



LAST July I boarded the stanch steamer "Boston" for Yarmouth. There was the usual medley of cooks and waitresses returning from a two weeks' vacation, and of tourists eager for a taste of foreign soil at the cheapest rates. For the most part the faces were common and uninteresting; so, when we passed Boston Light, I fled a group of howling children, whom the swell, I hoped, would soon silence, and, choosing a seat above the screw, fell to reading a most fascinating account of Doctor Broca's discovery of the serum of intoxication.

Like so many other physicians of the modern school, I am an enthusiast over the many microbe theories that tumble over each other in the order of their discovery. What will not the bacillus be responsible for next? Absorbed in the resistless fascination of this speculation, I raised my eyes from my pamphlet, and looked straight into those of a man not ten feet away.

His was a most remarkable face: it conveyed the immediate impression of intolerable anguish. His eyes were sunken, burning with unquenchable intelligence; they looked as if they were vainly seeking compassion, and had lost all hope; the high forehead seemed glazed, as if covered with stretched parchment; his cheeks were hectic and hollowed; the beard, wandering of its

own free will, showed the mouth, whose passionate form and sensitive outline, embittered at the corners, indicated a noble character that had been blasted by some extraneous fatality, or by perjured love. The man might have been thirty, but looked fully fifty. His seemed an age of ambition undone, of plans miscarried, and of future disrupted.

For fully two hours we sat there side by side without speaking. I had now ceased speculating upon Doctor Broca's serum, and was filled with curiosity regarding my vis-à-vis. At last, unable to stand the tension any longer, I handed him the pamphlet, and said: "If you are interested in medical discoveries, you will find this of momentous importance to society, if what he claims can be proven."

The stranger's eyes lighted with recognition as he glanced at the title. "Ah, Doctor Broca!" he exclaimed. "I knew him well. I worked with him and Pasteur and Koch before I went to Vienna. I am Doctor Cox."

Through the lobes of my brain there flitted a reverberation of that name. It was associated with the reports of foreign medical journals, and with some remarkable experiments. Indeed, there flashed upon me the association of the name with a discovery that was to revolutionize humanity, and which would be given out at some future time. So I greeted the stranger with that effusion which mediocrity pours upon genius, and gave him my unknown name.

I had never studied abroad, and knew nothing of the incandescent lights—those saviors of humanity—except by reports.

Doctor Cox greeted his brother physician with as much cordiality as his reserve could command. Evidently he was pleased not to be alone upon the ship.

"You look as if you had overworked," I said, introductorily.

"No," he answered, with pathetic weariness, "I have not overworked, I have overdone." This distinctive phrase did not detract from the mystery that surrounded the man. We talked for an hour or two before the gong sounded. His deep eyes glowed as he retailed with intimate knowledge the history of Pasteur's and Koch's wonderful experiments. And, as he forgot his own misery, his youth came back before my eyes just as some desiccated plants are suddenly resurrected by a few drops of water.

"Doctor!" I ejaculated, as the last vibration of the gong passed by. "You are suffering from some terrible calamity; you have given up your future, and it is killing you. Anyone with the blindest eyes to symptoms can see that. I wish you cared to confide in me." I felt more like a girl than a man in my impulse, and breathed rapidly. I could distinctly feel my blood accelerating, and expected nothing less than a curt reply, if not an immediate withdrawal.

But Doctor Cox looked at me long and searchingly, until my eyes became blurred, and I could no longer distinguish his features. Then he said, kindly: "Thank you for your interest. After supper, when the rest have retired, and the moon is well up, I will tell you my story, and you can judge whether you can be of assistance to me or not." With that he bowed and left. I cannot now account for my friendly aggression, or for his flood of confidence to a stranger, except for the mysterious fact that natures change upon the high seas.

With what impatience did I await the night! Food was impossible; but time, that flies too fast for the condemned, at last accommodated the waiting. With an ill-assumed air of indifference, I strolled to the stern. Doctor Cox was sitting smoking impetuously. Without a word of greeting, and with startling abruptness, he began his story.

The churn of the tireless screw, the velvet line of smoke, the sheen of the moon

upon our quarter, the quiet sea whose horizon was veiled by a tenuous mist: these are my only memories in connection with the marvelous tale which I was permitted to hear.

"I will not burden you," he said, "with the story of my whole life. I will simply say that I am a graduate of Harvard College and Medical School. Ten days after I got my diploma, authorizing me to kill or cure under the law, my father died, leaving me an income that made me independent. In a month I was in Paris, and devoted my nights as well as days to investigation and experiment. I became familiar with the Pasteur School and all that it aimed to accomplish. In the same way I spent two years as Doctor Koch's assistant in his laboratory in Berlin.

"Feeling the need of hospital practice to supplement my laboratory experiments, I went to Vienna, that Mecca of all physicians. In less than a month I met Elsa. Elsa was the most superb woman I had ever seen. She was a perfect type of blonde. She had all the stateliness of a Margaret, all the piquancy of a Lili, and all the seductiveness of an Undine. She was tall and svelte. Her eyes were star sapphires, and her lips bows of roses. At one moment she could be stately as a princess, at another clinging as a bride. Capricious as the Mediterranean, yet steadfast as the Gulf Stream, she was a woman to be won by hurricane and calm, by volcano and by ice. I became immediately infatuated with her, and was soon on intimate terms with her mother.

"Madame Von Krakenburg was the widow of an Austrian captain of noble blood, and lived a proud life of genteel poverty, which she fancied she hid from all her friends. The only one she deceived was herself.

