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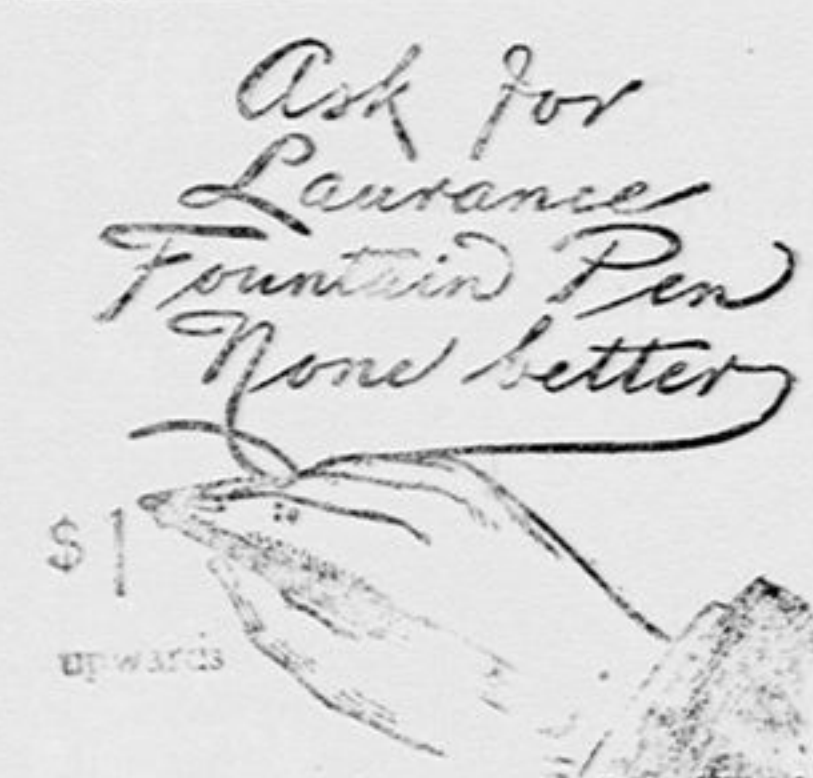
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The undersigned having been restored to health by simple means, after suffering for several years with a severe lung affection, and that dread disease Consumption, is anxious to make known to his fellow sufferers the means of cure.

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I HAVE PURCHASED THE Bus and Dray business from Mr. John Vollet, and wish to announce to the people of Durham and vicinity, that it will be my aim to make the business, so successfully carried on by my predecessor for the past two years, more successful than ever.

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Pumps from \$2 upward.

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HESPER

...BY...

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He yielded to her. "I'll get you some water, and I hope there are some clean towels. Let me know if there is anything else I can do."

"You are very thoughtful."

"We try to keep that room ready, so that when the folks come down it will be tolerable."

"I'm quite sure it will do," she said definitely and entered the room.

Raymond turned to Louis. "Youngster, can you shoot?"

"Not very well."

"Learn. A man going round this country with a young woman wants to be prepared for war. He may never have any need of a gun, and then again, unexpected, he may. A gang of hoboos like that today is dangerous when they get to drinking, and it stands a man in hand."

Ann reappeared with a pitcher in her hand. "If you'll fill this for me?"

"With pleasure," he quickly replied. After filling it and placing it in her room, he asked: "Now, which bag is yours? I'll pass that in."

"This one. But where are you and Louis to sleep?"

"Right here." He caught at a sort of frame hung upon the wall. It fell and was transformed into a bunk.

"Right here, close beside your door, I'll put the youngster. I'll not take much sleep tonight. The boys will need some hot coffee when they come in."

He walked to the door and stood there looking away toward the fire. "I'm afraid they're an all night job of it. The mountain wind is springing up."

"If you really feel that you ought to go," she began rather feebly.

"Would you feel safer if I stayed?" His voice possessed a note of tenderness as he asked this question.

His fall form, outlined in the outer darkness, again appealed to her with power.

She hesitated. "I never was among—I mean I have never been separated from my kind in this way before. I am a city dweller, and, I confess, I am a little nervous."

"Then you'd like me to stay?" he insisted.

"Yes, I wish you would."

"Then I will do so. I'm sure Barnett will excuse me when he knows."

Something—a whip, a pistol—snapped far out in the darkness, a little snapping sound, a puff of dust rose from Raymond's broad breast, and he put his hand to his heart with a quick, inward gasp of pain. "Oh!"

