

GOLDEN THRONE.

[A ROMANCE BY SAMUEL P. PUTNAM.]

harp with considerable skill, and often during the quiet days and nights she sent the enchanting notes dancing over the glistening bosom of the sea. Her husband delighted in this, and he found in her all that he could worship and admire. However, she was, like him, a genuine worker; and those jets of fancy only sparkled over the surface of her being. She was thoroughly healthful, and, unconsciously to herself, was a disciple of her brilliant countryman, David Hume. She had not reasoned the thing out so keenly as this great philosopher, but at heart she had no faith in anything supernatural. I suppose that in her early days she had belonged to the Kirk, but, since her marriage and her life upon the sea, all the dogmas of the Church had dropped off, like so many "old clothes." So completely had they passed from her mind that she never thought it worth while even to refute them. She had a keen zest for life, was full of fun, enjoyed a joke; and her supreme recreation was playing chess, in which she was an adept, and could beat the sturdiest champions. She always accompanied her husband through storm or sunshine, delighted in the breath of the sea and the roar of its waves, and had been known, in cases of peril, to furl a ship right in the teeth of a hurricane.

But the oldest, the wisest, the most curious and learned man on board the ship was Dr. Mackenna. He seemed to be a century old, was tough as a knot, could endure any hardship, and was strong as a lion. He was ostensibly the surgeon of the vessel, but shipped with Captain Furgeson, because the latter was an old friend, and he himself had won a competence in larger and more varied service on board a man-of-war; and, being advanced in life, he wished to devote himself mainly to his favorite sciences and the perfecting of his inventions. On board the "Albatross," his duties were few; and he could spend much of his time in study, and the massing together of a vast variety of natural curiosities, gathered from many a shore, from the bosom of the sea and even from its depths. He was a man of original genius, a real delver into the secrets of nature; and, moreover, he was thoroughly equipped, having received a university education. He could almost talk in Latin, he was so familiar with it. His favorite poet was Lucretius. He knew him by heart. He enjoyed his lively and wonderful descriptions of the material universe. Lucretius, he declared, was the first poet who, with magic wand, had touched the world of matter, and revealed the essential glory of all its flying atoms, as they

formed and reformed like obedient armies on the plains of infinite existence, ever making some new and beautiful order. The doctor was what you might call an ideal materialist. He saw in matter the promise and potency of all life; and yet that life to him was full of wonder, and he recognized the haunting mystery of sun and sky and earth, "of what behind these things might lie and yet remain unseen." He had boundless faith in the capacity of nature of what might be done, if we fully understood its laws and could evoke all its riches. He thoroughly detested theory and metaphysics, and looked upon their study as a melancholy waste of time. It was folly to try to mount the skies, when earth needed our utmost energy. In early life, he had devoted some time to the discovery of "perpetual motion," but finally gave up the pursuit, though somewhat unwillingly; for he had a sort of lingering conviction that somehow it might be called forth from the infinite resources of nature. In fact, at heart the doctor was a poet. Behind his keen intellect was a soul of restless fire.

Paddie and the doctor were friends at once, and talked by the hour as the ship went rolling over the billows.

"No use of being sea-sick," said Paddie, "when we take things as easy as we do here. I should like to float on forever. This is a kind of dream. The motion of the ship is like an endless song."

"A ship's the place to live," said the doctor, "for there you are always on the move. Even when asleep, you are speeding away, I've got so used to this ship that it seems like a part of my body."

"Don't you ever long for shore?" "Sometimes, of course, when I wish to increase my collection. I'm continually finding something new. Strange what variety there is! Last time I was on shore at Portsmouth, where I've roamed scores of times, I found a new specimen. Come and see it."

Down they went to the doctor's collection. It was a museum indeed, and not a rock but the doctor seemed to know its history from the foundation of the world.

"See this," said he. "It has been tossed about I don't know how many hundreds of thousands of years. I believe it has been washed all over the planet. I have found many specimens in the islands of the Southern Seas, and only this one in England. How did it ever get there, all alone in the north, when its family have huddled together in the south? Rocks have a strange history, and they do strange things just like men and women."

"Nature is full of freaks," said Paddie. "With all her law and order, she is constantly doing the

unique. She is not in favor of monotony, even among flowers and rocks. I believe that every flower and every rock is a sort of species by itself. It is different from everything else, and can't be classified. Nature never does the same thing over."