"In a natural way it came about that I soon hired the whole of her top floor, and so became an inmate of that delightful household. This household consisted only of Elsa, her mother, and an aged Newfoundland dog, called Max. This dog had a strange habit that had grown upon him like the mange, a hatred of Elsa's mother; at the time of my entrance into the family this had become a mania. This extraordinary aversion was undoubtedly due to

senility. Devoted to Elsa, Max would growl asthmatically, and show his toothless gums whenever the mistress of the house came into the room. The dog never allowed Elsa to be touched by anyone but me without fierce demonstrations of resentment. I had been provident enough to bribe him the first day I called with sugar pellets.

"One morning I received a summons to go to the hospital to see a patient who had just been brought in. I arrived in time to find a man dying of old age. A careful diagnosis showed that he had absolutely no disorder or ailment. For years I had been looking for just such a case, for I had developed a theory that age was nothing but a disease caused by the ravages of a bacillus which had never yet been seen. Up to this time I had never found a case whose fatality did not result from either disease or accident; but before me lay a man perfect in all his functions, yet so old that his years had long since passed the century-mark. Feebleness without senility, death without impairment of functions—the suspension of the breath of life without a visible cause—here was the opportunity for my years of training. It was the unique case that might solve the insoluble problem. That night the life of the man flickered out while I held him in my arms; and in a moment I was absorbed over specimens of his blood that I had wrung from his reluctant veins. Fancy the feeling of the man who after superhuman efforts discovers the North Pole, or who has lived to see an almost impious theory accepted as a law of the universe! With eyes glued to the microscope, that night I understood for the first time the saying that a day is as a thousand years unto the Lord. In the viscid fluid before me floated the microbe of old age, and in my hands lay the secret of eternal life!

"I must have lost my head; for, when I came to, I found myself in the wintry night, running like a madman home in order to perpetuate in my own laboratory that precious colony of immortal germs. It was icy, and in crossing a street I slipped and fell. At that fatal moment a dozen sleighs darted by on the return from some cursed revel. Ah, if they had only known how they trampled on eternal life! We commit the

unpardonable sin in blindness, and giggle and chatter, while Azrael points his shining sword at us, prophetic of our doom.

"When I awoke, dazed with the momentous misfortune, the hurricane of hoofs had passed, sweeping with it my slides and specimens—hostages to humanity of undying youth—that had been flung from my hands when I fell. In vain I groped and searched; the discovery had passed me by, illuminating my soul for a brief moment like a blinding flash of lightning, leaving me in greater darkness than before.

"For two months I lay delirious. Elsa and her mother watched over me. During my convalescence, the manner of the mother puzzled and troubled me. She was a splendid woman of about forty-five, in the prime of her vigor, and at times of excitement not looking much older than her daughter. She must have been beautiful in her youth, and indeed I had heard from General Van Fersen that the court of the Emperor held no fairer maid of honor when she was eighteen.

"It was at the time of my greatest depression and perplexity that Elsa told me that the old elephant in the Zoo had died that morning. In an instant I was well. The microbe that I had once held and lost might be found again. Elephants are well known to live to a marvelous age. Fortune, whose daughter I had, alas! kissed, was restoring to me her fiftful favors.

"'I must hurry,' I said. 'Have the stove in my laboratory heated. I must see that elephant.'

"'You will take care of yourself?' Madame Von Krakenburg put her hand imploringly upon my arm. But Elsa only pouted. With a hurried assent I jumped into the drosky, and was gone.

"My disappointment only whetted my ambition. Somewhere in the world my great discovery was beckoning me. Somewhere the limit of existence was reached, and at that limit would be found the microbe of old age. I got in the habit of calling it 'my macrobiote.'

"'Madame,' I said one day after supper, 'I am going to leave you for a few months, or even for a year or more. I have a mission to perform for humanity. I have made a great discovery. It must be verified. It may take much or little time; in

the meanwhile I wish to keep my rooms intact. If I return successful I shall be hailed as the greatest benefactor the world has ever seen—next, of course,' I said, reverently, 'to the historic Savior. In that case I shall ask you for the hand of your daughter Elsa.'

"Madame Von Krakenburg became very pale, but Elsa looked me straight in the eyes.

"'Mama,' Elsa said, after a long pause, 'I shall marry Carl, and no one else.' She arose, with royal dignity, and held out to me her hand, and I kissed it.

"They accepted my high claims and the necessity for my departure with a beautiful faith, and made suitable preparation.

"The next morning I read an account of a large whale which had been captured alive on the shores of the Baltic. My opportunity called me. I hastily packed in a special case all the apparatus for making and preserving cultures. It seemed as if Elsa's arms could not be untwined from my neck, and that my eyes were fascinated by her beautiful face; but later, when I bade Madame Von Krakenburg adieu, it seemed as if her lips had lost the power of detachment. What did that passionate kiss mean to her? What would it mean to me? Thrilled, but troubled, without another look at my weeping fiancée, I tore myself away, and rushed into the street.

