

**THE
God of
Civilization**

A ROMANCE

—BY—

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TO
FRANCES M. BLUMAUER,

The valued friend who pointed out to me a pleasant path wherein my feet might tread; and to whose loving advice I shall owe whatever of success I may hereafter achieve.

THE AUTHOR.

Chicago, Oct., 1890.

THE GOD OF CIVILIZATION.

CHAPTER I.

“Oh! I have grown so tired of this continual round of parties, calls, and theatre going; I do wish something would happen to break the monotony of my life.”

The foregoing remark was made by Mabel Miller, who spoke in a very discontented manner.

“Why, Mabel, how can you talk of monotony? There is not a girl in our acquaintance who has more delightful changes of amusement than yourself. What with your winters, a succession of gaieties, your summers at Santa Cruz or Monterey, I don’t see how you can be so discontented.” It was Mabel’s cousin, Lucy Maynard, who spoke.

“Oh, I know that is what you always say, but it does not alter the fact that I am sick of it all.”

“Well, well, what’s the trouble? What is this, that my little girl is so sick of?” Mabel turned hastily as these words of her father’s caught her ear.

“Why, papa, I didn’t know you were here or I might not have said what I did; I ought to be contented, I know, after all you do for me.”

“Come, come; this won’t do, little girl. If you are unhappy why shouldn’t your old father know all about it?”

“I am not unhappy, papa, only I am so tired of everything. I was just saying I did wish something out of the ordinary way might happen.”

“How would a trip to Australia do for novelty, Mabel?”

“Oh, papa, do you mean it? I would like it above all things. I have always wanted to go there.”

“Well, Mabel, if you think you can be ready in a week’s time you shall go. I met our old friend Captain Gray to-day, and it seems he is bound for Australia, and is going to take his wife and two daughters along with him, and he has room for one or two more on board; so there is a chance for you to go, if you like.”

“Won’t that be splendid?” cried Mabel, clapping her hands and dancing gleefully about the room like a child.

“But, Mabel, you must remember it is a sailing vessel, and not a steamer, that you are to go on, and, aren’t you afraid that the number of weeks it will take you to reach your destination, will prove as monotonous as parties and calls do now.”

“I don’t mind the length of time that we shall be in going. I shall find something amusing I feel sure; will you go too, Lucy?”

“Oh no, thank you; you will have to excuse me;” laughed Lucy. I like the present order of things very well and will try a little while longer to find amusement in balls, and so on, and then besides there is Harry, you know, I couldn’t leave him.”

“No, indeed, I do not intend to spare both of my dear girls at once; what in the world would I do with you both away,” said Mr. Miller.

“But, papa, you don’t mean to say that you are not going too,” asked Mabel.

“Why, of course, that is what I mean; did my girlie think I could drop everything and trot off to the antipodes with her at a moment’s notice? No, Mabel, I can’t go; but you will be well cared for, as Mrs. Gray, I know, will look after your welfare as closely as would your own mother if she were living. And her two daughters will prove most delightful companions if they are half as amiable as they are pretty.”

“They are lovely girls. I met them last summer at Santa Cruz, and liked them ever so much. I know we shall have a nice time.”

“All right, then; you had better begin your preparations, as young ladies are not noted for their ability to do things up well at short notice.”

“I could be ready to go to-morrow, but as long as I have a week to get ready in I expect I shall find every minute of the time taken up, so I am off to make a beginning. Lucy, will you run down to O’Brien’s with me? I shall want a dress or so, and you are such an authority on such things, I want you with me when I choose them.”

“Yes, I will go to O’Brien’s with you; that is much more to my taste than a disagreeable, tedious voyage to Australia,” answered Lucy.

The two girls left the room to don hats and wraps for their shopping tour; and as they left it Mrs. Maynard, Lucy’s mother, who had entered the room in time to catch a part of the conversation, came toward Mr. Miller with rather a

troubled look on her face, saying, "James, how can you propose such a thing as this trip for Mabel; you really encourage her in her foolish notions of dislike for conventionalities. She has no mother, poor child, to explain to her, her duties and responsibilities, and I'm sure I have tried my best, if ever a woman tried, ever since I have been living here, to make her see how foolish she is to be always wishing for some new mode of life. She almost drives me to despair with her whims and her notions. You ought to help me in my efforts for her good."

"Come, come," broke in Mr. Miller, "you don't mean to say I haven't got the good of my only child as much at heart as you have, do you? Why, that girl and her happiness is my first care in life."

"I know, you think you are doing what is best, but James, don't you see you have spoiled her by always letting her have her own way in obtaining what she calls happiness? You ought to realize that Mabel is now twenty years old, and it is high time she thought of marriage instead of such foolish trips as this one."

