



"Then the boat lunched, the man went on, hubbly, 'an' it followed the current past the island, and I see him struggle up an' heard him callin': 'Oh, father! I done my best! I tried to bring ye back! Mebbe some ship'll save ye, an' if ye ever reach home an' I never come, tell mother I died innocent—I died innocent!' Then I couldn't hear him no more, an' I watched the boat go further an' further, an' I see another island way off to the west, but just afore he reached it this boat struck something—a bar, I guess—an' sank, an' I fell forred an' didn't know no more, only a sort of dreamy movement of sights and faces, till Eric laid me down there on the sand an' your callin' roused me to life again."

His voice failed, and they sat a long time weeping together in silence; and all that might ever have been said of praise or blame, of sorrow and love, of regret and new resolve, was spoken in that sound of falling tears.

The next day was a Sabbath and all was quiet in Redwood town. The saws rested from their snoring hum, the millmen, clad in frosh clothing, sat on the doorsteps of the cottages smoking their pipes and looking idly out at the blue fields of the sea, or down among the fragrant stacks of lumber sat whittling and talking. Some, when the little cracked bell in the steeple of the church upon the shady hillside called them, had gone with the children to hear what love could do in saving men—even the love of a wronged and crippled boy. Surely all their hearts were better for having heard from the minister's lips the story of Paul Armor's victory, though they knew it well before.

Over on the head the day broke beautifully, yet with little cheer, for sorrow and heavy poverty were there. The children felt it, and the mother went sadly to and fro, longing for her lame, lost boy. Near noon she stood in the doorway looking out to sea. A big yacht, with all its white sails spread, blew into the little harbor, but she did not see it, for her eyes were wet. She was thinking of that island, somewhere to the west of the blue horizon line, upon whose cruel bar her boy went down. She thought of him as he used to lie upon her breast when a child, and again she seemed to see him, as she had so many times, coming up the path to the door where she stood, his straw hat in his hand, his light curls blown about his frank blue eyes. And yet when she turned from these fancies there was something sweet at the bottom of her heart. She could not tell whence it came. Was it because the sky was so beautiful with its flecks of snowy clouds, the sea so blue, the air so crystal clear, the sunshine so pretty on the tree-tops? She saw, too, that the children seemed happier than for many days, and when she went into the sick man's room he met her with a smile.

Presently footsteps came to the door, and Eric and his comrades, with their sweethearts, entered. Behind them were others bearing bags and baskets, and the children leaped with joy. Armor arose and came out. His step was slow but steady and his face was clear. The children, with Gale among them, shouted and danced with glee to see him grown so strong, and the big man's eyes were filled with blessed tears as he looked around upon the faces of his friends.

The shadow seemed lifted; even the mother smiled; something strange and sweet was in the air.

Suddenly there rose the noise of many voices near the hut, cheering and singing in the sunshine. Eric sprang up, and all stood still and harkened. The singing and the voices came nearer. A great light came into the mother's eyes. She held her hand hard against her leaping heart and listened. Suddenly Eric leaped out the door with an answering shout. They all followed him, and along the top of the green bluff a crowd poured into view, and there, borne upon the shoulders of the cheering men, sat Paul Armor!

He was pale and weak, and his poor hands, swathed in white bandages, hung over the men's shoulders, but his face was almost like a star. Ah, there was his old mother with her face creased in light and tearful smiles, and his father, looking as if Heaven had opened. In a moment they had come together, and there was kissing and

cries and handshaking and happy laughter. Then Eric noticed that little Gale was crying for happiness in the arms of a lady he had not seen before, and as soon as Paul could get his breath he cried:

"Mother! Father! this is the little thing's mammy! She was on the steamer that took me off the island where I was washed ashore after the boat sunk! She took care of me till we reached San Francisco, an' I brought her here! She had my kness frowd in the city an', oh, mother! I ain't lame any more!"

Then the handshaking and cries of surprise and gladness were renewed, and the millmen and wharfmen swung their hats again and gave three mighty cheers for "The Hero of Beaver Head," and went back to the town.

Trave Armor is an old man now, but since that day he has never tasted rum. Paul is a merchant in San Francisco.



BORNE UPON THE SHOULDERS OF THE CHEERING MEN, SAT PAUL ARMOR.

Sitting one day upon his porch and looking out upon the sunlit bay, he told me in part what I have told you here. Two pretty children were playing down below us in the grass, and a happy face was bending over a cradle just inside the door.

"And what became of the bit of a Norwegian girl?" I asked.

"Oh, I forgot," he answered with a smile, "she who once was little Gale is Mrs. Paul Armor now!"

[THE END.]

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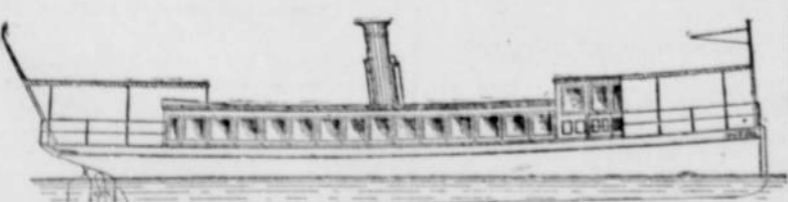
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"I tried different doctors and many proprietary remedies, but no permanent benefit was obtained.

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