

GOLDEN THRONE.

[A ROMANCE BY SAMUEL P. PUTNAM.]

Its glaring eyes were attracted by the white body, and it wheeled about as if to seize it; but the doctor skillfully hung one of his torpedoes, which exploded with mimic thunder; and the unexpected noise and tumult caused the huge animal to turn, and, like a comet with light flashing from every part of his mobile mass, he plunged into the outermost darkness. Safely, they continued their course, and with wondrous patience and strength fought their way through the enclosing waters to the "Albatross." They rose to the surface, and soon the fair body of Blanche was drawn upon deck and placed in the captian's cabin, under the care of his ready and skillful wife. Morton and the doctor immediately doffed their dripping garments, and were greeted with the cheers of the crew. They recuperated their exhausted forms with a quaff of brandy, and in a few minutes were ready to visit their patient.

She lay upon the bed, still and beautiful and white as a lily. Was the "heart of fire" within her yet, or had it vanished beyond the skill of man to summon to trembling lip and eye! Morton looked upon the marble features, he touched the cheek so cold, he kissed the mouth so calm and unresponsive. She seemed dead, utterly rigid, and chained to the everlasting silence.

"Is she dead, doctor?" he cried "I cannot see a sign of life."

For a moment, the doctor scrutinized her, as if his eyes had the power of a microscope to read the very secret of her motionless form.

"She will live," he said. "She is but asleep."

Gently, they went over and rubbed her feet and hands. For a long while there seemed no spark of heat, no flow of blood. Then, about the temples there was a little flush, and a faint mist gathered on the glass held to her lips. Then, slowly, the veins about the neck brightened; and along the arms the red tide fitfully swelled, surging to the fingertips. Then, all at once, a crimson glow spread over her face; and, with a deep sigh and a quick gasp, she opened her eyes, that flashed like lustrous stars, and, stretching forth her hands, she was clasped to the bosom of her loved.

"Saved!" he cried. "Mine now, forever and forever!"

"Yes, she said. "Where am I?"

"On board the 'Albatross,' among friends. Our plan was successful. We have taken you from the depths of the sea, and here you are in life and happiness."

"How strange it is! I thought surely I was dying as I sank down, down into an awful slumber, and I felt that my limbs were growing stiff, and my blood was like ice. What a terrible adventure! And I am really alive?"

"Yes, you are. Do you not feel this kiss? Does it not assure you of life?"

"It does, and kiss me again."

"Love is a stimulant," said the doctor; "but you must have a little medicine and good nursing. Mrs. Furgeson will take care of you for awhile. With this cordial and some nice food, you'll soon be ready to go on deck."

In an hour or two the transformation was complete. Mrs. Furgeson's dresses were altered by a little skill to fit the form of Blanche; and flushed with radiant life and happiness, she looked as if just dropped from the heavens, a child of light and love, rather than emerged from the jaws of death.

The sun sank in the cloudless west. The innumerable waves tossed against its golden orb. A slight breeze was stirring; and the "Albatross" began to spread its sails, and also the "Betsy Jane," and slowly the two ships drifted apart, and in a few hours seemed like specks to one another. It was a gorgeous night. The Southern Cross shone resplendent in the heavens, the supreme glory amid myriad stars. The sea answered to the sky with a lustrous world of its own. It seemed to be filled with shining halls that stretched far away into the remote darkness.

"Wonderful!" said Blanche, as in the beautiful night she and Charlie paced the deck, gazing upon the measureless scene. "And here I am like a queen in golden halls. I feel as if I had been snatched by fairies from darkness into light. Only a few hours ago, I was a prisoner, bound hand and foot, and now I am free!"

"How did Gooch do this? He must have schemed day and night," said Charlie.

"I understand I was in the way somehow. He had a claim upon the property. He did not dare to murder me so he married me."

"But how could he do it?"

"I cannot tell. My servant who went with me and is now on the 'Betsy Jane' was bribed. She must, under his instructions, have drugged my food or drink. I took my usual walk that morning, when I was overcome by dizziness. He followed, no doubt, and captured me, and then I was at his mercy. He rushed me through some form of a marriage, and then hurried off to sea."

"Detestable villain! But we have outwitted him."

"Yes, but what power the evil-minded man has, what resources furnished by science!"

"True, but science gives the same to those who would defeat him. See what marvellous power it put into our hands to travel through the deep sea, and under the form of death bear you to safety!"

