A WOOING BY PROXY EY could not speak a word to each other, for she was English and he was German, and neither knew the language of the other. They had no friends in common unicss one could call Ned Brook a friend. Ned Brook was acquainted with Mrs. Cheshire, Dora Cheshire's aunt

and guardian, and of course with Dora. He had introduced himself to Theo Edelstein by a piece of friendly good nature. He was sorry for the poor young beggar whose tongue was tied, the disadvantage of the silence being increased by the state of his health, which the Englishman would have described as "fishy" in the

Brook found Edelstein an enger, impressionable, impulsive young fellow, bound for the Cape, from which he was to go up country and start as a farmer.

The idea of that scarecrow maneuvering with a wagon and a span of oxen, exploiting Kaffir labor, building a log house, and settling down to sow and reap, to rear herds of cattle and flocks of sheep, when in six months or less all he would require of mother earth would be summed up in a

But as for strenuousness, the word hardly expressed the energy and determination which dwelt in the long bag of bones. Brook could not have believed that so much will power could survive in so shattered and enfeebled a frame

But the great bond of union between the two young men and the girl was that they were to be fellow passengers for a time in the Pair Winds. Dora and her aunt with Ned Brook were going on a holiday trip to the Canary islands, and Edelstein was on his way to the Cape.

"If the unfortunate chap does not kick the bucket before he sees the shore again," said Brook lightly, in discussing the alling passenger with the ladies during his last call at their hotel, "I shall be astonished."

he won't die before we reach the Canaries. I think he ought not to be allowed to come into the saloon. I will speak to the captain the first thing. We will hold this miserable Mr. Edelstein at arm's length."

But her aunt's careful arrangement was exactly that which Dora did not choose to follow. She contrived to slip away from her relative and to seat herself with an air of perfect innocence between Brook and Edelstein. Once scated she said it was "very nice" where she was and declined to be dislodged.

"I don't mind," Dora told herself, "though Aunt Cheshire and people in general count me forward and insubor-dinate—and pretend that I have iald myself out to engross the attention of a couple of young men-a couple did I say? A man and a half-a man so sick as this poor German is only half a man; but at least he shall have somebody who will not shrink from him, who will look kindly at him, and be attentive in passing him the salt and the mustard. I wish I could do more. Ah! I know; I will get Mr. Brook to speak German across me to him, so that a forlorn invalid, courageous enough to venture on exile, may not feel himself utterly lonely."

At the first luxurious, elaborate dinner Dora, sitting dumb beside her right hand neighbor, could at least beam upon him till his gaunt face and sunken bright blue eyes were lit up with half puzzled and eager admiration. She plied him with every toothsome dainty in their vicinity, making expressive signs of what she held most worthy of

At the time she wondered which was good and which was bad for him. She took it for granted that it was conmption which had left him a walking skeleton. She had heard that one of the last accredited cures was feeding the sufferers up. She did her best by expressive looks and encouraging smiles to get the scarecrow to begin to stuff himself. She shook her head disapprovingly when he declined oysters. She made the waiter pause significantly at Edelstein's shoulder with a chocolate cream.

Take care, Miss Dora," said Ned Brook warningly, "What, are you, too, frightened for infection?" she demanded scornfully, while both speakers were unfettered in their discourse because of the dead wall which Edelstein's practical ignorance of English had erected between him and

"Not particularly," he answered with a laugh, "but there are other dangers quite as deadly. I have heard that for pure blind conceit this kind of unfortunate beggar is unequaled. Don't play up to his vanity."

