

TRIAL FOR LIFE

"Did you—I beg you will forgive the question, Miss Elmer—but did you notice anything remarkable about this lady?" inquired the baronet, with interest.

"I noticed her extreme pallor, which, perhaps, seemed so ghastly only in contrast to her bright hair and eyes and her black dress. I noticed, also, a deep melancholy approaching despair, in the expression of her features, and a sort of restrained frenzy in her glances and motions. I saw her but an instant, but in that instant I will not deny that her appearance impressed me very deeply."

"Humph! humph!" muttered the baronet to himself, whether he approved or disapproved of the interest expressed by Miss Elmer in the person alluded to. "Miss Elmer, your appearance and manner, no less than the high encomiums of my friend, Dr. Seymour, give me the greatest faith in your prudence and benevolence."

"You are silent, Miss Elmer. I am well aware that the service I venture to ask of you is a very important one. If you feel any reluctance to undertake it, pray do not hesitate to say so," said the baronet, gently.

"I only wish to reflect for a few moments whether I could, with propriety, accept the charge you honor me with. I will at least drive out with you to-day, and I shall then be better able to judge."

"I thank you more than you can imagine, Miss Elmer," said the baronet; and in the favor of his gratitude he would have raised the hand of Laura to his lips, but she coldly withdrew it, saying that she would go and prepare for her drive.

"Sir Vincent held the door open for her to pass out the passage, and then he said: 'I have been in the habit of driving out daily with the young ladies; shall they join us in our drive this afternoon?' 'By no means,' said the baronet; 'by no means. They must forego the airing to-day, and after this, should you kindly continue to take charge of Helen in her hours of recreation, and other arrangements must be made for them.'

"She returned to her schoolroom, dismissed her pupils for the day, and then went to her room to put on her bonnet and shawl for the drive. She had scarcely drawn on her gloves, when Lizzy, the little ladies' maid, came to her door with Sir Vincent's compliments and carriage waiting down to the front hall, in which she found Sir Vincent with a lady, clothed in black and closely veiled, leaning upon his arm."

"When Laura came quite near, he merely throwing a slight glance at her, said: 'I have been in the habit of driving out daily with the young ladies; shall they join us in our drive this afternoon?' 'By no means,' said the baronet; 'by no means. They must forego the airing to-day, and after this, should you kindly continue to take charge of Helen in her hours of recreation, and other arrangements must be made for them.'

was settling herself in the carriage, she observed a gentleman on horseback emerge from around the corner, glance inquisitively at the occupant of the carriage, and then, as though unwilling to be discovered, retreat behind the angle of the house.

"He seemed to be about twenty-eight or thirty years of age, with a tall and elegant figure, a fine head, covered with shining light yellow hair, that fell in clustering curls around a forehead white, smooth, and round, as that of childhood, his features were delicate and regular, his eyebrows softly traced, his eyes blue, clear, and gentle in their gaze, his nose straight, lips and chin molded into the very ideal of sweetness and benevolence. Frankness, affection, and gay good-humor were blended in his habitual expression of this captivating countenance."

"No, no; but you may let down the windows, please; the air is stifling," replied the lady, in a low voice.

"See," observed this nervous group of little children as they passed; low much marked individuality there is even in these little people; their very looks and manners tell their characters as now and then, the young lady, who is the children of some wealthy citizen, with her pampere nurse-observe the children, all and shashes, hats and feathers—and see the consequential air of her over-dressed attendant," said Laura, wishing to cheer her companion from her sorrowful thoughts.

"The pale woman looked languidly forth, but neither the pomposity of the nurse nor the vanity of the babies could bring one smile to those sad lips."

"Better, better! yes, I should be better in my grave! Oh, for that dreadful sleep. Ah, why does death seize the young and the happy from all the blessings of life, and leave the desolate and wrecked to all his curses?" cried Helen in the same piercing tones of anguish with which she had spoken to the stranger.

"Can I serve you in any way, Mrs. Ravenscroft?" pleaded Laura.

"In no way but one; conceal from Sir Vincent the circumstance of my meeting."

"The excitement and vehemence of the child drew all eyes to follow the direction of her outstretched fingers."

