

PARTED BY FATE

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bedside, and dropping one drop into a wine-glass full of cold, clear water. "This will produce refreshing sleep. Ten drops would be fatal. But you are to live."

He held it to Uldene's lips, and she drank the potion, and shortly after the white lids closed softly over the great dark, piteous eyes.

Believing she slept, the doctor had stolen softly from the room, and Rutledge had taken his place at her bedside; not at the side of it, where she might awaken, and, seeing him there, receive a great shock to her nerves, but at the head of the bed, where he could watch Uldene, while he himself remained unseen. The sound of his footsteps as he approached made no sound on the thick velvet carpet.

A low moan broke from Uldene's lips, and peering breathlessly from behind the screen of silken curtains, Rutledge could see that there were tears on the long, dark lashes.

"I am to live," she moaned, feebly—"to live to curse the life of the one being on earth I would die to make happy—live to be a barrier between Rutledge and the girl he loves—live to know that he hates me, and will rue the hour life struggled back to the breast that should have been stilled in death."

"Oh, Rutledge, love of my life, you will never know how my heart bleeds for you." A moan that was most pitiful to hear broke from her white lips. "What is my life and my poor, blind, worshipful love to you, dear? I, whose love has been your doom? But I will repair the terrible wrong I have done you in taking you from Verlie. You shall be free to woo and win her for your bride, love—yes you shall be free at the cost of my own poor, worthless life."

She put out her feeble hand toward the little marble stand close by the bedside, and grasped one of the vials, and held it up in the flickering light, murmuring, faintly:

"He said one drop of this gave strength, while ten meant death, swift, sure, and with but one fierce throbbing pain. Ten drops, then, shall be my portion; and as I drink it let the sweet thought sustain me that I am giving my life—yes, my life—to make my darling happy, for then he will wed Verlie, whom he loves. He will never know that his happiness was purchased with my life—never know that my last words were, 'Oh, love of my heart! my darling husband, farewell!'"

Uldene raised the vial to her lips. Its liquid contents flashed like gleaming pearls in the flickering light; but it was dashed from the little hand by a stronger one, and a hoarse, thrilling cry echoed through the silence of the room: "Uldene, my wife! live for my sake! for my love!"

The voice and the words thrilled poor Uldene's heart to the core. In that one supreme moment Rutledge Chester's heart was touched and awakened as it had never been touched before.

When one moment of silence would have given him his heart's desire, his freedom back again, he had awakened to the truth. Uldene, his young wife, was dearer to him than all the world beside. In that awful moment he had chosen between Verlie and Uldene—yes, his heart had gone out to poor hapless Uldene, who would have given her young life to have purchased his happiness.

A true, deep love, such as he had never felt for Uldene, even in the old days, came to him now.

The great strength and depth of Uldene's love had, in the supreme moment when her life hung in the balance, won his return.

He clasped the frail form of this poor, desolate girl-bride in his strong arms, pillowed her dark, curly head on his breast, murmuring, brokenly:

"Live for my sake, Uldene. I have heard all. Live, and we will commence life anew, and be all the world to each other."

Two white arms stole around his neck and a joy that he never forgot came into her beautiful face.

"Is this a dream, Rutledge?" she whispered, nestling closely, fearfully within the shelter of those strong arms. "If this is but a dream, let me die dreaming this. Oh, Rutledge, has my great love won you at last?"

As soon as Uldene was able to travel, Rutledge took her abroad, leaving a farewell note to Verlie, every line of which Uldene heartily endorsed.

Rutledge and Uldene remained abroad two years, and, returning at the end of that time, the first persons whom they met as they landed were Captain Lansing and his bride, piquant, gay Neddy still.

"You ought to have come a week earlier," she declared, giving Uldene a hearty school-girl hug. "Oh, we had such a grand wedding in Washington, and, oh, the bride was just perfectly lovely. Guess who she was?"

"Not you, surely, Neddy; you've been married longer than that." "Me?" cried Neddy, agast. "Do you think I'd speak of myself as 'perfectly lovely'?" "I'll let other people say that," she added, with a saucy little roguish laugh.

"The description would be by no means out of the way, Neddy," laughed Rutledge Chester.

