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And then he lay very quiet, with one hand half over his eyes, while Russel told him of Muriel—of her beauty and sweetness, where he had first met her, and how long they had been married—last of all, of his great love for her.

"You do not need to tell how much you care for her," said Arundel, a little wearily, when he had finished. "I can see that very plainly for myself; and I suppose this beautiful Muriel of yours loves you just as devotedly as you do her. How did you ever win her consent to let you leave her and come out here and hunt me up?"

Little did he think how cruelly his words hurt Russel; he did not see the shadow that fell over his brother's face as he answered: "Muriel felt so deeply sorry for you, Arundel, that she willingly gave her consent."

"Then she knows all about me, does she," said Arundel, bitterly—"knows what a miserable creature I am?"

"Yes, she knows all, Arundel; but there are no feelings in her heart for you other than those of tender pity. Her tears fell like rain as she listened to your story, and she told me to tell you that even though she may never see you, she will always bear for you a sister's love—that she will pray for you—pray that the remainder of your life may be nobly spent."

"Did she say that, Russel? God bless her; perhaps her prayers will help me; it is a long time since any woman prayed for me."

He stopped abruptly, turned his head away and lay, neither speaking or moving; and Russel, thinking he was tired, said gently: "I am afraid I have let you talk too much; you are very weak yet; try and sleep, Arundel."

"I believe I am tired; while I take a nap you go out and get a little fresh air, Russel; you need it."

But after his brother had left him, Arundel thought he did not sink into slumber; he lay there with closed eyes, thinking of Muriel.

"Muriel," he whispered to himself, "the name suits her; it is such a pretty name. Strange in all my life before no woman's face ever affected me as her pictured one has done, and she is my brother's wife. Ah, how sweet life must be to a man who has the love of such a woman as she must be; and how dearly Russel loves her—who could help loving her? I love her, I who have never seen her."

Then he fell to thinking of his lonely, loveless life. Never before had it seemed quite so desolate and barren to him as now; and thinking of it all, he could not restrain the tears which forced their way through his closed eyelids and trickled down over his thin, white face.

Though he would not own it even to himself, the knowledge that the woman whose picture had been a revelation to him of the influence a woman can gain over a man was a wife, and a brother's wife as well, was a crushing disappointment to him. It was singular, unnatural if you choose; probably it was because of his weak, low physical condition, but he had built upon that pictured face hopes which were brighter than any he had known since that terrible night when he had held Percy Ervingham's dead body in his arms. The thought had grown in his morbidly active brain that he might some time meet the lovely woman whose soft eyes had looked out at him so tenderly from her picture, and in her he would find rest and peace; she would advise comfort, strengthen him, and perhaps who could tell? she might come to love him. Certainly it was a wild, unnatural thought; but then you must remember that Arundel Anthon was mentally and physically in that low state when wilder thoughts than this even are cherished.

After that there was not a day that he did not beg Russel to talk to him about his life; and thinking to divert his brother's mind from his own sad thoughts, Russel would tell him patiently about his home, his friends, his young wife, until after a while there was scarcely a detail in his life for five years back with which Arundel was not perfectly familiar. It was pitiful too, the deep attention with which the homeless, friendless, wifeless man would listen to his brother, as he described his beautiful home, grew eloquent over his many warm, true friends, and spoke so tenderly of his lovely wife.

And many times after he had heard it all, Arundel would say to himself with a great pang of sorrow and remorse: "Ah, Russel, I do not envy you your beautiful home, your many friends, your wealth; but I do envy your wife—may God forgive me for it—your young wife."

But all this time he was growing stronger, and Russel began to think hopefully of getting back to El Paso; that would not be a hard matter as soon as Arundel was sufficiently strong to ride, for they had two fine saddle-horses at their disposal.

They had made all their plans. Russel had insisted that his brother should accept a large sum of money yearly from him, but through the liberal allowance would enable Arundel to live in comfort and luxury without a thought of work, still he had resolved to go into Texas, buy a large tract of land, and settle down to stock raising as a business.

"For I could not live if I did not work, Russel," he said, sorrowfully: "life is only tolerable when I am so busy that I have no time to think of myself; you have no idea what it is to have a past so terrible that it makes you shiver and grow faint to look back upon it."

Russel, of course, was to return to New York as soon as possible; now that he had seen his brother, had provided for his future, a great longing to get back to his wife had come upon him.

It was decided that in six months the two brothers should meet again in San Francisco, and that in the interval they should correspond regularly.