Dora with a pretty little will of her own was not only undeterred by Ned Brook's caution, she was confirmed by

it in her cares for the invalid. When he was not able to join in the game of quotts and shovelboard which the passengers played on deck, she managed to spare him the mortification of helplessness by standing looking on with him, as if his passiveness was not due to incapacity, but to the duty of attending to a lady, albeit it had to be in dumb show. She challenged him to games of backgammon, draughts, and dominoes in quiet, sheltered corners. She hunted up "The Buchholz Family" and other German classics in the original from the polyglot

library, and laid them before him with ingenuous triumph. Theo Edelstein would have been the basest of ingrates if had not responded to the tender, generous compassion of the young girl, the picture of health, who had never been

ill in her life, with whom he had not exchanged a word. He was no ingrate. He was touched to the core of his romantic, honest heart. To be with her-to look at her seemed to do him good, to transplant some of her abounding vitality and vigor into his faintness and lassitude. He pulled himself together, held up his head, and in spite of the fever flush on his cheek bones and the baneful fire in his eyes looked twice the man he had looked when he came on board.

The Fair Winds was nearing the Canaries. Mrs. Cheshire was so much in advance that she was interviewing the stewardess and the man who had charge of seeing the luggage

Then in the middle of the bustle and commotion Ned Brook came in search of Dora Cheshire.

He found her standing watching for the boats coming out with fresh fruit and vegetables. She had a disengaged

air just tinged with the excitement of anding. He looked half provoked, half pitiful, with a stirring sense of waggish amusement getting the better of both provocation and pitifulness.

"I told you so, Miss Dora, you have been and gone and done it. You must come with me to the saloon, which at the present moment is empty except for one individual. You must pay the penalty you have incurred. You must come. You owe it to the ill fated mortal whom you have enticed and deluded to the bad quarter of an hour in which

his eyes will be opened." What do you mean?" she asked, remaining where she was, but opening her eyes more widely. Herr Edelstein desires me as a third party acquainted with the language to act between you two as interpreter."

What does he want?" inquired Dora, beginning to move towards the stairs. "He means nothing less," said Brook, "than to make you an offer of marriage by the lips of your humble

Dora fairly jumped and then stood rooted to the spot. impossible," she cried. "You must have misunderstood him, Mr. Brook, such an insune, ghastly idea could never have entered into his head."

Fact I assure you, granted that it nearly took my breath away when he broached it to me." Tell him it is out of the question, it is preposterous-

is the next thing to an insult," declared Dora hotly. will not go down. I will not put myself into such a ridio ulous, affronting position. You must explain this for me and make him understand."

That is exactly what I cannot do," he said, more gravethan he had hitherto spoken. "You are seeing the thing m the woman's point of view only, as your sex is apt to o. You must look at it from the man's side also. Think of his mortification, of his disappointment when he has orked himself up to the pitch of making this proposal-not speak of the delicate state of his health about which you have been so much concerned!" There was a grain of malous mischief in the emphasis with which he uttered the

"If I had thought that he was equal to anything of the kind!" protested Dora indignantly. "Don't tell me that he ever imagined I was leading him on to this folly," she forals Brook vehemently, "else I shall not only not see him,

shall be tempted not to forgive you." How grossly unjust! and you must see him-she is entitled to that grace. You misled him-quite unintentionally, no doubt, still the truth remains. Had it not been so do ou think that even a romantic, passionate lad-as dogged as he is passionate, and in the fever of his pitiable state of ealth, would be so far left to himself as to pester you, at ich a moment, with such a suit, and to press me into his rvice? He has transferred his own feelings to you. He cles not only that you in your 'grand generosity' and exquisite sympathy' have 'stooped to care for a poor felin his humiliated condition this own words, I assure i, but that you will set the seal on your goodness by coning to become his bride. (A German bride or brant, you nust know-not necessarily as in England a newly wedded fe, merely an engaged girl who may have to wait a dozen

years before she is a married woman, and wait faithfully

all the same.) He is under the delusion that you (being one of those wrong headed, devoted angels, whom poets and men of his kidney find among women) like him well enough to follow him the would have followed you to the world's end in other circumstances)-to the Cape, to trek up country after him, and when some Dutch pastor has made you man and wife, to be contented to find your happiness in nursing him back to health-as if that were not a desperate job. There you are to work with him, a household drudge, a notable farmer's wife, without a civilized creature, save himself, to speak to far and near (and even to speak to him you must pick up German), without a decent shop to enter, without a log built church in which to say your prayers. Assuredly our friend is not 'blate,' as the Scotch say,'

"Friend! I do not count madmen among my friends. Mrs. Cheshire was roused into a protest. "Ah, I hope He is beside himself," declared Dora, with uncompromising.