"But it wasn't me," declared Neddy. "You both seem determined not to guess right; so, as I'm dying to tell you, may as well know that it was—Verlie. She has married my brother Dick. He always adored her, poor fellow, but there were always so many rivals in the path, and he, being bashful, always thought he hadn't the least ghost of a chance of winning her."

Our story is ended, dear reader, unless, it is to state that three handsome villas, side by side, grace one of the finest avenues of the gay capital, and in one of them dwell Rutledge and his idealized young wife, who is now the pride of his heart and home; in the next mansion lives Captain Lansing and Neddy; and last, but not least, is the imposing home in which fair Verlie and her husband live, and are the most devoted couple to each other the sun ever shone upon.

Every one at the gay capital knows the strange, romantic story of these three pretty brides, and how their lives were entangled at one time so cruelly by the hand of cruel fate; and they tell, too, how happy they are now for a world, out of darkness, through trials and crosses.

Every heart finds its own true mate

Some time in life; for this is fate."

Mark Sefton and Nella are welcome guests at the three mansions. So is Miss Lennox, the poor, patient creature who was Uldene's friend in her hour of need; and, if report speaks truly, she will not be Miss much longer.

Verlie and Uldene never referred to the past but once, and that was to murmur, as they twined their arms around each other as they had done in sunny childhood:

"It is best that everything happened as it did, Uldene. The mystery that shadowed your early life is a mystery no longer. And if Rutledge and I had not been parted by fate at the very altar almost, I would never have been Dick's bride."

And in their happiness, we will leave them, dear reader, remembering the course of true love never does run smooth, but, to quote happy, dark-eyed Uldene's words, "All's well that ends well."

THE END.

THE BOYS WERE WELCOMED HOME

Trooper Moffat and Pte. Gifford Were Given Receptions on Their Return from Africa

The arrival of the troopship Roslyn Castle at Halifax with the second contingent stirred the Dominion once more with enthusiasm for its soldier boys and as these have been reaching their widely severed homes that enthusiasm has manifested itself in the heartiest sort of demonstrations. The people are glad to have their soldiers back again, with a gladness unknown at their going away.

On Saturday trooper Moffat reached town on the 2 o'clock train. Letters from him to his family at Valentia published in these columns have kept our readers posted on his work. They know that he was among those who went up the coast to Beira in Portuguese territory and from there struck away inland and after a wonderful march of 400 miles came to the vicinity of Mafeking from the north in time to co-operate with the other relieving columns in the attack that drove away the besieging Boers. They know that he afterwards fought at Rustenburg and Warm Baths and has travelled around the Dark Continent more than the average campaigner.

Mayor Smyth, mayor-elect Ingle, the new council, Chaplain Macmillan, Senator Dobson, Col. Hughes and a number of other military men received him at the platform which held a big crowd of citizens. As the bronzed face of the tall young soldier in his khaki suit and slouch hat appeared in the car door the band struck up "Home Sweet Home," the crowd cheered and his sisters stood with tearful joy at seeing their brother home again.

At the market square Mayor Smyth, Col. Hughes, Mayor-elect Ingle, Chaplain Macmillan, spoke words of welcome to which trooper Moffat briefly replied.

On Monday night Pte. Gifford, who used to work in J. A. Williamson's harness shop and went to Africa as a saddler came home. He was met at the station by the mayor, council and band and escorted to his home at Mr. Peter Fisher's.

A representative of the Watchman-Warder was on the C.P.R. train that brought battery "D" and some of the mounted men up from the east. They were in charge of Lieut. McCrea of Guelph. Miss Ailcock of Perth who was one of the red cross nurses got off at her town and was given a great reception. At the other chief places along the line demonstrations were held while the train was at the station. Three of the men were from Peterboro and that town was in festive attire for their reception.

The boys were: Trooper "Chill" Turner, son of Mr. J. J. Turner, Gunner Brown of the Kingston Military College, but home on 3-weeks leave, and Trooper Percy Price, a nephew of Lord Roberts. The last-named is probably the best rider and shot that went from Canada. He broke the horses before they went on board ship at Halifax. This was learned from his companions. He distinguished himself in action and was promoted several steps, while away. His father is a farmer near Peterboro. His brother, a member of the N.W. Mounted Police was with that force at the Queen's Jubilee and Lord Roberts went to his tent and asked about his parents, one of whom as has been intimated is a close relative of the great soldier.

