

GOLDEN THRONE.

[A ROMANCE BY SAMUEL P. PUTNAM.]

It was their only salvation. Would the wind dash them against the base of the mighty mountain, or would it hurl them by?

"We can do nothing more," said the captian. "We might as well fold our arms and be spectators of the scene. The drama will move on without any more assistance from us. We are supernumeraries now."

Like an unlashd hound, the ship went bounding forward. Nearer and nearer, it came to the overhanging pinnacle. It was right over their heads.

"One more puff, and we are round that big rock. Hurrah! We've got it! That's a good squall. Here we go!"

They shot by the beetling cliff, and in the shadow of the immense mountain found a sea whose rolling breast, though heaving fearfully, still permitted the launching of a boat.

"It's an awful risk, but some of us must get ashore."

"That's my business," said Charlie.

"And mine too," said Will and Paddie.

"You attend to the boats and women."

They plunged in, and battled with the waves, which wrestled with the brave swimmers and seemed determined to break their heads or bury them in the depths. Charlie was the first to touch shore, but the others were not far behind.

"Hurrah for work! Here's a place for the ship's cable. We can hitch the 'Albatross' now and land her cargo."

The mountain, once so threatening, hung over them like a protecting angel, and kept off the gusts that thundered against its opposite side. All were safely landed, and many of the ship's stores, before the "Albatross" had sunk.

"I must bid her good-bye," said the captian: "she's been with me many a year, staunch and true; and I could almost perish with her. I shall never have a better friend."

"You shall have as good a one," said Charlie. "I'll build another 'Albatross.'"

CHAPTER XXVIII.

The storm swept by. In the morning, the world was clothed with fresh loveliness. The ocean was as placid as an infant, and smiled along the shores with sparkling beauty. The island was beautiful, spreading away with field and stream and hill and valley. The sky bent over it with glorious lustre after the baptism of the storm.

Our little party were happy, in spite of their misfortunes. They were on a lonely shore in the midst of the mighty sea. It was seldom visited by man, and they might remain for years without a chance to

escape. They saved as much as they could from the ship, which took its time about going to pieces as it swung upon the rocks. There was enough food to last them several months, and no doubt they could find many means of support on the island itself. Most of their mechanical instruments were preserved; and they had the material for rude shelters. All went to work with a will. There was no lamenting. So long as they lived, so long would they make out to enjoy themselves.

"Here, we can build the republic of Plato," said Paddie. "Here, we can have Utopia, a model society. We are released from the world and all its cares and perplexities. We have no traditions to bind us. We can live the ideal."

"Wouldn't it be a good plan to draw up a constitution?" said Charlie.

"Perhaps so, though I am not much in favor of a paper government. We can build up a state after our own fashion."

"I hate rules and regulations," said the captian; "but, whether we need them or not, they may invest our society with a little more dignity."

"Let us women try it for once. We have had no chance yet," said the captian's wife. "There are only two of us, and we shan't quarrel. It won't be long, if you men manage matters, before one half will have to study law to keep the other half in order." "I second the motion," said Blanche. "I don't propose to submit any longer. We start new now, and I begin by snapping my fingers in the face of the divine right of man."

"Do it, and I'll stand by you. You shall have your own way," said Charlie. "You shall vote as early and as often as you wish."

"On both sides too, if I like," said Blanche.

"So much the better. I shall have a chance then," said Will.

"We will call a meeting at an early candlelight," said Paddie. "We haven't any meeting-house yet nor candles, but yonder grove will make a good temple. Now for supper."

The meal was soon over, and the evening light flashing with gold spread through the beautiful forest and glittered afar out upon the tossing sea. Beneath the verdant canopy, the jolly company gathered to see what might be done toward the formation of a model republic.