"I need not detail my search for the oldest life the world had in existence. Birds, beasts and reptiles passed under my microscopic gaze. Impatience and disappointment were the travail of my mind, and what hope was left was rapidly dispelled through travail of the body. The carp, the turtle, the snake, the whale, the elephant, the cockatoo—in short, any animal supposed to live longer than the time allotted to average life, underwent a vigorous scrutiny. You know as well as I do that old age comes to animals as well as to man without a feeling of desire to be old. It is therefore abnormal, and it must be a disease. We all fight it. At last, overcome, we accept it with resignation. It occurred to me that this unconscious or even sentient antagonism to old age might be a means itself for hastening its advent, for it is a universal law that what we dread we invite. Every now and then there occurs a rare

case where old age comes with a desire for it. Such a clod of a man ought to live forever, for to him there is no waste of the brain and body tissue. The one I found in the hospital may only exist once in a century. I therefore decided to give up animals, and continue my search in plants. They have a circulation of the vital fluid, and may attain an extraordinary age. It has been stated by the greatest botanist that they have morality as well as sagacity. What is an elephant of a hundred years to a tree of a thousand?

"The decision made, I hurried to the Island of Kos, and to its little capital, for there is supposed to exist the oldest tree in the world. It was especially fitting that I should give this historic and guarded monument of ancient civilization a careful inspection, for it is undisputed that under its shade over two thousand years ago Hippocrates wrought his healing arts, and that four hundred years before, Æsculapius, his ancestor, the father of human medicine, beneath its limbs cured the superstitious of their diseases. Supported by columns of masonry, surrounded by a fountain, and railed from the populace, this most ancient living relic challenged the modern discoverer. Did the bacillus of old age course sluggishly in its atrophied veins? Had this wonderful tree stored in its heart the lore of the ancients? And would it yield up the secrets of eternal life to a disciple of Pasteur?

"This memorial relic of Grecian paganism is probably the most pathetic example of old age in the world. Its enormous trunk is only a hollow shell, and from its scaly bark only a few green shoots struggle for a starved existence. To gather one or two of these became literally the object of my future life. In vain I tried to bribe the zealous guards. No money could accomplish my purpose, for the tree had been worshiped by the simple inhabitants for many centuries; besides, it was the source of the island's greatest income.

"I soon found myself an object of suspicion, and dogged with a persistence that characterizes the bigotry of the Levant. Fortunately, at the critical moment of failure and despair, an Englishman, whom I had met pleasantly in Paris, sailed in on his yacht. I explained that I needed a few

twigs of that almost dead descendant of an unknown age for museum purposes, and told him how matters stood.

"Nothing pleases an Englishman more than a spice of adventure in which the superstitions of an inferior race are trampled upon. A few nights later, in a hurricane of wind and rain, a small party of us landed, and made for the sacred tree. The frightened guard was gagged and bound, ladders were hastily unlimbered, and in a few minutes the priceless twigs, oldest known specimens of living growth, were concealed in my breast-pocket. The next morning before sunrise we were in the open ocean, with only purple spots on the distant horizon.

"But all night long my eyes were glued to the microscope, searching in vain for that microbe of old age which I had once held in my possession, and which now seemed to have eluded me forever.

"In three months, after I had eliminated all the possibilities of Europe, I was encamped amid the giant redwood-trees of California; for, after all, it was forced upon

my reluctant imagination that the United States not only held the tombs of the most ancient civilizations the world knows of to-day but it also possesses within its fastnesses inorganic life that antedates the Montezumas, the Incas, the Greeks, the Egyptians, the Cliff-dwellers, and even the Mayas—that mysterious race, contemporary

with the inhabitants of submerged Atlantis, and cousins to the shepherd kings, who antedated the ancient monarchs of Egypt by many thousands of years.

"I stood, surrounded by the gigantic sequoias, and seemed to be transported into that antediluvian age when fernscrapped the sky, and when dragons were not myths but were fearful realities. It did not take me long to run to earth, or rather to air, the oldest group of this strange species that have been



Drawn by George T. Tobin.

"'COME!' I CRIED, 'IN THE NAME OF GOD ALMIGHTY, ONE DROP OF BLOOD!'"

appropriately called 'sempervirens.' At Felton, near Santa Cruz, I soon found myself in a mystical circle of sequoias, more ancient than the Stonehenge, and whose birth perhaps antedated the sacred tree of Kos. The redwood is the natural receptacle of germs and microbes,

for, like the fauna of arid zones, its veins contain much water and no resin. Pierce its cells, and it bleeds like an ox at the sacrifice. With infinite pains I selected the oldest of this prehistoric group. There it stood, pointing straight to heaven. Its base was over a hundred and twenty feet in circumference, while its huge fronds swept the pure air hundreds of feet above me.

"I had hardly pitched my tent at the base of this eternal monument, wondering what strange history it had witnessed and had disdained to record during its thousands of years of life, when a party of scientists rode up for purposes of investigation. These confounded college expeditions headed by the inevitable professor! How did I know that under the disguise of a blessing they were about to bring upon me a life's curse? How ignorantly and how buoyantly we walk into the traps that Fate is ready to spring upon us!

"That evening I drew the ichor from the sequoia's veins. It flowed elastically, nay, too eagerly. It lacked the inertia natural to senility. It dawned upon me, even before I prepared the fateful slide, that perhaps the gigantic specimen, born before Abraham was conceived, had not yet arrived at even a respectable old age. Cyclone, fire, flood, the ruthless axe of civilization—these may murder the red-wood-tree, but age has not yet wreaked her vengeance on that sublime order.

"My microscope, the most powerful made in Paris, showed, alas! undoubtedly this astonishing fact, that the oldest sequoia known had not yet reached middle life. If it were permitted to live on, it would in all probability witness the rise and bemoan the fall of our boasted American civilization. For such curves of progress and degeneracy are but ephemeral instances during its transcendent vitality.