And, my poor boy, you must never feel that you are alone in the world, that there is no one to take an interest in your welfare, to care whether you live or die," said Russel, earnestly. "Remember that as long as Muriel and I live, you will have a brother and sister who will always love you and think of you. Be true to yourself, Arundel; God will find you something to do, and life will not seem so hard, after all."

"Will your bring Muriel with you when you come to meet me in California?" said Arundel, wistfully. "I wish you would, Russel. I would so much like to see her."

And Russel answered cheerfully. "If it is a possible thing, she shall come with me."

He did not think—poor Russel Anthon—that Arundel would see Muriel long before he would, that it would be many months ere his eyes would rest again upon his wife's face.

CHAPTER X.

It was the day before they were to start for El Paso, and Arundel Anthon, stretched at full length upon his blanket in front of the little cabin, was watching the sunset. There was a very weary look in the dark eyes fixed upon a huge red ball which every moment was sinking lower into its bed of rose and gold clouds, the white face wore the saddest expression which it is possible for a human face to wear—an expression of utter hopelessness.

Many times during the years which had elapsed since his own act had made him a wanderer upon the face of the earth, Arundel Anthon had been tempted to take his own life, never before so strongly tempted as now, for never had life seemed so terrible, so unendurable.

Sometimes he was unconscious of the blackness and intensity of the darkness in which we are walking, until a gleam of light reveals it to us. Often we can bear sorrow and pain with some degree of calmness and resignation, until by comparison with the joy and happiness of another, they suddenly grow intolerable. It is hard to reconcile ourselves to our own poverty when the riches of another man stare us in the face. After all, it is true, "What the eyes do not see, the heart does not feel."

Arundel Anthon had never realized quite so plainly all that he had lost, until he heard his brother speak of his own happy, peaceful life; then, with almost a breaking heart, he did realize, with bitter clearness, all that he had recklessly thrown away. Home, friends, the love of a wife, the spontaneous affection of children, these were for other men, never, never for him; and yet it might have been that, instead of being an outcast as he was, he had been sitting by his own fireside, with a woman's hand in his own—a woman, perhaps, with eyes soft as Muriel's—and with little children playing beside him. Ah, how that picture of what might have been came and went before the eyes of the lonely man, until many times he groaned in bitter agony, "My God my punishment is heavier than I can bear."

Now, on the morning they would start for El Paso, there to separate, going each his own way again—another brother to go back to his home, to find there love and happiness and rest, the other to resume the old weary life of loneliness and labor and horrible despair.

Small wonder that Arundel's face wore its look of hopelessness as he lay there with the sunset-light falling over him, and compared his own life with that of his brother's.

He could hear Russel's voice plainly; he was only a few feet away, talking to the Mexican boy—asking some questions regarding the journey back to El Paso—and after a few moments he came and threw himself down beside Arundel.

"Everything is all ready," he said, wearily; "the horses are in a splendid condition, and if we start at sunrise we will be some distance from here by to-morrow this time."

"Yes, indeed," murmured Arundel, rather absently, letting his eyes wander slowly from the western sky to his brother's face; and then he raised his head quickly, for Russel's face was deeply flushed, and his eyes dull and heavy.

"You are not feeling well, Russel," he said, anxiously, "you look very badly."

"I am tired and my head aches, that is all," answered Russel, languidly. "I shall be all right in the morning, after a good night's sleep. You don't know how I long to get away from here, Arundel; it seems as though to-morrow would never come."

But Arundel's fears were not so easily quieted; he had seen too many men stricken down with the fever not to be seriously alarmed at his brother's appearance, and, rising hastily, he mixed some medicine, saying as he gave it to him:

"It won't do you any harm to take it, Russel, and it may do you some good; you can't afford to be sick now, you know."

Russel laughed a little as he drank it. "Me sick, Arundel? Why, I have not known a day's sickness in years! I have a wonderful strong constitution. As I said before, it is only a headache that troubles me now, and that will be all gone by to-morrow morning."

"I hope it will be so," thought Arundel.

But at sunrise the next morning, Russel's headache was not gone; it was there still, that dull, throbbing pain; and, after making several ineffectual attempts to rise, he fell back heavily, his face growing deadly white as a sudden fear came over him.

"Give me some more medicine, Arundel," he said, trying to speak quickly, trying not to give way to that sickening fear.

"In a little while, an hour or so, perhaps, I will feel better; because we must start to-day, you know; we must get back to El Paso, I must go home to Muriel!"

And Arundel could not bring himself to tell him that not that day, nor for many days, perhaps never, would he ride back to El Paso; he could only stand there in silence thinking how he would break the news to him, until Russel, wondering why he did not speak, looked up into his face.