"I have taken the liberty," said Paddie, "to draw up a few resolutions as a starting point for our portentous undertaking. We now occupy a remarkable position in history. Let us be worthy of it. We are undisturbed by any of the precedents of the mistaken past. With boundless hope, we look forth into the future. We have the stored wisdom of the ages for our

guide, besides our own untrammelled reason. We wish to build a state that shall be a joy to those who come after us, that shall be a monument of human ingenuity. In the first place let it be distinctly understood that we will have no church with state. The church is an individual matter; and all can suit themselves, they can have whatever style they wish. They can worship or not worship, according to the dictates of their own conscience. We want something simply for human convenience, by which we can live happily together and obtain the most from mutual endeavor. Is not this the mind of all?"

There was a universal assent.

"This point then is settled. Now for business! I have omitted the ten commandments. They have done their work, and we do not need them. I shall lay down as the fundamental principle of our new commonwealth the eleventh commandment, which is the sum and substance of them all, so far as they are true; namely, resolved first and last, always and afterwards, everybody shall mind his own business."

There was a unanimous murmur of approval to this proposition.

"You've hit it!" said the doctor. "That's the wisdom of ages. It's an improvement upon every form of society so far. I heartily vote for that resolution. Heretofore, society seemed to exist for the express purpose of meddling with everybody's affairs. I am glad to hear somebody say, Hands off! In fact, I think that is all the constitution we need; and we might as well adjourn and live up to that, and we shall be happy."

"That is all the constitution I propose," said Paddie. "I have only a couple of bylaws; and, if they are accepted, our model republic is complete."

"Out with them, but I am afraid you will spoil the dish."

"I guess not," said Paddie. "This is number one: Resolved, That, if one does not mind his own business, we will persuade him to."

"That's good," said the doctor: "it passes unanimously."

Paddie continued: "Resolved, That, if one will not be persuaded, we will let him severely alone."

"Boycott him. Well, I agree to that," said the doctor, and so said the rest.

"Resolved, That, if one persist in meddling with the business of another, his ears shall be gently cuffed."

"That's where we differ," said the doctor: "that's going too far. It is an appeal to brute force. In order to enforce it, we must have a congress, and a court, a president, and standing army, and the police. I'm opposed to the bayonet. Trust in persuasion."

"Suppose you can't persuade, and one violently intrudes"

"That may be settled, when the time comes. But I am opposed to any declaration of war until necessary."

"I think the doctor is a little off," said the captian. "I am in favor of cuffing the ears, as a last resort. At any rate, it is a good thing for people to know that we can cuff their ears, if they deserve it."

"Yes, and so appeal to their brute nature," said the doctor. "It isn't right. We might as well go back to old barbarism, and hang, and draw, and quarter. We'll have the old tyranny, the order built on fear."

"But, if we do not reserve the right to reprimand, then we cannot rule at all," said the captian. "Why insist beforehand that man is going to be bad, and so provide for his wrong-doing? We have nothing to fear. The genius of man is always sufficient to deal with evil, when it comes. Be as kind as nature: she attaches no penalty until wronged. Both knowledge and happiness make for order: order without liberty is a curse. We are constantly in prison, in every state today where every man is treated as a thief and every woman as a beast."

"I think the doctor is right," said Paddie. "I don't believe in any rules and regulations founded on cuffing. The true state must be founded upon persuasion, and nothing else. If that is anarchy, then anarchy let it be. I'll try it," said the captian. "I've never had to lick anybody yet, though somehow or other I've always hated to give up the right to. Maybe that's a superstition too. I shouldn't wonder if the state was just as absurd as the church."

"You've a twinkling of sense," said the doctor. "For my part, I stand outside of both. They will pass away. They belong to barbarism."

"I'll put it to a vote as to whether we shall have any ear-cuffing," said Paddie.

"It's too bad," said Blanche. "We've had our ears cuffed so long, and now you won't let us cuff back. But never mind: I can well afford to vote for the persuasion, and give my tongue a better chance."

"True again," said Charlie. "In the long run, it's the mightiest of sceptres."

"What a chance we'll have in the future!" said Blanche. "When the tongue rules, men will have to subside."

Paddie put the ear-cuffing question to a vote, and it was discarded by a large majority.

"I don't see the use of any constitution now," said the captian. "If we can't enforce it, we might as well put it on the shelf. If we must only appeal to a man's good sense, what's the use of any written authority?"

"You are right," said Paddie.