"What's the oldest thing alive? I asked the professor next morning, as I smoked my pipe, trying to calm my vibrant nerves. As his students were off bug-hunting, we had a quiet moment to ourselves. The professor was one of those lean, spry men, whose eyes burn within their cavernous sockets, whose cheeks are high and hollow and hectic, and whose gaunt jaws are covered by fine, gray, un-

kempt hair. Driving, yet kindly, a bundle of watch-springs, yet philosophic, he combined the solidity of continental learning with the irrepressible originality of American expression.

"Lichens," he said, sententiously, as if he were about to deliver a lecture. "There are some lichens that never die."

"Explain." I looked at him, trying to control my breath. Little did he know how I suffered during those few seconds of anticipation.

"Take the verrucariaceous apothecium," he began, lightly, as if he were discussing corn.

"Yes!"

"Have you ever been to the Grand Cañon? Not! It's a pity. When you go, if you are fortunate, you will see on one of the walls a huge grayish green stain, extending two to three thousand feet in circumference. It is the apothecium. There may not be more than ten specimens in the hundreds of miles of gorge. When the river first flowed, and cut its first depression, this lichen had its birth. As the Cañon deepened, the lichen followed its fall. As the erosion averages one foot every thousand years, and the Cañon is about three thousand feet deep, you can easily calculate the age of your friend."

"Three million years!" I exclaimed, ecstatically.

"Precisely." He took a leisurely contemplative puff.

"But how can it exist on and on indefinitely?"

"It is because the spores are developed in the theca, which constitute, with the paraphyses, the hymenium."

"Ah, I see."

"If the interior of the conceptacle were not thickly dotted with converging filaments——"

"Of course!"

"It continually throws off spore-like bodies, found within the spermatogonium——"

"Spermatia!" I hazarded.

"Exactly so. It thus became perpetual in its cellular reproduction."

"Why had I not thought of lichens before? Taking their nourishment from the air, they contain the elemental principle of life as much as a violet, a tree, an elephant,

a man. I saw the end of my search and sorrows. I saw in the desert of cathedral rocks, amid the fastnesses of the Grand Cañon, the everlasting fount of eternal youth, the secret of which I alone held in my possession.

"Engendered in the hour the glacier receded from the North American Continent, and alive in the day of King Edward, and in the aggression of Emperor William, and in the might of Roosevelt, it beckoned me to its arid heart.

"I should think it would be about dead by this time," I said.

"Not at all." The professor waved his hand, lightly, as if a hundred thousand years more or less were a mere turn of the palm.

"I suppose they will be living when the ice age comes again and engulfs them with the rest of us."

"When will that be?"

"In about ten million years or so."

"Then the apothecium is hardly past teething, so to speak."

"Hardly."

"When I looked up again into the sympathetic and puzzled eyes of the professor, I burst into violent laughter, the hysterics of despair.

"Now," said the college professor, strolling up to my tent the next morning, with a shrewd glance worthy of a professional palmist, "I have been watching you, and I wouldn't take your disappointment so bitterly. Perhaps I can help you." He held a square pasteboard box in his hand. The box was perforated with holes. "You are searching for the last throes of life. Is that not so?"

"I nodded, moodily.

"I suppose its some new germ theory that you bacillus bigots are running to earth."

"I suppose so," I said, warily.

"And the subject must have lived longer than the number of years supposed to be allotted to the species."

"Much longer," I said, decisively.

"Well, here's a toad."

"A toad!" I said, contemptuously. I fell back against the trunk of the redwood-tree.

"I suppose you've heard of toads being found imprisoned in coal-seams." His tone implied indulgent sarcasm.

"Of course, I have heard of such things, but there are no authenticated cases. It's all tommy-rot. Greville experimented encasing toads and frogs in clay and plaster of Paris, but none ever lived over a month."

"But still such toads have been found, and here is one whose authenticity is beyond question. I saw it dug out of a coal-seam, fifteen hundred feet under the surface."

"The professor spoke with such sane assurance that I was aroused as if by a shock of electricity.

"That was six months ago. I have carried him with me ever since. He has taken only two meals since his rescue. I want to show you his case. There, hold the box carefully. You can take the cover off; he can't move."

"With the reluctant eagerness natural to a cautious scientist, I gazed upon this world-old specimen. It seemed indeed the gift of an unknown age. The only signs of life were the infrequent heavings of the puffy chest, showing that the lungs could still work. The skin was warty, rough, and wrinkled beyond imagination, and the eyes were glued shut. I touched the animal reverently. It was as cold as the age of ice.

"Here," said the professor, interrupting my stare, "this may convert you. This nodule fell beneath my feet at the end of one of the drifts which I was investigating. Thinking that it might be a fossil, I carefully broke it with my hammer, and the toad fell out on my palm." The dark bluish slate showed the perfect outlines of a fossil toad. The stone had become the living amphibian's shroud.

"There is no doubt in my mind," continued the professor, gravely, "that this batrachian was born in the Carboniferous age, when coal was forming. Burrowing in clay to hibernate during a winter, it was overwhelmed in one of Nature's stupendous catastrophes, following on the heels of the Devonian period, and thus was included in the coal-formation. It may, and it may not live more than a few hours or a day. Now, young man, tell me what you want?"

"Only a drop of its precious blood! My God! Professor, only one drop, and I'll be satisfied!" Shaken with an anxiety and

wild excitement which I could no longer repress, I trembled almost as if I should disarticulate.