"What was that?" asked Ann.

He swayed back against the door frame, and a yellow white pallor came over his face. "Some one has touched me," he said slowly through his set teeth. "It's that cowardly bound Speck. Go call your driver. I'm shot."

He tried to walk to a chair, but reeled and fell.

Ann's first impulse was toward laughter. It was so absurd, so melodramatic, so perfectly impossible. "He is trying to frighten us," she thought, looking down at him, but Louis ran out screaming for Watson.

Raymond partly rose and faced her. Big drops of agony sweat gleamed on his forehead. "It's no joke," he gasped, seeming to divine her feeling. "He's put it right through, just above my heart. Don't let me bleed to death, he ended, with guttural harshness, and began to tear at his coat in the effort to get it off. As he took away his hand and studied his palm, which was red with blood, Ann's heart grew sick with horror. Her limbs grew numb and weak. Then, as she watched him tearing feebly at his coat, the long dormant woman in her awoke. She ceased to tremble and fell on her knees beside him.

"Let me help you," she said, and her voice was calm and clear, her fingers firm. When his coat was off he sank again exhausted, breathing hard.

"Cut away my shirt—get at that hole and plug it," he commanded. "Anything that will fill it. You'll find some scissors there in that box—in the window."

His shirt was wet with blood, and yet the girl clipped it away with steady hands. He looked down at the wound and then smiled up to her. "I'm all right. It was a steel jacketed 30-30. It won't bleed much, and it's above my lung. I'll fool him yet."

The driver, wild of eye and much crumpled of hair, scrambled into the room. "Who did it? Who did it?"

"Never mind who did it. Plug this hole," commanded Raymond. "Bring some cold water and pour on it."

Ann saw that the driver's wits were too muddled to permit of proper action, and while her tense nerves quivered she bathed the wound, which was already ceasing to bleed.

"Turn me over, cap," called Raymond. "You'll find another vent on the other side."

Louis and the driver turned him gently on his face, and Ann was horrified to find an uglier wound than the other. Sick with horror as she was, she contrived to cut away the shirt and staunch the blood as before.

Raymond was recovering from the first shock of the wound, and though his breathing was troubled, his mind was clear. "Now, Watson," he said to the driver, "spread some blankets under me, and then you go out to the



"I'm shot." He tried to walk to a chair, but reeled.

corral and take my brown mare, with the saddle on, and slide out for Wallace and bring a doctor. Don't urge the mare—just let her take her gait—and don't ride her back. Leave her there."

After the driver had helped him to a bed on a blanket Raymond added, "Now I've got to be quiet and wait, that's all there is about it." He looked at Ann. "You can go to bed and sleep. Youngster, you're in for sentinel duty tonight."

Ann interrupted him. "You must not talk, not another word! Lie perfectly still. We will keep cool bandages on your wound till the doctor comes."

He submitted to her directions and lay quiet, moving only to allow her to change the compress. Louis, when he knew what was needed, became almost as deaf as Ann and relieved her of the painful task of replacing the bandages.

But the powerful frame of the ranchman grew each moment more heart, and at last they could not dress the wound at his back.

CHAPTER V.

FOR a long time the silence remained unbroken except now and then when the girl bent over the silent figure to ask "Can I do anything for you?" Each time she listened with added fear, hoping eagerly for his voice. "Oh, I wish we could do something," she whispered now and again to Louis.

The boy, worn out with his day's excitement, struggled manfully to keep awake, but as the night deepened slumber rose about him like a wreath of numbing incense. His sense of what had taken place dulled, his head nodded and drooped, and at last Ann lowered him to the floor, where he slept, his cheek pillowed upon her feet.

Again the singularity of the chance, the absurd unreality of the situation, came upon the self contained girl, inciting her to a sort of hysterical laughter. Here now she sat—Ann Rupert, most conventional of persons—in a rude ranch house, alone with a strange, rough man sleeping in a deathlike trance before her.

The minutes elongated like bands of rubber, attaining the length of quarter hours, and the night stretched away into horrifying distance as she sat tensely waiting, hoping each moment for deliverance, expecting each instant to hear the swift beating of hoofs, the hoarse laughter of the men; but only the wind serpents hissed and the wolf howled.

At last immobility became intolerable, and, lowering Louis's head to the floor, she gently placed his doubled coat beneath it and with a mighty effort of the will bent again above the pallid man, so tragic in his supineness, and whispered:

"Are you still suffering? Can I do anything for you?"