Mr. Price said the Boers are a very hard people to get at. They appear suddenly in small bands, shoot terrific volleys into the enemy and then fly. Their horses are the best saddle animals in the world. They are easy to ride and do not stumble into the badger holes that are such a dismay to British horses.

It was for carrying Mr. Price out of danger that Trooper Inesley, (in the papers Kingsley) is one of the four or five recommended for the Victoria Cross. Mr. Price told of the incident as follows: "We were advancing about 20 yards apart when

we were fired upon from a kopje. We were dismounted and prepared to return the fire when all of a sudden a lot of Boers rode right at us from the foot of the hill and fired heavy volleys into us. Many of our horses stampeded. Mine was among them. Our fellows had to retreat. I fired a couple of shots and ran as far as I could but my breath gave out and I dropped behind a boulder and fired a dozen more shots. Then I got up I threw my rifle and ran as hard as I could. It was nearly up with me when Inesley rode back and took me up behind him."

Trooper Price was among 34 of the boys who were poisoned by eating some cheese when near Bloemfontein on the way down the railway. He shot several Boers. From one of them he took a beautiful Mauser rifle and bandolier, but when sick from the poison lost both, for which he was very sorry. The boys spoke one or two exceptions and declared one or two executions and declared that the men were in a good mood to throw them overboard on the way back.

They spoke with disgust of the house-burning they were compelled to do. For days they went through the country turning women and children out of their homes. If there were several bags of corn in the house only one or two would be given these poor people. "Where did they go?" was asked. "Oh God knows," said the boys, "but it was a job we hated. The houses were burned by shoving a torch in the thatch. It was too bad."

"Chill" Turner declared that if it hadn't been for the chickens the Canadians "commandered" they would have died. Several of the fellows who would not go out and rob the roosts were compelled to turn back from weakness. All they got on the march was dried beef and hardtack that was a terror to teeth. It was almost impossible to get wood to cook the fowls and he had seen fine pianos smashed up to make fires of. The boys had all the soldiering they wanted.

Trooper Price was close beside Pte. Milloy of eastern Ontario when he was blinded in both eyes by a bullet. Milloy is at home and now is able to do his correspondence on a typewriter.

"Chill" Turner saw Charley Graham. He intended coming home with them but through neglecting to get a discharge from Brabant's Horse he could not be received into the returning body. He was very much disappointed. Gunner Brown of "D" battery saw Col. Hughes when they and "E" battery were together for a while. He spoke in the highest terms of the colonel as a good fellow and good fighter.

News of the Week

Lieut.-Col. Biggar cables the Militia Department at Ottawa that Strathcona's Horse will sail from Cape Town for Halifax on or about the 21st inst.

The bye-election in South Winnipeg, to fill the vacancy caused by the resignation of Mr. Hugh John Macdonald will be held on the 31st inst.

The December monthly casualty list shows that from the beginning of the war to the end of December, 1900, 12,158 officers and men have been killed in action or died of wounds or disease. During December 298 officers and men were killed in action or died of wounds and 481 died of disease or were killed accidentally—a total death list for the month of 779.

The following are the market prices at Edmonton, N.W.T.: Flour per sack, \$2; bacon, breakfast, 15c.; bacon, dry, 11c.; hams 13c.; pork, dressed, \$5.50 per cwt.; beef, \$6 per cwt.; mutton 6c.; potatoes, 25c per bushel; wheat 60 to 65c.; oats 25c. \$22; stubble plow, \$18 to \$24; brush plow, \$25; iron harrows, (3), \$15; Implements: Breaking plow, \$20 to iron harrows, (4) \$25; wooden harrows, \$18; disc harrows, \$30 to \$35; mowers, \$55 to \$65; rakes, \$28 to \$35; wagon, \$75; binder, \$155 to \$170; buckboard, \$45 to \$65; jumper \$12 to \$18; buggies, \$75 to \$125; road carts, \$25 to \$50. Horses are worth from \$75 to \$125; cows, \$40 to \$60; sheep, \$5; steers, 1 yr. old, \$20; 2 yrs., \$25; 3 yrs., \$30. Hay brings \$8 per ton. Horses do not do well for a few years. It would be more profitable for settlers going in to bring high grade cattle.