"I guess your need is greater than mine. The toad is yours," said the professor, gravely. "Only don't mutilate the body, I want to keep it as a specimen. You'd better hurry; there isn't much time to lose. There probably will never be found another one like it in the world."

"I could have thrown myself at the professor's feet. Instead, I prepared my gelatin. In ten minutes I had everything ready for the cultivation of a colony of microbes, if my fate were at hand. Then I took the antediluvian, toothless toad from its box, and bared my scalpel for its divine use. Taking the cold, unresisting creature in the palm of my left hand, I made a quick incision above the heart. Not a drop of blood flowed from its congealed arteries. I plunged the knife deeper, and looked in vain for the priceless fluid. Ah, but I must cut to the heart! If it had nothing to yield, humanity's hope had died with the death of this immortal.

"I plunged the knife in. Then a frenzy seized me. With an oath I grasped the creature, and squeezed it in both my hands. The professor, my promise, everything was forgotten but the fact that I stood at the side of this expiring creature as sponsor for the life of the world. 'Come!' I cried. 'In the name of God Almighty, one drop of blood!'

"Then there slowly oozed like carmine asphalt one dense globule. This I gathered upon the end of my blade. There was no moment for microscopic investigation. I thrust it into the warm gelatinous ooze, Nature's bed for bacilli. Even as I did so, I felt in my hand an icy quiver. I opened it mechanically! The Carboniferous batrachian was dead."

Doctor Cox's voice was lost in the rhythmic pounding of the screw. He lit his pipe, pulled savagely, following the tenuous smoke with his gaze as it was whiffed over the rail out into the silver sea. By the way he scowled as if in pain, I knew that the tragedy was about to be unfolded, and dared not speak. I could only wait for his errant mood to return to me. It might have been after an hour's pause that I heard a click in his throat. It must

have been only through a supreme effort that he went on.

"It was night when I arrived in Vienna. The ladies were at the theater, not expecting me until the next day, and I had slipped upstairs, lighted my fire, and was absorbed in the contemplation of my priceless colony of microbes.

"I looked up from my microscope. Elsa stood at the door, closely followed by Max, whose wagging tail was giving me his best greeting. Careful not to jar the table, I caught the splendid girl in my arms, and my lips met hers in the first real lover's kiss that we had exchanged.

"'It has been so long—so long!' she murmured, clinging convulsively. 'I thought I had died waiting for you, Carl, my love!'

"The foolishness that we were guilty of during those first five minutes of transport, if nothing more than a divine memory, was surely worth a century of life. I then held my fiancée at arms' length. Her face was a little thinner and paler, which gave a new glory to her blonde beauty; but her figure was better molded, and this added dignity and womanliness.

"'Ah, dear heart,' I said, aloud, thinking of my cultures, 'you shall never die. I could not bear it.'

"'I do not want to, now I have you, Carl; but I could not have stood another month. I would have died. And Max, poor Max, he is nearly dead now: I only kept him alive by whispering in his ear that his Uncle Carl was coming. Didn't I, Max, dear?' Elsa stooped, and patted the old dog so lovingly that it brought tears to Max's eyes and mine. 'Now, tell me,' she said, brightening up, 'where is it? There? In that jar? That wonderful discovery? Do you mean to say that what is in that muddy jar can restore youth, and you had to spend a whole year away from me finding it? You shall experiment, sir, immediately on Max. Do you hear?'

"Noting my astonishment, she added: 'Max must be saved. Hurry! He may die any minute.'

"'But, my dearest, I haven't experimented on anything yet.'

"'Then you must begin on Max right away. I shan't leave you until you do;

‘if I don’t, what will mama say?’
 ‘She looked so irresistibly roguish, and added such a potent argument, that I foolishly consented. At that moment Max uttered a deep growl.

‘‘It’s mama,’ said Elsa, with a pout. ‘Quick! There! At any rate we have had a few minutes together, haven’t we?’

‘There was a rustling on the stairs. There was a quick cry.

‘‘Carl, my dearest son!’ Before I realized what had happened, Elsa’s mother lay in my arms, considerably closer than her daughter had been a moment before. I do not know what stirred within me, but, stunned and dazed, I strained my mother-in-law to my heart.

‘‘Mama,’ cried Elsa, turning pale, ‘you forget that Carl has important experiments to make. It is late, and we must leave him. He is tired.’ Madame Von Krakenburg gave me a melting look. I could not meet it. My eyes wandered to Elsa. She evidently did not blame me in the least. She stood tapping her foot with high-spirited impatience upon the floor. Her mother had disengaged herself, and stood trembling.

‘‘You will not forget your promise,’ said Elsa, in a low tone, glancing at the bewildered dog. ‘Max, you sleep with Carl, to-night. Carl, dear, won’t you kiss me good-night?’ She stole a triumphant glance at her mother. Shamefacedly, I kissed my fiancée on the lips. I did not linger there, but I felt the chaste and soothing influence that was balm to my harassed heart. Then I looked at her mother, tall, commanding, dark, magnificent and melting, and I did not know whether I hated her or loved her. Then the two women left me with Max and with my tumultuous meditations.

‘‘But my promised experiment nerved me, and in the careful preparation of a spot above the dog’s medulla for inoculation, I quite forgot the two ladies of my life. Max seemed to understand, as dogs do when you try to cure them. He did not interrupt or whine, but cocked his aged ears with interest, and tried to see out of his blind eyes. With infinite pains I injected the vivifying bacilli into his blood, sealed the wound from the air, and turned the dog into the hall to seek his mistress’ room.