"I pray you will forgive this intrusion, and grant me a few moments' conversation, Miss Elmer," he said.

few yards distance, where he remained calmly upon the watch. He did not all before Laura could form a conjecture upon the circumstance, she was startled by a shriek from her companion.

"She turned quickly round, and Helen Ravenscroft had already darted to the open window, from which she leaped, with her wild eyes fixed, and her thin white arms and clasped hands extended toward the horseman, and her piercing voice, calling in an agony of supplication: 'Rayburne! Rayburne! Rayburne!'

"The thrilling anguish of those tones could never be described and never be forgotten."

"The horseman smiled and held out his arms. A wild cry of joy burst from the lips of Helen, as she threw her arms around the form of the excited woman, and forced her back into her seat, where her resistance suddenly ceased, and she sank in a swoon."

"Oh, Mr. Cassinove, I am so glad that you are here! Yet I do not know how you can assist me, either," said Laura, suddenly recollecting Sir Vincent's orders that Mrs. Ravenscroft was to be seen by no one; yet greatly perplexed to know how she should get home with her strange charge, should the latter upon her recovery, again become unmanageable."

"The lady has fainted! Let me assist you," eagerly pleaded Cassinove, attempting to open the carriage door, and you may leave us if you please, Mr. Cassinove; but first tell me how much happiness it will to engage the untiring pen of your conversation, she said: 'There is quite a numerous assemblage of visitors here to-day. Will you not throw aside your veil and look out?'

"No, no; but you may let down the windows, please; the air is stifling," replied the lady, in a low voice.

"I hope you feel better," she said, in a gentle voice, turning to her strange companion.

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one's attention was called to him by the exclamation of the little girl."

"It is perfectly unaccountable. The unhappy lady in your carriage who swooned at the sight of this strange man, called him Rayburne, I think."

"Possibly not so much, Miss Elmer. And now I will give you my reasons for talking so deeply into the matter."

"I beg your pardon, Miss Elmer, but my young friend Percy here recognized your carriage, and insisted on coming up to see you, and was obliged to be ill. We were taking a walk through the park. Your companion, should the latter upon her recovery, again become unmanageable."

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CURRENT COMMENT

How many of your good resolutions have you broken? A big lawsuit over Cobalt Lake would be a tidbit for the lawyers.

Count Tolstoi has them bad again. This time it is Mongol domination of the world that is worrying him.

He is a very mild-mannered editor who does not kick Governor Swettenham about for exercise these days, and he would it would be hard for many of them to explain.

After all those stories of a Japanese army, under the guise of immigrant laborers, landing in the Philippines and causing Uncle Sam bad dreams, it is comforting to learn that only 27 Japanese landed in the Philippines in 1906.

Simulu, in the Dutch East Indies, has been overthrown by a tidal wave, and it is feared that probably 1,500 persons have perished. The year begins disastrously.

On New Year's Day the bread winners of Pittsburgh got a lift of \$25,000,000 in their wages for the year 1907. But the increase in the price of the necessities of life rather more than offset the wage lift.

The death of the Shah of Persia may disturb the relations in that quarter of the world. As Russia is the factor of danger there, however, there is less probability of trouble than there might have been before the war with Japan.

Speaking of the purchase of the municipal ownership of water in New York City, the Herald, of that city, says: "Some folk seem to think that \$500 is a low price for a corrupt Alderman, apparently forgetting that one can purchase a good dog for less than that."

Iowa is about to follow the example of Wisconsin and pass an anti-tipping law, inflicting a fine of \$250 on any one who gives or receives a tip. This law will be difficult of enforcement, but it will supply a reason for those who want one for refusing to give a tip.

Senator Smith, of Kansas, will introduce a bill providing that marriage engagements must be published in local papers and churches at least thirty days before the wedding takes place. Secret marriages are to be discouraged, but thirty days is a long time—the credit term in the sugar trade.

At the next Hague Peace Conference Italy will propose a limit to the size of warships that will preclude the building of vessels of over 16,000 tons, thus barring ships of the Dreadnought class. But if the powers can agree on a limit of size, why cannot they agree on a reduction in numbers, and even on a plan to make the use of great fleets unnecessary?