Beside himself? Yes, with unrequited love-only he does not dream that it is unrequited, with the enthusiasm which we call 'gush,' and the weakness consequent on the poor sinner's illness. And I must warn you, Miss Dora, that if you were the infatuated being he thinks you, if you gave up for his sake every worldly prospect, every intellectual satisfaction, and every family tie, I believe by sheer dint o' will he would fight off death, he would live on and cheat you for years of the deliverance which widowhood might

She said nothing for a moment, standing silent, with a face from which the rich color had fled, with knitted brows, and set lips. Then she spoke abruptly.

"I will go down with you, Mr. Brook, since you think entitled to my presence on the occasion, only let us get through with the-the horrid ordeal as speedily as

She walked down the stairs and entered the saloon with her head held high and pride and scorn in every line of her figure and lineament of her face. She had said he had insulted her-more, he had cruelly wronged her in the mistake he had made. He had abused her womanly good will, distorting it in his foolish fancy, and employing it as a weapon against her. He was compelling her to endure a detestably painful, awkward, grotesque ten minutes.

He was standing near the door of the saloon as she entered. He bowed low with a foreigner's instinctive gesture of the hand to the heart, which indicates profoundest

She met his eager eyes devouring her, and tendering to her grateful thanks for her infinite condescension in co plying with his daring summons, with a slight bend of her head, and a resentful glance. It wavered and fell before his ardent regard, while her heart suffered a sharp pang and sank like lead in her breast.

Two saloon chairs had been drawn forward for Dora and Ned Brook. Edelstein took up his position on the other side of Brook, standing there as at once the boldest and the humblest of petitioners.

Brook accepted the arrangement until he remarked how Dora, who had come in with a rigid air, was beginning to fidget uneasily, as if she would rise from her chair; for she was, saying to herself, as he soon guessed, "I am angry and I do well to be angry, but I would not for worlds sit here and hurt him in that way. It would be mean to force him to realize his weakness. He cannot stand there and be agitated and argue the matter as a strong man would."

Ned Brook comprehended, got up, and pulled forward chair, saving hastily to E

You had better sit down, you are not up to much, and this must be a trying explanation for you." The suitor sat down on the other side of Brook, who was between him and Dors, and for a moment sank back with a forced sigh of relief for welcome rest. The next instant ne was bending forward with intense earnestness and speaking some eloquent words in his mother tongue, with glowing eyes fixed upon Dora, who turned away impatiently.

He says," interpreted Brook with a carefully repressed grin, "that his proper place, which he is ready to assume, is his knees at your feet."

"O! don't let him! For mercy's sake prevent him!" cried Dora in real trepidation, catching hold of her countryman's

Edelstein had cast a glance of mystified annovance at Ned Brook when Dora's action appealing for Brook's intervention met his eye.

"Good heavens! the beggar is prepared to be jealous," urmured Ned half audibly, putting up his hand to conceal the telltale mouth of a laughing face.

Dora understood both the murmur and the movement, herself up in a stateller pose, which implied a mixture of reproach and displeasure.

Theo Edelstein was speaking again. It was forcible speech from pale lips which trembled under the burden of it. 'He confesses he has nothing to give you save his love, but that is so great it surpasses even the love of women. It will surmount every obstacle. In the future it will wrap you round like a mantle, it will shield and shroud you from every genuine trouble and sorrow, even though you have to face hardship and loneliness by his side."

"O, that is enough!" protested Dora, bowing her head to hide her blushes, and clasping her hands in futile vexation. "Leave out anything else of the kind. Tell him straight out that I have not had a thought of love and marriage in connection with him. O! I am ashamed to speak of such a thing. Say, if you like, that so far as I can judge am not a marrying woman. Impress upon him that even if I were willing, and I am not willing, my aunt would never consent to my taking such a step. Why, she has not so much as spoken to him. Say that I am English and provincial to the last degree. This trip to the Canaries is only holiday excursion, nothing could induce me to quit my country for a permanency, or to unite myself to a foreignernot though we were the only man and woman left in the world. For I know when we came into close quarters every prepossession and prejudice would be different, and we could not dwell together in peace." She delivered her decision not with calm, cold deliberation but with exasperated apidity, looking down at her hands which she sat clasping tightly in her lap.