He turned his head slowly and with a glance which made her shiver answered: "No; I have ceased to bleed. I am going to pull through if my pulse keeps down. Won't you take it?"

Timidly taking his brown wrist in her soft finger tips she tried to count the pulsing of his blood.

He waited a little time in silence, then said: "It's there, but it's weak. Don't you feel it?"

"Yes; it is more regular now," she answered.

"I'm not going to die," he continued in a hoarse, flat tone. "I could get up and mount a horse right now, only I'd bleed if I did. It's hard to keep quiet, but I'm going to do it. I can't afford to die now. You've roused me. There's something in the world for me to do."

"You must not talk," she whispered. "Please—it will do you harm."

She put her hand impulsively on his forehead as if he were a child, and he closed his eyes and lay in silence for

several minutes. When she withdrew her palm he muttered: "Leave it there. It—is so cool and soft."

"Would you like a wet cloth on your head?"

"No—only your hand—if you don't mind."

Her feeling toward him at the moment was like that she manifested toward her brother. "I don't mind, if it helps you," she answered, but a flush rose to her face.

"The boys will come in soon, and then you can go to bed and rest. I'm sorry to trouble you. You can go now. I'm all right," he said.

"I shall not leave you," she firmly replied.

"You're mighty good," he said simply.

The night wore on interminably. At a little past 3, faint and far, arose the cheerful crowing of a cock. Her heart burned with joy—the morning was near! As she waited the light came and her voice, faint and far away, touched her ear, and then slowly, moving in a disorderly squad, the weary fighters of flames came riding down the slope and across the meadow.

The herders did not ride up to the house, as she expected them to do, but turned aside toward the stables, and she could hear them as they dropped their saddles and turned their tired ponies loose. "Surely they will come now." Then all was still save the crowing of the cocks and that sad howling of the wolf on the hill.

Unable to endure the suspense, she tiptoed across the floor and hurried out toward the corral, her heart in her throat with fear of the body on the floor. She ran as silently as possible, as if to avoid rousing some fierce animal, and was close upon the men before they saw her.

"What's that?" she heard one quick, keen voice cry out.

Then each man rose from the heap of blankets wherein he lay curled like an arctic dog.

Ann answered them breathlessly. "Come to the house, quick. Mr. Raymond is shot!"

Their responses were like bullets: "Shot! Who shot him?"

"Some one fired out of the darkness—he was standing in the doorway. I'm all alone. He must have help!"

"Where's Watson?"

"Gone for the doctor."

Shaking loose from his bed, Baker started on the run for the house, but Ann cried out sharply: "Wait! Go quietly. You must not excite him." And, walking beside him, she returned to the house, and in a sort of daze the other herders silently followed.

The jangle of Baker's big spurs, familiar and penetrating, called Raymond to a knowledge of his surroundings.

He turned his head and looked at the men in a way that made them shrink and asked: "How's the fire? Did you stop it?"

Baker replied, "Yes, we got her under."

Raymond half closed his eyes. "I'm glad you're here. This lady needs a rest. Somebody did for me. Baker, you and Jones and Skutte stay here. Perry, you saddle a horse and get Abe and his wife. Miss Rupert, you go to bed; the boys will look after me now. I can't let you wear yourself out for me."

But Ann could not so easily be put aside from her plain duty. "No, I will stay till the doctor comes."

At last, when the wounded man was lying comfortably on a thick pile of blankets and the white light of the morning filled the cabin, Ann yielded to his entreaties, went to her room and threw herself down upon her bed with a sense of having put all her easeful, careless girlhood behind her. It was as if she had suddenly been flung into a gray and bitter sea far from shore.

Louis, who had been roused by the return of the herders and who sat watching their slow and painfully cautious handling of the sufferer with the mute, unemotional gaze of a sleepy kitten, followed his sister into the inner room and stood in silence till his bewilderment left him and his perplexity crystallized into words. Then he said:

"Jupiter! I didn't know you could

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do such things. What do you think? Is he going to die?"

"I don't know, laddie. I hope not. I've done all I can."

Ann must have dropped asleep there after, for when she woke the horizontal rays of the flaming sun filled the room and the loud and hearty voice of a woman could be heard out in the kitchen.

Her words came distinctly to Ann's ears. "Now, Rob, you've got me to deal with. I'll cuff your ears if you don't do as I say. You've got to eat to keep your strength up."

