelve." "What did you do?"

"Nothing, just then. I waited. And while I was waiting I saw that black. spooky craft come out of the dark, and go skimming astern of us. A little after eight bells I came down from the bridge-I stopped there for just a minute to have a word with Brandon when he came up-and then I went myself to look after Johnson and the man I'd set to watch him. The fisherman was in a bunk sound asleep, and the man swore he had been lying there snoring, for the past two hours. Who was it came up the ladder twenty minutes ago?' I asked. He looked at me as if he thought I was gone suddenly loony. Before the watch changed?" he asked. I nodded. 'Not a soul came or went,' he said, 'since I been here."

"And the boat without lights?" I questioned. "Did you inquire about her? Who else saw Her?"

"I asked the lookouts; but-well no, sir-and that's very strange to me -neither of them saw her. I gave them both a rating. If they weren't asleep I don't see how they could have missed her."

The thing was growing more and more baffling. MacLeod was the last man to be accused of imaginative fancles. He was thoroughly in earnest in what he had told me; and yet to

"You see there oughtn't to be any meither of his statements had be the smallest corroboration. For my own part I was sure that, at the time he mentioned, no vessel of any description had passed anywhere near us.

"What did you make the craft out to be?" "Well, sir, I couldn't say exactly. She was in sight only a minute, com-

ing in range of our own lights. She looked more like a tug than anything else; but she had more speed than any tug I ever saw. She hadn't the lines of a yacht."

"She wasn't a pilot boat?" "Oh, no, sir. New York pilots don't cruise this far east, and the Boston

pilots wouldn't be so far away from home either." I offered the captain a cigar, which he declined, filling his pipe in prefer-

ence. When I lighted a cigar myself, I asked: "I suppose you have some theory, MacLeod. You don't seriously think

it was suicide?" As usual he was slow to answer. After a thoughtful second, he said:

"I'd be sorry to think that, Mr. Clyde. Taking into consideration what you told me about the threat, and connecting that boat with it, it looks-" and then he paused, thoughtful again. "It's not in possibility," he went on, after a second, "that they could have plucked him off with a line. But if that fellow I saw going aft-Oh, Lord, no, sir! It's past me to see a way out. All the same, we are keeping that craft in sight, and if we can only get thirty knots out of the Sibylla again, we'll find out what she is and what her business is, before morning."

CHAPTER X.

A Woman of Intuition.

Ill tidings, always a heavy burden, never weighed more heavily on any one than on me that dismal, rainy Sunday morning, on which I stepped from the Sibylla's launch to the stone water steps of Cragholt, For two days we had searched the bays and inlets from Provincetown to Plymouth and from Siasconset to Providence; questioning at every pier and landing stage; making inquiry in every town and hamlet; but without a thimbleful of profit for our pains. As that black craft, with dimmed lights and muffled engines, had eluded our pursuit on the night of Cameron's disappearance, so for forty-eight hours succeeding she had baffled out quest. No one

knew her; no one had seen her. As for that shaken, frayed, pallid fisherman, Peter Johnson, he appeared below, rather than above, suspicion. If my knowledge of men went for anything he was too inferior both mentally and physically to be a participant in any such plot as was here involved. He seemed to me woefully weak and wasted, and with as little brains as sinew. So, with enough money for a new mast and sail, we had put him and his dory ashore at our first landing, and had forthwith

forgotten him. MacLeod had been inclined to continge the search, but I argued that any further efforts in that direction would be only a waste of time. The craft we were looking for might have come from any one of a thousand places and returned to any one of a thousand more. Some more effective, general and far-reaching steps must be taken, I held, and taken quickly. Indeed I felt now that to keep secret longer the conspiracy, as indicated in those mystic letters, would be little short of criminal. The aid of the police and the press must be invoked at once, and nothing left undone to trace

the crime to its source. Bu' my first and most operous task was to acquaint Evelyn Grayson with the facts as I knew them. How I shrank from that duty is beyond anything I can put into words. I know it would have been far easier for me to have carried her definite news of her uncle's death. What I had to tell was horrible in its stark obscurity. And yet, if I could have foreseen just what was to follow, I might have spared myself a goodly share of dis-

I imagined I knew Evelyn Grayson, before this. I thought I had sounded the profundities of her fortitude and courage on the night that I spread before her and read with her that third and last letter. But my fancy did her an injustice. She was even more of

a woman than I dreamed. Recently I chanced upon these lines by Thomas Dunn English, which must have been inspired by such a one as

So much is clear. Though little dangers they may fear, When greater perils men environ. Then women show a front of fron: And, gentle in their manner, they Do bold things in a quiet way.

Evelyn Grayson did a bold thing in a quiet way that morning. I have not yet forgotten how marble white she was, and yet how bravely she came, with springing step and lifted chin and fearless eyes. I had waited her coming in the music room, with its score of reminders of happy evenings in which he had participated. The chair he usually chose, in the corner, near the great bow window against which the east wind was now driving the rain in gusty splashes, took on a pathos which moved me to weakness. The Baudelaire lyric, spread openpaged upon the music rack of the pi ano, stirred memories scarcely less harrowing. A photograph, an ash tray, a paper knife, all commonplace objects of themselves, but so linked to him by association, became, suddenly, instruments of emotional tor-

(To be continued.)

Daily Thought. There are two elements that go to the composition of friendship tradi and tendermons.—Emerson