The man whose sentence she was thus glibly pronouncing could not follow a word she said, but he could read her face in a measure. He never lifted his eyes from it, he sat gazing at her with beseeching yearning.

It took some time for Ned Brook to translate her answer. coccesses oftening its inflexible harshness, so as to render it as little hurtful to its recipient's feelings as it could be made.

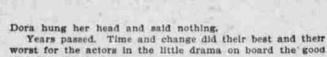
To the surprise alike of the original speaker and of the interpreter Edelstein was not silenced nor even seriously rebuffed by the refusal-it was as if he would take refusal. He grew pale to wanness certainly. he said Dora was shy, was frightened, she was ignorant and inexperienced in her proud maidenliness, she could not understand her own heart or his-how could she when this was the first time his great love had been put into words for her hearing, and that, alas! by the lips of another man?

"Do not say another word," gasped Dora, no longer dictating, but imploring as she sprang up, "He is raving. Bid him good by from me," she said more gently. wish him well, and that I trust he will regain his health in milder air at the Cape. I hope he will prosper and be a great stockholder and a mighty farmer. I suppose there are mighty farmers as well as mighty hunters, and O, after

Brook obeyed her, and added on his own account, "I am sorry, Edelstein, but time is up. Miss Cheshire is on the point of landing with her aunt, and 40, for that matter, am L think I hear the bell warning those who are going ashore. Good-by, old fellow, and permit me to wish you better luck

Theo Edelstein stopped his remonstrance and fell into flence. He rose with an effort, and grasping the back of his chair bowed low once more to Dora, and held out a shadowy hand to her companion, in recognition of an obligation and as a sign that he bore no malice. It appeared to the two, on looking back, that he had tried to conjure up the flicker of a pathetically forgiving, friendly smile where they left him standing, supporting himself wearily in the solitude of the

Queer medieval beggar!" remarked Ned Brook, while



ship Fair Winds. Mrs. Cheshire had died suddenly, leaving no will (for wills are unpleasant topics to deal with when the testatrix is in health). In this instance the negligence was disastrous, for there was a nearer relative than Dora who, though he had been a reprobate, refused admission to Mrs. Cheshire's house, not on that account forfelt his legal birthright.

Dora found herself without a penny of her aunt's property, while she had nothing to expect from the generosity of the

She rose to the occasion, and secured a situation in one of those establishments to supplement the board schools, as a day helper. Her salary just sufficed to furnish her with food and clothing and a fairly comfortable lodging in one of the streets between the east and the west ends of London.

Soon the novelty of Dora's independence and hard work passed away. A certain reaction followed. She was as brave and resolute as ever, but the world grew occasionally drap colored. She could not help wondering what was to become of her in sickness and old age.

It was a cheerless prospect accentuated by the main pattering against the window panes, the dull little side streetdreary as well as dull. Suddenly there rose up before her a vivid remembrance of the far away islands, their sunshine, their moonlight, their half tropical vegetation, their dark eyed population, and their blue sea setting.

It was the setting more than the jewels it enclosed to which Dora's memory clung. Herr Theo Edelstein not Ned Brook filled the foreground of Dora's mental vision. Had he been dead for half a score of years? Had he died at sex as she and others had thought possible? Did he remember her to the last? Was he loving her through eternity as he had vowed he would love her? His declaration had only shocked and afronted her. His ardor, so out of place in a dying man, had simply distressed her, and beyond the shock and the distress there had been an exasperating fringe of unwilling. unwelcome, half hysterical laughter at the absurdity of having a proposal of marriage, and such a proposal, so passionately pled, translated by a third party in the presence of the two persons principally concerned.