For a moment that which he read there stunned him; then, though his lips were colorless, they did not tremble as he said, bravely:

"It is the fever. Very well, we must fight it, Arundel, you and I, and for Muriel's sake, you must not let me die."

So, from the first he was brave, calm, hopeful; even when he drifted off into the delirium, which is the natural course of that terrible fever, he did not rave wildly, madly, as Arundel had done. The days went on, the fever raged fiercely, and Arundel knew his brother was more dangerously ill than he had been; knew it and could do nothing but watch beside him and see him grow hourly weaker.

This thing is certain, Arundel Anthon had then not the slightest thought of the fearful thing he was afterward to do; he had only one thought, one wish, one hope, and that was, that Russel might live to go back to his home, and to Muriel. He prayed, as he had not done since he was a boy, that God in mercy would spare his brother's life.

One day—it was toward nightfall—a party of surveyors stopped at the cabin and encamped about it for the night. They were Americans, all of them well educated men; and very anxiously Arundel asked their opinion with regard to his brother. Out on the plainsmen fraternized readily, and there was not one of those men who did not speak sadly, as in answer to Arundel's questions they told him truthfully that his brother had scarcely a chance for his life. They told him too, with grave faces, that they had that day seen what they believed were Indian signs, and Arundel was too well versed in frontier life not to be somewhat alarmed at the information.

The following morning before they went on their way, one of them drew Arundel aside.

"I don't believe your brother will live the day out, my friend," he said, bluntly; "he is sinking very fast; he is much worse this morning than he was last night, and I am not the only one who thinks so; ask any of the boys, they will tell you the same thing. And here's a bit of advice for you: just as soon as you possibly can get back to El Paso, or nearer to it than you are now; there are Indians about here, of that I am positive, and the red devils are not the most agreeable companions in the world; I've had many a brush with them, and I'd rather a thousand times take my own life than meet death at their hands."

The party had not been gone long before Arundel missed the young Mexican. At first the boy's absence did not worry him, he thought he might have gone a little way with the surveyors; but when the time went by and he did not return, when he discovered too that he had taken their best saddle-horse and Russel's rifle, he could not help feeling very anxious.

Could it be possible that the boy was in league with the Indians, and had gone to apprise them of the whereabouts of the surveying party? It did not seem as if it could be so, for he had been so faithful and devoted to all outside appearances; yet when he came to think about it, Arundel remembered many of his actions, which, at the time of their occurrence, he had thought were a little strange.

Slowly the day wore on, still Russel slept that heavy sleep which was so like death, which must inevitably end in death; and Arundel kneeling beside him asked himself despairingly why Russel must die instead of him.

"If death must have one of us why did it not take me and let you live, Russel," he whispered brokenly. "I have nothing to live for, you have everything that can make life worth the living—great wealth, many friends, a beautiful home, a loving wife, and yet you must die and I live; I who am a disgraced, dishonored man, afraid to go back to my own country, afraid to bear the name which is mine by right of birth, an outcast, a wanderer."

And then his agony seemed to culminate in the words uttered in such a passion of anguish:

"Oh, my dear brother, why am I not in your place?"

Was there a demon standing beside him whispering in his ear? for surely the horrible thought that came to him and which apparently his own words had suggested, was devil-born.

"My God!"

With a low cry he started to his feet, great drops of moisture standing upon his forehead.

"How came that thought into my brain?" he muttered hoarsely.

"Surely I did not think it, no, no, not that; for though I have led a wild, sinful life, I could not myself have thought of that—Great God am I going mad?"

It seemed so almost; the blood had settled in spots upon his face, his fingers twitched convulsively, and there was a wild, hunted look in his eyes. Almost staggering he walked toward the door and stood leaning heavily against the framework.

Suddenly an exclamation escaped him. He bent forward eagerly, his breath coming in quick gasps. Far away, shadowy and indistinct in the distance, he could dimly discern a group of dark figures, so far off were they that they looked like stationary black dots against the clear afternoon sky. But Arundel Anthon had seen just such dark groups as that before; he knew what they were, knew too that they were not stationary—that they were advancing rapidly.

"Indians," he muttered, as after another long, searching look he turned back into the cabin. "I was afraid the red devils would track us out!"

For a few moments he bent earnestly over Russel; there was not a particle of color in the thin face, the lips were blue, the pulse so weak it was barely perceptible. With a deep sigh, in which relief was strange mingled with despair, Arundel rose to his feet.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

The "Victory."