Thursday last a deputation composed of Sheriffs Mowat (Toronto), Drury (Barrie), McBrady (Oxford), Gemmell (Kent), Watt (Brant), Bettes (Muskoka), waited upon the Ontario government. They complain that the revenue incident to their office is gradually declining, and, in view of the responsible character of their duties, they ask that some adjustment be made of the fees which will give them a reasonable emolument. Some of the sheriffs of Ontario are receiving very comfortable returns, but others again receive as low as \$700 per year.

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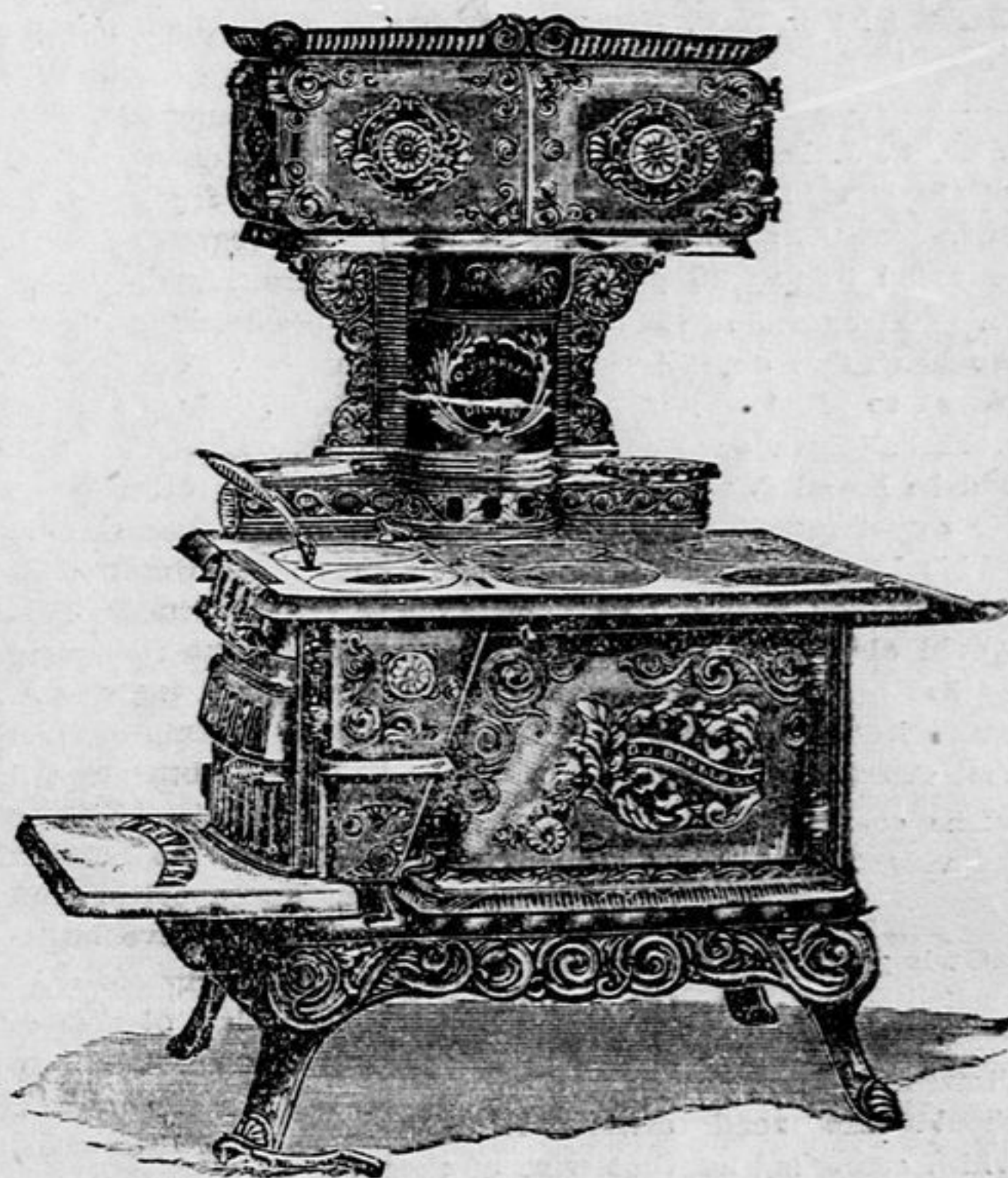
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