"Oh, nonsense, she has plenty of time yet; and if she don't happen to get married I guess I've got money enough to keep her here with me yet awhile; hey, Kate?"

"I might almost as well talk to the girl herself as to you. Now, why can't she settle down to take an interest in society, as Lucy does? In a few months I shall see Lucy nicely settled in an establishment of her own; and if Mr. Howard is a little wild now he will settle down after he and Lucy are married

awhile, and I had hoped that when she was married and all that, I should then see Mabel as well suited.”

“I know, Kate, you are a great little matchmaker; but you see Mabel don’t want to find a husband just yet, and I don’t want to lose her yet awhile, sister; so we will just let her alone.”

Perhaps Mrs. Maynard might have felt inclined to carry the argument further, but at this moment the two girls returned, and with them Harry Howard, the young man to whom Lucy was betrothed. Of course the subject was dropped, and the few days that followed before Mabel’s departure was so fully occupied with the arrangements for her trip that the subject was not again referred to. These last days at home were made lively by a farewell afternoon tea and a round of calls, all of which Mrs. Maynard thought necessary for Mabel to make before her departure, although Mabel tried to evade making them by putting forward the plea that she was too busy; but her aunt was firm in her purpose, saying, “My dear Mabel, you do not seem to realize what you owe to society. You must make these calls or what will people in our set say?”

“Oh, auntie, I don’t care even the least little bit what people say. I don’t care for the people in our set, which means three or four hundred people that I don’t care the snap of my finger for, anyway; and who do not care at all for me. Then, what is the use of trying all the time to keep up with society? I like my friends, and I hope I have some friends who like me really in return; but I don’t care for society, as you call it, at all.”

Mabel and her aunt were not all likely ever to have the same ideas of society, as Mrs. Maynard was one of those women

who all her life had lived for society, and struggled continually to be a leader, but as yet her ambition was ungratified, for, though she was a prominent figure socially, she was by no means a leader; whereas, Mabel, having lost her mother in early childhood, had been the companion, more or less, of her father, a man kindhearted and thoroughly good, but who regarded social duties as rather a bore, and consequently Mabel saw the world through his eyes and had learned, very young, the bitter lesson of disenchantment as far as the social system was concerned. It was all a sham to her, and, as she was eighteen when her aunt and cousin Lucy came to form a part of their household, the ideas of the two girls were very different.

CHAPTER II.

The day on which the bark sailed was one of those clear, bright days that are so delightful in San Francisco, when the brisk breeze blowing in from the sea, bringing the color to the cheeks and giving one an indescribable feeling of thankfulness for the mere fact of being alive.

As Mabel stood on the deck, dressed in a jaunty sailor suit, she made as pretty a picture as one could wish to see, with the soft curly locks of golden hair blown out from under a snug little cap about her sweet face, and among the large party of friends who had come down to see the vessel off that was to carry Mabel on her eventful trip, there was at least one young man, if not more, who thought her by far, the handsomest as well as the brightest girl he knew, and felt that he would like very much to tell her so. But Mabel had a peculiar way of her own of keeping young men at a friendly distance, and the young man who looked at her with such a longing in his heart had not dared to speak of love to her, fearing to meet the fate of more than one of his acquaintances, for already she had had a number of offers of marriage, for she was not only a girl of wonderful beauty, but also exceedingly fascinating and entertaining. She had every accomplishment that could be taught a woman of the present day. Then another fact that may have had its influence on some of her suitors was that her father was what is commonly called a rich man and she an only child.

At last all was ready and the staunch little tug Relief, after much fuss and bustle and blowing of whistles, had made fast

to the bark. Mabel threw herself into her father's arms for a last good-bye. Now she stands leaning over the rail, with one hand raised to shade her eyes from the glare of the sun, and with the other waved farewell to those standing on the wharf watching the slow, majestic progress of the vessel out towards the blue Pacific.

Mabel strained her eyes for a last glimpse of the form of her father. It never entered her mind that this is the last time she may ever see him, but her heart is as gay and as light as a child's as she joined Mrs. Gray and her two daughters who are talking with a man of perhaps thirty, who is dressed in the pronounced English style.

As Mabel had already met Mr. Allen Thornton, who was a fellow passenger, she fell quickly into conversation with the group. Allen Thornton was saying to Mrs. Gray, "Well, you know I had intended to take the steamer for Melbourne, but reached San Francisco a day too late for the steamer, and as I should have to wait about a month for the next one, then finding that your vessel was to leave in a day or so with a pleasant little party on board, and as I have a fondness for pleasant little parties rather than large ones, not so agreeable, here I am. I do hope you ladies are going to be awfully nice to me and try to do everything in your power to make the trip a pleasant one for me."