Then I flung myself on the bed, glad to be at home again, and yet puzzled as to the actual outcome of the amorous confusion in which I found myself snarled. Soon youth and health conquered, and I fell into a troubled sleep, only to be awakened in the morning by joyous barking and the eager scratching of a dog at my door. Wondering what could be there, I cautiously opened the door. This was pushed violently to one side, and a magnificent Newfoundland pup darted in, and, leaping all over me, began to kiss me violently.

‘‘Whose was this creature? What could it mean? Then a mad thought illuminated me.

‘‘Max,’ I cried. ‘Max, is that you?’ At that name the pup whirled about me in ecstasy. But I could not rebuke his exuberance, for before me danced the first illustration of the vitalizing power of the serum at my command. Old age had been wiped from the face of the earth. Death could only entrap us through accident and illness. Immortal youth was the gift of my pleasure.

‘‘After a few dabs and embraces the hurricane bolted out and down stairs. I locked the door, and threw myself upon the bed, feeling within me the power of a god, and wondering at the vast possibilities of my divine discovery.

‘‘As yet Elsa was my only confidante. Without an exhaustive series of experiments, it would be impossible for me to give to humanity my discovery. A thousand problems of proportion, strength, and number of inoculations must be solved beyond a peradventure of a doubt. For the first time I had become reconciled to animal experimentations, for my laboratory work would consist not in torture but in giving joy, not in vivisection but in vivifying, and I began to gather all the old and worn-out animals I could find. The resurrection of Max had to be explained to Elsa’s mother in a way that bordered on a fairy tale. I was alleged to have brought this young pup with me to take the place of the old dog I had mercifully disposed of; but the strange thing was that the young Max seemed to have his senile antipathy to Madame Von Krakenburg redoubled in his rejuvenescence, to use the appropriate word. This antipathy became so serious

‘if I don’t, what will mama say?’
 ‘She looked so irresistibly roguish, and added such a potent argument, that I foolishly consented. At that moment Max uttered a deep growl.

‘‘It’s mama,’ said Elsa, with a pout. ‘Quick! There! At any rate we have had a few minutes together, haven’t we?’

‘There was a rustling on the stairs. There was a quick cry.

‘‘Carl, my dearest son!’ Before I realized what had happened, Elsa’s mother lay in my arms, considerably closer than her daughter had been a moment before. I do not know what stirred within me, but, stunned and dazed, I strained my mother-in-law to my heart.

‘‘Mama,’ cried Elsa, turning pale, ‘you forget that Carl has important experiments to make. It is late, and we must leave him. He is tired.’ Madame Von Krakenburg gave me a melting look. I could not meet it. My eyes wandered to Elsa. She evidently did not blame me in the least. She stood tapping her foot with high-spirited impatience upon the floor. Her mother had disengaged herself, and stood trembling.

‘‘You will not forget your promise,’ said Elsa, in a low tone, glancing at the bewildered dog. ‘Max, you sleep with Carl, to-night. Carl, dear, won’t you kiss me good-night?’ She stole a triumphant glance at her mother. Shamefacedly, I kissed my fiancée on the lips. I did not linger there, but I felt the chaste and soothing influence that was balm to my harassed heart. Then I looked at her mother, tall, commanding, dark, magnificent and melting, and I did not know whether I hated her or loved her. Then the two women left me with Max and with my tumultuous meditations.

‘‘But my promised experiment nerved me, and in the careful preparation of a spot above the dog’s medulla for inoculation, I quite forgot the two ladies of my life. Max seemed to understand, as dogs do when you try to cure them. He did not interrupt or whine, but cocked his aged ears with interest, and tried to see out of his blind eyes. With infinite pains I injected the vivifying bacilli into his blood, sealed the wound from the air, and turned the dog into the hall to seek his mistress’ room.

Then I flung myself on the bed, glad to be at home again, and yet puzzled as to the actual outcome of the amorous confusion in which I found myself snarled. Soon youth and health conquered, and I fell into a troubled sleep, only to be awakened in the morning by joyous barking and the eager scratching of a dog at my door. Wondering what could be there, I cautiously opened the door. This was pushed violently to one side, and a magnificent Newfoundland pup darted in, and, leaping all over me, began to kiss me violently.

‘‘Whose was this creature? What could it mean? Then a mad thought illuminated me.

‘‘Max,’ I cried. ‘Max, is that you?’ At that name the pup whirled about me in ecstasy. But I could not rebuke his exuberance, for before me danced the first illustration of the vitalizing power of the serum at my command. Old age had been wiped from the face of the earth. Death could only entrap us through accident and illness. Immortal youth was the gift of my pleasure.

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that the dog had to be kept chained except when he was in Elsa's room, in mine, or out walking. But the noble beast seemed never so happy as when Elsa and I were together.

"Dear heart," I pleaded, about a week after my return, 'why can we not marry at once? I need you so much.' Indeed my need of her was becoming urgent. Whenever Elsa took Max out for a morning walk, her mother would run up to my room, ostensibly to put it in order. I do not dare to think of the wild passion that swept like a sirocco over my nature at those times. My heart would cry out for Elsa, while my lips were snarled in what Madame Von Krakenburg was pleased to call a 'mother's kiss.' I was on fire, and, loathing the dual part that I became willing to play, I longed for the flame on the one side to consume me, and for the sweet peace of Elsa on the other hand to calm and comfort me.