She had not believed Edelstein's representation of his feelings. She could not realize them. They were incredible and in the circumstances utterly distasteful to her-a profshation of what ought to have been a dying man's sentiments. But after the lapse of time in the altered world in which Dora moved, and the altered woman she was, she him, she recognized that he had spoken the truth of the

value of the love she had rejected, which it would have been impossible for her to accept. No worldly advantage would weigh a thistle down in the scale against such love as she had inspired once-but once in her life. Like the blossom of the aloe it could only be counted upon to appear at rare intervals, to a few individuals. How strange and sad that when the precious gift was offered to her it was in connection with a situation which precluded any chance of its teing taken-even if she had been worthier of it:

But it was not of herself she thought, beyond the fact that she was haunted with an aching regret for not having

been kinder, more forbearing. What did it matter? What could her gratitude or ingratitude signify to a disembodied spirit, which had long ago entered into eternity, and been employed, she trusted, in heavenly praise and heavenly work for a longer period than that in which she had taken up her life task in earnest.

Dora was disturbed in the look she had cast backwards by her landlady's voice speaking to somebody on the door "Yes, sir; Miss Cheshire is at home. Will you please

to walk in?' 'Glye her my card."

The second voice spoke with a foreign accent. To whom could it belong? It was a big man who was shown in, and seeing that he was there in propria personse Dora laid down the card without looking at it, and waited for the stranger He loomed almost gigantic in his long ulster and the

broad felt hat he held in his brown hands. He seemed to fill the little room to the blotting out of Dora-herself a tall

"O! (he pronounced it 'ach ') Miss Cheshire." He halled her by her name, adding with lingering emphasis "at last!" She had only listened to that voice for any length of time on one former occasion, but its tones thrilled her with a sense of some sound she had heard and been impressed by, n the past. In the same way the face, hugely changed, condened, bearded, of a hale weather beaten tan, and the cornflower blue eyes with the glint of steel in their keenness and strenuousness struck her as strangely, distractingly fa-

"Do you not know me?" he was asking her, with tender reproach, which no amount of respectful restraint could altogether check, vibrating through his guttural accents. would have known you among a thousand. Why, of course, am Theo Edelstein." "No, no, it cannot be," she gasped, putting out her hands

in a desperate impulse, as if she would thrust away from her the dead come alive again of whom she had been idly dream-

ing this morning. "You were desperately ill ten years ago. It is an age since you must have—"
"Died?" He finished the broken sentence, catching and

holding the hands that would have pushed the vision of him beyond touch. "Nothing of the kind. I reached my destination. The fresh air and the sunshine suited me. I recovered from my ague, which I know some of you thought was a galloping consumption. I remembered you always as I said would. I have learned English. I should have written but I feared to put my fortunes to the test of paper. Had they anot failed when they were urged by another man's tongue? I would plead my own cause, and if you were still free-(if ou had sied I should have known it)-you might yield, you might still be mine. I would do all that I had promised to You had wished that I might be a mighty stockholder and farmer. I have oxen by thousands and sheep by tens of thousands. I have many a field of nodding grain and barns to receive it. My house is built and furnished and standing waiting for its mistress; your garden is laid out like the English gardens English women delight in. Our next neighbor is an Oxford man who took honors at his college as did at mine, but his health also gave way and he, too, was fain to turn to primitive nature as the great healer she is, and to lead the life of an old patriarch, throwing his books and papers overboard. But we are not without books. I have laid the foundation of a library-I shall do as he does every time he goes to the nearest town. He brings back for himself and for his young wife-a bishop's daughter-books and magazines, as well as new music, and pretty dresses as I shall bring for my wife when I have won her. Our neighbors on the other side are a dear old German couple who nursed me when I first arrived, and have been like a father and mother to me. I have told them that if I take you back you will be another daughter to them as I am another son. you come, my one and only love, and make my life and my

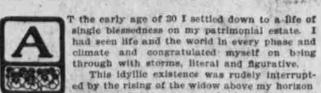
I-I cannot tell," she faltered, "You have taken me so by surprise. It is not a couple of hours ago since I thought of you as long dead. In one light you are an utter stranger to me. Recollect this is the first time we have spoken together. In another sense I seem to know you well, and to owe you a mountainload of gratitude for thinking of me so much oftener and better than I have deserved, and for forgiving me for the harshness of your dismissal in the dining saloon of the Fair Winds." "There was nothing to forgive," he said, simply. "How

home complete?

could there be forgiveness between you and me? second light is the true light-you do know me-you will come to me, my gift from God?"