At which the three girls laughed heartily, and Etta, the younger of the Gray girls, answered him with, "Oh, we'll make it pleasant for you, if waiting on us can make it so. I was just saying how nice it was to have a young man along to

wait upon us all the time as you won't have another thing in the world to do, and we shall have to keep you busy."

"Oh, this is something simply fearful. I thought, being the only man in this little party of idlers, you would vie with each other in your efforts to amuse me; but alas, instead of that, you intend to use the advantage of your superior number to reduce me to the level of a slave."

"Don't you wish you were safe on shore again,?" laughed Etta.

"I do not dare to say I wish it or you may perhaps throw me overboard and tell me to strike out for the shore. No, I will try to bear your tyranny," saying which he settled himself comfortably in a big bamboo chair, and after asking of the ladies permission to smoke and being granted his request, he lit his pipe. He certainly looked as if he were going to make the best of his lot.

CHAPTER III.

The days passed more rapidly than Mabel had any idea they would, and a delightful time they had, too. Reading, card playing, and an occasional old-fashioned candy making enlivened the time. They really did not heed the passage of time as the vessel, day after day, brought them farther into that realm of delight—the tropics. All day long they lie lazily on deck under an awning that had been put up to protect them from the fervid rays of the glorious king of day, and drink in the fresh sea air so warm, yet so refreshing, so delicious.

The party had become so imbued with truly tropical indolence, that now, even reading was abandoned by them. They were having a desultory conversation one afternoon when it occurred to them that a pleasant diversion would be to relate any strange events that had ever happened to any of them, and then weave the whole into one romance, drawing on their imaginations, of course, to make the final story more thrilling.

“Now,” cried Mabel, “Mr. Thornton, as you were the one to propose the scheme, you must be the first to tell of the events in your life that are worthy to be written in our crazy-patch story, which, I am sure, will astonish the whole world when we allow it to read our wonderful productions.”

“All right, Miss Miller; but as you are the one to propose giving our story the honor of being written I move that you be the one to write down all the events that have, in the past,

happened to our party,” Mr. Thornton answered with a laugh, as Mabel made a wry face at being picked out as the one to do the only physical labor connected with the plan.

“Wait until I run down and get a blank book which I have in my cabin, and we shall be under full sail,” saying which Mr. Thornton disappeared down the companion way, returning with blank book and pencil. “Now, Miss Mabel, to work.”

“But,” said she, “how can I write anything until you have told me what to write.”

“By Jove, I forgot you were waiting for me to begin. Let me see, to begin with I was born at a very early age, and——”

“Now stop, Mr. Thornton, we won’t allow any such old joke as that to go with our romance,” cried Etta.

“Very well, then; I was born at Brighton, England. Now, really, girls, I don’t see where I’m going to find the romance or strange events in my life. I’m in despair.”

“That isn’t fair, Mr. Thornton,” said Mabel, “you’ve got to go on now. I warrant you have a romance you don’t want us to know anything about.”

“Well, here goes then. I was born at Brighton, England, and lived there the first fifteen years of my life. When I was about a year old my father, who was a sea captain, left home in his ship for the very port which we are bound for, but which he never reached, as his vessel was lost with all on board and was never heard from. I lived with my widowed mother until I was fifteen, at which time she died, leaving me alone in the world, as I had no brother or sister and but one relative, an

uncle, who, at about the time I was born, had gone to Australia, where he had large interests in some of the gold mines in that region. After my uncle learned of my mother's death he sent me to school and college, in the meantime putting a liberal amount of money at my disposal, and when I left college I had a letter from him saying that he now wished me to come out to Australia and live with him, to take an interest in his large business; in fact to occupy the place of a son to him, as he was childless. Now you would think of course I did as he wished, but I did not, and why? All because a pretty little girl, with rosy cheeks and roguish, laughing eyes, had too strong an attraction for me; but I should have known that those laughing eyes could have looked as lovingly at other admirers as myself. But I trusted my little darling, even when with her arms around my neck she told me that 'papa must not know of our engagement just yet.' What difference did it make to me so long as I knew she loved me, even if she did dance half the night and idle away half the day with that young idiot Grayson, whose father is worth his millions. I knew that she loved me, but one day I awoke from my dream. What was this I held in my hand—a card to a wedding? Was I going mad or had my eyes played me false? No, my God, no; it was there printed on the card I held in my hand—'HELEN JESSUP TO HERBERT GRAYSON.' Yes, it was my darling's name. I dropped my head on my hands and gave way to my agony. But finally recovering myself I resolved to go to Helen and ask her what it meant; so dashing out of the house I was soon in a cab going rapidly toward her father's house. I hardly gave the cab time to stop before I sprang out and rushed up the steps and rang at the door. I asked for Helen. The servant hesitated a moment and then said, 'Miss

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