"As yet Elsa could not suspect my disloyalty, nor could I explain it. She was curiously devoted to her mother, for whom her placid nature had no feeling of jealousy except when we three were together and Madame Von Krakenburg overstepped the boundary natural to a future mother-in-law. Was ever a man in such a predicament? As I sat between the two at table, and looked from the one to the other, my heart gave alternate leaps. I adored the one, and I could not live without the other. If Elsa had married me then and there, the future of mankind would have been immeasurably changed.

"It was on a day when I found myself peculiarly distraught by the strange entanglement in which I was placed that Elsa's mother received a call from General Von Fersen. This officer was not only an ardent admirer of Madame Von Krakenburg but was in close touch with the Emperor at whose court Elsa's mother was once a famous maid of honor. It seemed that this general had lately persuaded the Emperor to restore to the heirs of the dead Von Krakenburg some family estates that had once been confiscated, and this meant a fortune and an independence to the beautiful widow and her daughter. Stunned by the happy news, the lady fell into a dead faint. I was hastily called, and together

the General and I carried her to her room. Elsa and I were then left together.

"As I was about to employ the common restoratives, Elsa put her hand on mine.

"Carl," she said in a low voice, 'I will marry you next week if you will inoculate mama now. She will never know it, dear mama.'

"Nonsense, Elsa! I exclaimed. talk foolishly. I must bring her to."

"Carl, dearest, you do not understand. I declare I will never marry you at all if you do not do this for me. Mama has been so unhappy, and, with this new fortune, youth will mean everything to her. I cannot bear to have her grow old. Will you, Carl? And we will be married next week.'

"But, my God! Elsa, don't you see?" I exclaimed, madly.

"What? See what?" Elsa asked, wonderingly. Then she straightened herself.

"You can choose. Take me or lose me. Now, Carl?" I glanced from the indignant girl to the silent and royal woman who even in her pallor thrilled me with a powerful passion.

"Elsa! Elsa!" I said. 'You know not what you ask. Anything else. My God! I cannot do it, and I cannot refuse.'

"That or nothing." She spoke with the icy decision peculiar to the blonde temperament.

"My cultures were always ready.

"Very well," I said. 'The result is on your own future. I pressed a kiss to my fiancée's lips, and slowly mounted the stairs to my room, hoping that the faint would pass by, and relieve me of my weak promise. When I returned, the woman was still motionless. Hectic with excitement, Elsa watched the process. It was so simple, so fraught with fateful results! In a moment the bacilli of life were sporting in the mother's veins, warring with age and death.

"How terribly you look," cried Elsa, glancing up. Then the unconscious woman moved. With a physician's anxiety I peered into her face as her eyes opened. To my frenzied imagination it seemed as if those crow's-feet, indicators of time, were even now disappearing.

"Carl!" cried the lady, with outstretched arms. Then a puzzled look stole over her

features, and with a deep sigh she sank into profound sleep.

"But I could stand it no longer. 'Tomorrow morning, the living-room as usual, before breakfast,' I whispered to Elsa. Ten minutes later I plunged into the frosty winter air, not knowing where I was going, only intent upon getting away from the terrible complication.

"I did not enter until long after midnight, and then I could not sleep. Brunette and blonde, death and life, seemed warring in insane phantasmagoria within my fevered imagination, but rest was an impossibility. Finally I aroused myself from some weirder vision than the rest, and, after a cold plunge, dressed impatiently. I was cooled and comforted, and my heart cried out to Elsa and her trustful love.

"Early the next morning I stole downstairs to the dining-room, where the little German maid had already lighted an open fire. Its morning cheer made my whole nature smile, and I forgot everything but my promised bride.

"I heard Elsa's familiar rustle on the stair, and boyishly I turned my back so as to appear surprised and thus prolong the joy of the greeting. A few light steps across the room, two arms entwined them-

selves about my neck, and I felt a glowing cheek pressed to mine, and the breath of a garden of jasmine intoxicated my senses. I closed my eyes in ecstasy, and turning, took the divine creature in my arms, raining upon her face, her mouth, kisses which were avariciously accepted and returned. Such bliss as this beautiful woman bestowed upon me is reserved for few to experience.



Drawn by George F. Tolan.

"WHO IS THIS WOMAN?" CRIED ELSA.

I could have fainted in my joy. At the moment when it seemed as if heaven had taken the place of this inhospitable earth, I was brought back by a cold, cutting voice from the doorway.

"'Carl,' it said, 'Carl, what does this mean?' Opening my eyes, I saw Elsa in the doorway. She seemed surprised and indignant. In my arms lay the most beautiful woman I had ever seen—a human Jacquemi-not—radiant with love, redolent with passion.

Ah, it was a woman for whom a man would commit a thousand crimes, and suffer a thousand deaths for one touch of her crimson lips!

"'Who is this woman?' cried Elsa, in a commanding tone. 'Explain her presence in your arms.' There the two creatures confronted each other. Passion and peace duelled for the mastery.

"'Do you not know me, Elsa?' the stranger asked, with a triumphant smile—such as only comes to the mouth of a successful rival. Elsa and I gave each other a quick, comprehensive look. Her tender, blue eyes expressed forgiveness, horror, self-accusation and hopeless misery. Ah, what had she done? What had I done?