'The gift is mutual," she said, speaking softly, "if there is any meaning in the name common to us both."

## A Kiss Shot.



When she burst upon my vision the history of the world recommence. For a day and a night I was daxzied, stupefied, and when I fearned that her lands adjoined mine I knew by instinct that it was all up with me. I am not one of those who struggle against their passions

and for my expected tranquillity I had counted not on my will, but on freedom from temptation. So I let myself go. I visited my neighbor and did not aceal from her the feeling with which she had inspired me.

Accustomed to admiration and declarations of love, she reccived mine calmly, but replied: 'I shall never marry again. My husband was the best men and I loved him dearly. That is enough for one life." And when I urged, pleaded, protested with the energy

of sudden passion she smiled and said: What a tyrant you would be! No, I wish to be free." She was a creole of New Orleans and possessed the soft, languorous beauty that, even in its decline, made another creole widow. Josephine Beauharnais, so irresistible. But my widow was only 24 and yet in the perfect bloom of youth. Her late husband, an American railway promoter, had left

she successively acquired other properties until she threatened to surround and inguif me. One day she said: "You have a lovely bit of forest that makes an ugly jos

in my line. I will give you a hundred thousand franca for it

'It is not for sale-to you," I replied. "Take it if you She raised her eyebrows and her shoulders and dropped the subject, but returned to it next day in the billiard room

of old Count Lavilleuce, whom she had just defeated, for she was an excellent player, for a woman. "Come," she said, "I will play you for a promise to sell sgainst that picture by Diriks that you covet so."

Then I lost my head and answered: "No. but I will stake the forest against a kiss!" She looked at me more in amusement than in anger.

"You are joking," she said. "Am I? You know I would gladly sell the forest for a klas, but I know you would not consent to the exchange. So

ct us play for them. "I have half a mind to take you up," she laughed. "You dare not!" I cried, for I knew her temper.

"O, I dare not?" she cried. "Very well. We will make the game 200 points." It was a fine game, for we were well matched, and, having se much at stake, played our best. For my part I swear

T the early age of 30 I settled down to a life of her a large fortune, which she appeared anxious to exchange went on with alternate advantage until she had scored 200 single blessedness on my patrimonial estate. I for French soil, After purchasing the estate adjoining mine to my 283. Then I made a run of sixteen with case and had seen life and the world in every phase and she successively acquired other properties until she threat-stopped, balked by a difficult shot, within one points stopped, balked by a difficult shot, within one point of victory. She also, after running up to 290, found herself confronted by an awkward configuration, but the shot was so much easier than some which she had made that I gave up the game for lost. She aimed carefully and steadily, playedand missed by a hair's breadth!

I waited half a minute before playing, for my hands trembled so that I could hardly hold the cue. It was an easy shot, but not for me at that moment. My ball caromed lightly on the light red, advanced timidly for the dark, and-

"Ab, I have lost!" she exclaimed, with a nervous laugh. "Well, I will pay-in half an hour, in the grove." She ran away, blushing, and soon I saw her strolling, with careful carelessness, toward the grove. It was a long half hour-though I shortened it by ten minutes. In the sacred grove she came to me without a word and frankly and

lovally offered her sweet ling. When I raised my head I saw that she was pale. She trembled and laid a hand on my shoulder as if for support. Then she laughed softly and whispered: .

"It wasn't fair, you know. I ought to have made that abot. I-I cheated!' So, though she lost she won not the forest alone, but its owner and all his worldly goods, while he won not merely one that I'thought only of the kiss, not of the forest. The game pour kiss, but bliss prolonged.