Ann rose hastily, but paused before the closed door with a new and singular timidity. The coming of another woman made her own position embarrassing. With a return of resolution she opened the door and met the big gray eyes of a tall, broad shouldered, slatternly woman, who stood over Raymond with a bowl of steaming broth in her hand. She was neither deft nor dainty, but Ann perceived that she was capable and good tempered, a natural nurse, experienced in the ways of the border.

"Good morning," she called, and her infections and many of her phrases were masculine. "You must 'a' had a right hard night of it. Friend of the Barnetts, Rob tells me."

Her familiarity and the essential commonness of her tone repelled Ann, who asked, with cool dignity, "Can I do anything?"

"Not a thing. I'm Mrs. Scribbins, Rob's highest neighbor. We come a-runnin' the moment we heard of this thing, for Rob's a mighty good man and neighbor."

Ann repented and held out her hand. "I'm glad to see you, Mrs. Scribbins. I'm Miss Rupert, and this is my brother." She turned to Louis, who had crept to her side, pale and silent.

Mrs. Scribbins shook hands, carefully guarding her broth. "I don't see how you kept Rob down. I've had to just about throttle him once or twice since I came. He's a headstrong cuss and hates being bossed or nussed."

"Has the doctor come?"

"Good Lord, no! But I've sent Abe up the road. That fool Watson is more'n likely to get lost and never get in. Even if he did he couldn't get a doctor here before noon, and that Wallace doctor ain't worth the powder to blow him up anyway. We need a bone doctor from Valley Springs. As soon as Don Barnett hears of this he'll come a-runnin' with the best there is in the Springs."

Raymond lay on his pile of blankets, his face expressionless as that of a dead man, but his eyes called to the

girl, and she bent to ask, "Are you better?"

His lips moved a little. She bowed lower, and he whispered, "Yes—bring Don—"

"They have gone for him."

"They must hurry." Then he added, "Don't leave me."

With a conviction that he knew he was about to die, she spoke, and her tone was tense with a desire to help him. "I will not leave you. Do not worry."

He closed his eyes again and lay so still, so breathless, it seemed that he had entered upon the last coma, beyond the reach of any medicine.

Louis, awed quite out of his sprightly self, drew Ann aside and whispered, "How is he?"

"He is worse. Oh, I wish the doctor would come!"

"The boys say that big, speckled faced fellow did it. He had it in for Mr. Raymond. Do you know, Perry, the Mexican boy, took a horse and was going to chase them up, but the boys wouldn't let him. They've sent word to the railway, and they'll have Speckle before night. Uncle Don said that these fellows were only hired men, but seems to me they're a good deal like the old time cowboys."

(To be Continued.)

AT THE DRESS GOODS COUNTER

You're sure it's fast color? How wide did you tell me? A full yard? Oh, yes. You are sure you can't sell me

Ten yards any cheaper than five? Just a minute—

You're certain it hasn't a thread of green in it? I couldn't wear green, and the light here's a little

Confusing. The threads in it seem rather brittle—

These dyes rot stuff so. Dear me, seems that one twenty

is high. Are you sure that six yards will be plenty?

Now what do you think—does this silk sample match it?

It has just a pale tinge of blue—do you catch it?

Now, what I was thinking was—all now, I wonder!

That's not the right sample at all! I picked it up just as I left in a hurry. And must have picked up the wrong one. Such a worry

It is to be shopping! Now, isn't it fretting?

And just as I thought I was so near to getting

Some skirt goods to match it! Is this piece as high as

The other? How would this look cut on the bias?

You say you have none in dark blue? Such a pity.

A dark blue in that would be awfully pretty!

What's that piece up there? No, the one just above it!

Voile? Get it down, please. Oh, a mire it! I love it!

Now, isn't that sweet? But so light. I was thinking

It might not be easy to clean without shrinking.

Have you some blue silk near at hand? There! Just lay it

Beneath. With that lining of blue I should say it

Would make up just splendidly. You haven't got it.

In red? Why is that? Oh, the red dyes would rot it.

Too bad! Red is just what I wanted. How queerly

It happens that you always see something nearly

But not quite the color. Well, if it is blue, it

Is blue and not red, and that's all there is to it.

I guess we'll go back to that first piece. You say it

Is warren ed goods? Oh, yes, this is the way it

Should go. And you think that six yards would be ample?

You're sure of that? Well—you can give me a sample.

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