"'Well,' cried the splendid creature, 'is this the way that I am received by my daughter? Carl was more sympathetic in his greeting. Oh, I live, I dance, I sing for joy, and I am so happy! I am just beginning to live. I feel as if I were born again. Carl, tell me, am I really beautiful again—or is it a dream? If it is, I will die. I could not bear to go back. Elsa, Carl, will you not explain? She stood there glancing from one to the other, for we could not speak, as the success of the experiment burst over our disordered minds. For I had conjured from the past, through the blood of the toad, the most glorious woman that my eyes had ever beheld. There she stood, vibrant with life, glowing with youth, eager with the enthusiasm of girlhood, a poem of passion, an ode to ecstasy, and with a heart that quivered with forty-five years of experience. I looked upon this creature of my microbes with blinded eyes. Who could withstand her? She was the incarnation of love. She was the empress, nay the temptress, of the world. Beside her, Elsa seemed a pale replica; but there was that hovering about the girl's lips which made me wonder that I could ever have wavered.

"'Mama,' said Elsa, her lips dry, her tone quiet. 'Carl did it; I asked him. I promised to marry him if he would. That is his great discovery. He made Max young. Now he has made you young. I—I did not know, I did not realize——' The noble girl averted, and I bounded to her side. 'It is nothing,' she continued, with great dignity. 'Do not touch me, Carl. It is evident that you have a decision to make. You can make it now.'

"'Before her daughter had finished, the young mother had thrown herself at my feet, and was kissing my hand.

"'My benefactor! My god! My creator!' she exclaimed, in increasing vehemence.

"There was a bounding on the stairs! A whirlwind in the shape of a big dog rushed in. It was Max. Seeing the hated woman at my feet, he seized her by the arm, and held her in a growling grip.

"This broke the terrible tension. In an instant I had caught the dog by the muzzle, and forced his reluctant jaws apart, dragging him by the collar.

"'I will chain him up,' I said. At the door I stopped, and looked back. Decide? A Jupiter could not have decided. I loved Elsa—I adored her impetuous mother.

"When I found myself in my laboratory with the dog, I doubly bolted the door. By this time madness had taken possession of my mind. To what impossible end had my impious ambition brought me! How I cursed those jars of jelly filled with life! I raged before the phalanx of glasses, of test-tubes and beakers filled with bacilli, shaking my fist at each in order. The window was unlocked. I threw it open for breath. Outside, the air was crisp, and the snow crunched and creaked under horses and sleighs.

"Ah, what misery had I caused when I dreamed of joy and glory to mankind! Is it possible that God knew better than man?

"The idea had never occurred to me. I thought it man's business to outwit God, and this was the result, this topsyturvydom of love.

"Something stronger than my will impelled me. I took up a jar, and threw it out of the window. It fell with a crash. A few minutes, and eternal life had frozen to death. 'If one, why not all, old boy!' I cried, turning to Max, who wagged his splendid tail encouragingly. Then followed a mad fusillade of microbes. Ah, how the world would have cried out for mercy if it had known what slaughter I was committing!

"Suddenly I stopped, aghast. The last jar had gone, and the gift of the toad had been irretrievably destroyed. God! how we spent the best of our years in searching for life, and how we cast it away! May I never experience such a horrible conflict again. I blessed, I cursed, I rejoiced, I regretted, I stormed, I prayed, I hated, and I loved. At last overcome, broken of life, lost of ambition, and forever deprived of joy, I threw myself on the bed,

and sank into blessed unconsciousness, Nature's calm for the storms that wreck and kill.

"That night I packed my bag, and softly stole away as I had come but a few weeks before. I did not see the two women again, but the fleeting kisses of Max's cold nose are still upon my cheek.

"For two years I have been a wanderer, although I have left with Elsa my address in case I am called; but I never expect to hear from them again."

It was long past midnight. I silently wrung the sufferer's hand, and slipped into my room, leaving him sunk in sleepless reverie. The next morning we were up at six. The fog was lazily lifting as the steamer mowed its way slowly up the motionless channel. It was low tide. A dory defiantly sculled across our bow with a big Newfoundland vigorously pursuing it, yapping the salt water from its mouth. At sight of the animal I gravitated toward Doctor Cox, who was at the extreme bow.

"Why not breakfast together at the Grand?"

"All right," he assented, resuming his hopeless stare, the look of a man searching for that which he knows he can never find. The kindly customs officers did not trouble us, as we had no bicycles or whisky, their *bête noire*. Half an hour later we were seated in a spacious dining-room, waited on by freckled girls who brought us huckleberries and little else. Both of us were ineffably bored. It seemed so petty com-

pared with the tremendous drama enacted by the silent man with his back to the door. The tourists were shoveling in the berries contentedly like cows. Then there was a hush in the clatter. The young clerk stood in the door, flourishing a yellow envelope.

"Dr. Charles Cox!" he called. Doctor Cox here?"

The doctor turned a ghastly shade.

"You take it," he said, "I dare not."

Mechanically I held out my hand, while the blood leaped within me. Somehow I felt that I was providentially in at the finish.

"Open it," he commanded. "Read it first, Doctor—then tell me."

The message had been forwarded from the Doctor's lawyer in Boston, and read thus:—

"Mama found dead in bed this morning. Max guarding her. Come.

"Elsa."

As I read this call from another continent, the face of my vis-à-vis became changed as through a potent conjuration. Happiness is, after all, the surest elixir of life. He threw off twenty years in twenty seconds. His face radiated power and manhood, for his joy was sublime.

"My God!" he cried. "I did love El Quick! There is no time—Good-by, Doctor, good-by. You were very good." Languor and restlessness had vanished like mist. He passed out of the stuffy room like a whirlwind, vital as an electric current, and was gone.