"I sometimes tremble when I think of this prodigious power man

is acquiring. How will he use it?"

"For the good. It must be so, for his greatest triumphs have ever been won through a devotion to others. Why has he penetrated the heavens and mapped a million systems? Why has he harnessed and imprisoned the steam? Not through any selfish purpose, not for individual good, but for the universal. One could not accomplish these merely for his own welfare. He can only do it through the inspiration that comes from his selfless feeling. That is the way I look at it; and the more man knows the better he is, for in order to know he must be actuated by the highest desire."

"I see that, but," persisted Blanche, "Gooch has only been able to carry out his perfidious plans through the aid of science."

"He has used what others originated, not himself, and with low cunning. He is a sort of intellectual monstrosity, keen as a serpent and as poisonous. He is the spawn of Orthodoxy. The light of science could not make such a devilish creature. The scientific spirit is essentially generous. Gooch is the child of the old religion,—an exaggeration, I grant,—a prodigy of evil under the garb of saintliness; but he is the outcome of its real tendency. For the old religion appeals to selfishness: its motive is a crown of glory; one's own welfare in the life to come. Orthodoxy, today, is a brilliant speculation, a long look ahead for number one, and so it makes one like Gooch enormously selfish; and then, when he gets the idea that God is on his side, he is capable of committing any crime. I have no doubt that he felt justified for all that he has done as regards you. He has got himself so mixed up with the Deity, is on such familiar terms with him, that he makes him partner in every mean thing he does, and it becomes a divine mission. Christianity is responsible for this monstrous absurdity. It is a part of its system. It cannot call such a knave as Gooch an exception. He may be a distortion, but he draws his life blood from the theology of the past. Under the reign of science there can be no such saintly rogues, for it allows of nothing beyond man's reason. It will have nothing to do with inspiration, only with argument. A man cannot argue himself into crime. The moment he begins to argue, he becomes clear-headed; and then he will shrink from wrong-doing."

"You are quite too philosophical for me, though I see the truth of what you say. But Philosophy is a gray-headed gentleman, who broods over books and looks very sedate. I could never scrape acquaintance with him; but love is a young and sprightly thing, laughing and dimpling, and I like his company best."

"I do, when it comes to that.

Love settles everything, for it is the glory of everything. Would men toil so, if it were not for love? How it fills the human heart, so that it can endure everything!"

"Ah, I should have sunk, if it had not been for love singing in my heart. But it said always, 'He will come, he will save you'; and I would not yield."

"But, when I first received that cruel letter, I said I would not come. For a moment I doubted you."

"Doubt me? How could you! That was unjust, indeed!"

"I know it. But the old devil was in me yet. I thought you had discarded me. Will exorcised the the demon. He never doubted you for a moment. We owe all to him."

"He is a wise man indeed."

"I suppose I am a foolish one."

"I forgive your folly."

"I shall not be found guilty again. O trust, what a heaven it is! Without it love is like a raging sea; but with it calm and beautiful touched with softest music."

"We can trust each other now, for our suffering is the seal of fate that makes us one."

"Indeed, it is; and fate's sweet signals are thy bright eyes."

Her eyes were indeed beautiful as they looked upon her kneeling lover. Lustrous as the heavens, liquid as the sea, unfathomable they glanced with wild splendor of love.

No wonder that Morton knelt at her feet and kissed her hand. Night shone about them like a great palace. A thousand torches were burning. The sea spread like a jeweled floor. The waves flowed and melted in the intense radiance. The winds danced along with musical feet. The sails were spread, and with quickening motion the ship ploughed its sparkling way; and the two lovers brooded and dreamed and whispered and listened to the song of the sea and to the deeper song within their own hearts. They read the mystic glory of love in each other's faces. The divinest of all was theirs, the affluence of eternal joy.

O love, sublime interpreter of the universe! Without thee we are weak indeed and poor and desolate even though crowned with diamonds; but with thee the most lowly path is beautiful, all toil is gracious, the humblest home is laurelled with flowers, and its hearthstone blazing with uncounted jewels!

CHAPTER XXVII.

The good ship sped along. They were a happy company. The splendor of the sky and the music of the sea were not more full of joy than these brave adventurers.

"I should always like to do this," said Paddie. "Here we forget the cares of life."

"I wonder if it could always be so," said Charlie, "or is there a fate that forbids happiness to be more than for awhile?"

"I suppose the breakers must