If the reader should at any time find himself a visitor to the first naval port of Great Britain—which he need not be told is Portsmouth—he will find lying placidly in the noble harbor, which is large enough to accommodate a whole fleet, a vessel of modern-antique appearance, and evidently very carefully preserved. Should he happen to be there on October 21, he would find the ship gaily decorated with wreaths and evergreens and flags, her appearance attracting to her side an unusual number of visitors in small boats from the shore. Nor will he be surprised at this when he learns that it is none other than the famous Victory, that carried Nelson's flag on the sad but glorious day of Trafalgar, and went bravely through so many a storm of war and weather. Very little of the oft-shattered hull of the original vessel remains, it is true—she has been so often renewed and patched and painted; yet the lines and form of the old three-decker remains to show us what the flag-ship of Hood, and Jervis, and Nelson was in general appearance. She towers grandly out of the water, making a few sailors and loiterers on deck look like marionettes—mere miniature men; and as our wherry approaches the entrance-port, we admire the really graceful lines of the planks, diminishing in perspective. The triple battery of formidable guns peeping from under the stout old ports which overshadowed them, the enormous cables and spare anchors, and the immensely thick masts, heavy shrouds and rigging, which she had in old times, must have given an impression of solidity in this good old "heart of oak" which is wanting even in the strongest built iron vessel. Many a brave tar has lost his life on her, but yet she is no coffin-ship. On board, one notes the scrupulous order, the absolute perfection of everything of cleanliness and trimness; the large guns and carriages alternating with the mess tables of the crew. And we should not think much of the man who could stand emotionless and unmoved over the spots—still pointed out on the upper deck and cockpit below—where Nelson fell and Nelson died, on that memorable 21st, off Trafalgar Bay. He had embarked, only five weeks before, from the present resting place of his brave old ship, when enthusiastic crowds had pressed forward to bless and take one last look at England's preserver. "I had their hurrahs before," said the poor shattered hero; "now I have their hearts!" And when three months later his body was brought home, the sailors divided the leaden coffin into fragments, as relics of "Saint Nelson," as his gunner had termed him.

Tacks.

A tack is a simple, unpretending sort of a young nail, noted far its keen repartee when pressed for a reply, and possessing the peculiar power, when standing on its head, of causing the cold shivers to run down the back of a man in mere anticipation of what might be.

Tacks are in season all the year round, but the early spring is usually the time selected by them for a grand combined effort, and then they flourish everywhere for at least a month. Since the time of the inauguration of the time-honored ceremonies of house-cleaning, every thorough housekeeper, with long experience in the line of duty, so takes up the carpet as to retain all the tacks in their original places, thus preventing it slipping from the shaker's hands, unless the tack breaks or the fingers give out. But the triumph of the tack is not complete at this early stage; it patiently abides its time, and on the relaying of the carpet issues forth in double force. After searching the entire house for a paper of tacks, without success, the unfortunate man drops on his hands and knees to begin, and immediately discovers four tack at least, and as he rolls over and sits down to ext act these, finds the rest of the paper directly under him, and then unless he is a man accustomed to put up stoves and join stove-pipe the chances of laying the carpet on that evening are slight. In selecting tacks from a saucer he always inspects the points of his forefinger, as the tack instantly loses its head when they come to blows. In argument the tack is sharp and pointed, but the display of either or both, depends largely on the amount of pressure employed by its opponent. In direct contrast to a good joke the amusement generally begins before you see the point, and this fact is easily demonstrated by walking the floor in your stocking feet, a well-kept room on such an occasion averaging two tacks to the square foot.

The future of the tack gives great promise of more extended usefulness and unlimited possibilities, as several of our most eminent college professors have carefully studied the effect of a sharp tack of reasonable length placed properly in a chair or under a cot, are about to introduce tacks, and do away with spring-boards in our college gymnasiums.

The Wisdom of a Solomon.

A curious decision is reported as having been given by a Chinese mandarin the other day. A Chinese who had been drinking in a tea-house pulled out a dollar to pay the bill. This was immediately claimed by an Indian, who was there too, and who accused the Chinaman of having stolen it from him. On the matter being referred to the magistrate a second claimant appeared in the form of a Japanese; but neither could make good his case. After profound deliberation the magistrate came to the conclusion that there was not the slightest evidence to prove that the dollar belonged to either the Japanese or the Hindoo; he decided, therefore, that it should be divided equally between them, and the Chinaman discharged from custody.—North China Daily News.

The French in China.

It is stated in Paris that China is making great preparations to resist French designs in Tonquin. The French Government is consequently being urged to take active measures. Telegrams from Saigon to Paris report 10,000 Chinese have crossed the Tonquin frontier.

Not a New Discovery.

There is a woman who eats with her eyes. She looks at food and her hunger is appeased. All women can talk with their eyes. The tongue is therefore a useless appendage to the sex; still there are women who have found something for it to do.—Progress.

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