"If we could get a the ultimate atoms and scrape acquaintance with them," said the doctor, "we'd find that each had a different face, and I don't know but an infinite number of faces. So there cannot be a repetition. This rock isn't what it was when I took it up."

Charlie had told the captain and his wife all about his strange troubles, and they deeply sympathized with his effort to find and capture Blanche.

"We don't go half fast enough," said Charlie.

"We are going twelve knots an hour, and have kept it up ever since we left port. At this rate, we shall catch the 'Betsy Jane' about day after tomorrow."

"If we are on the track of her. The Pacific is pretty broad, and we might slide by and not know it."

"Hardly; for ships have a certain course. If Gooch is going to Calcutta, he'll take the shortest way, and I know what that is. It's a queer game he's up to. I wonder what he's after?"

"I can't imagine," said Charlie. "I never gave him credit for being any great shakes, even of a devil. I didn't suppose him capable of a bold villany, only of something sneaky and mean. I must confess it staggers me to think that he's undertaken such a stupendous job as to kidnap a woman and carry her off to England."

"I reckon he'll be surprised when he sees you on board the 'Betsy Jane.' He'll have to heave anchor then, I guess."

"I have a good notion to throw him into the sea," said Charlie.

Occasionally, a ship fluttered into view upon the far horizon, and then disappeared. Furgeson had the knack of knowing just what the ship was, and whither it was going. He had made up his mind where the "Betsy Jane's" course lay, and he wasted no time in useless pursuit.

Finally, on the day he set, a distant sail hove in sight to the south-west. As he swept the remote horizon, he said: "That's the 'Betsy Jane.' It won't take long to overhaul her, and then we must manage to board her. If this breeze keeps up, it will be difficult, unless of his own accord the captain of the 'Betsy Jane' hauls to. However, we've caught her; and we won't let her slip, even if we have to stick to her side all the way to Calcutta."

They steadily gained upon the distant ship, and by afternoon were within a mile; and it was plainly visible that the "Betsy Jane" was spreading every sail, and meant to

keep at the top of her speed. All night long they followed her as she flew over the waves. They were within hailing distance, but the captain of the "Betsy Jane" would not answer any signals. Toward midnight, the breeze began to diminish, and both ships moved lazily along.

"I shouldn't wonder if we had a calm by morning," said Furgeson. "If we do, we are all right. We can tackle them with a boat, and they won't refuse to let us come on board."

Sure enough, when morning came the sea was almost like glass: there was hardly a ripple. The sails flapped idly; and the vessels were almost motionless, within a quarter of a mile of each other.

"Now, we've captured the booty," said Charlie. "In a few minutes, I'll have Blanche in my arms."

They hastily lowered the boat, and in a twinkling, almost, were alongside the "Betsy Jane."

"Hullo," said Furgeson.

"Hullo," said the captain of the "Betsy Jane."

"This is the 'Albatross.' I want to come aboard."

"You can do so," was the response.

Charlie and Will and Paddie eagerly climbed the side of the "Betsy Jane," and were soon upon deck.

They were greeted by the captain, an enormous man, almost seven feet high, and strong as a bull.

This was Captain Jedediah Stockdolliger, a regular Down-easter of the sturdiest type, and a thorough-going Calvinistic theologian. The five points stuck out all over his capacious person. You could see that he believed in hell-fire with his whole heart, but that he himself was one of the elect, and would play upon a harp of gold and look over the battlements of heaven, and rejoice in the torments of the damned and give glory to God. Stockdolliger thoroughly believed in God: the whole universe hinged upon the Deity. There was no possibility of getting along without him; for he made the sun and the stars also. And this god was what? Why an infinite Stockdolliger—that and nothing more. Stockdolliger worshipped himself, and when he was glorifying God he was glorifying his own burly image. However, he was simply repeating the feat that thousands of theologians have performed before him.

Now, we must understand that Stockdolliger was a thoroughly conscientious man. He was a Puritan of the Puritans. He believed in the law and the gospel. He would do what he thought right, though the heavens fell. He was no hypocrite and no rogue. He had the sternest sense of duty, as he understood it. He hadn't a particle of charity. From his stand-point, every thing was grim and awful;