The new Workmen's Compensation Act, passed by the Imperial Parliament, comes into force next July. It is an Act that will cause a good deal of anxiety to many employers, however beneficial it may be to the employee. What it means to the "lady of the house" is thus summarized by the London Evening Standard:

SWETTENHAM-DAVIS.

LOTS OF MATTER FOR A FIRST CLASS OPERA BOUFF. (Toronto Saturday Night.) Three American war vessels steamed into the British harbor of ruined Kingston offering to help if help were needed. Ships of any other navy in the world in the port of a first-class power would have placed themselves at the disposal of the authorities, and been content with that. Rear-Admiral Davis expressed his intention of firing a salute in honor of the British Governor. Very sensibly the Governor requested that this formality be dispensed with, as it would needlessly alarm people for miles around who had passed through enough of the salute, however, when taken out of the salute, it was still more insane, ninety-eight in a hundred will rub the frozen part with the snow as hard as they can, and if soft snow cannot be had, they will rub the skin when frozen is very much more easily injured than under natural conditions, and unfortunate effects have often been produced in this way. Rubbing, of course, increases the warmth, and promotes circulation. It can be done with the hand, which is warm. A woollen glove gives friction, but at the expense of applying cold to cold. A very slight covering usually protects the ears, whether applied at the upper or lower extremity. A lady's hair is often enough.

There is a prevalent opinion that fur caps or other heavy headwear produce colds in the head, as the head may get overheated when the face is exposed, when taken off a chilliness results. This accounts for the common sight of a man wearing a fur coat and a Derby hat at the same time, leaving the ears unprotected, the part of the head most susceptible to frost bite. However, if the feet are kept warm, the other parts of the human system will be better able to resist the effects of the frost.

A MOTHER'S PRIDE. A mother's greatest pleasure is in seeing her little ones bright, playful and healthy. The well child is a blessing to the parents. A few doses of Baby's Own Tablets will make the sickly child well, or an occasional dose will prevent sickness. There is nothing to equal these Tablets as a cure for stomach and bowel troubles. They make teething easy, break up colds, expel worms and cure simple fevers. Baby's Own Tablets are sold under the guarantee of a Government analyst not to contain one particle of opiate—they never harm.

Most Obliging Host. The Duke of Connaught once paid a visit to the late Sir Edwin Arnold at Tokio, and just before he was leaving his royal highness told the poet that he had invaded England, "direct the medical officers of my squadron to make all efforts to aid cases of distress which perhaps do not come under the observation of your medical officers." In fact, he left satisfied with the look of things, and is going to take hold of affairs, Governor or no Governor.

When Old Maidenhood Sets In. When does a girl become an old maid? This question, blunt and shorn of delicate intendment, is now figuring in the somewhat insouciant of Philadelphia society. One might say that a girl becomes an old maid when she fails to marry before, but that is not the point. What is the exact year that waters in splendor and closes forever the gates of youth? Of course this is not a matter in which man has any word to say. No man should suggest, for any arbitrary dead line would necessarily bring down upon the luckless masculine head a storm of reprobation. It has been left to the women themselves to place the age at 40 years. Under this ruling a woman is a tender bud until two score years have counted their gloomy litany of days and the hair near the scalp begins to whiten.

Moving in a New Sphere. F. Linotype Carr, who has been in the employ of the Reporter in the capacity of compositor for a year past, has ceased from his high-low jig-saw business, and has taken up the composing room of Main street. During F. Linotype's career in this office he has absorbed so much knowledge as to induce publication of the Standard to the advantage of friends, he will join the Eighteenth Infantry, U.S.A., where it is hoped the heavy blue vocabulary of his associates and a steady diet of cold beans will reduce the superfluous and thus reserve a life so full of promise and self-esteem.

Following Common Practice. (Yonkers, N.Y., Statesman.) Church—it seems to be the custom now for an audience to hum something they have heard on the stage, when leaving the theatre. "Fishtuck-Yeh, I believe it has become quite common. The other night we had 'Uncle Tom's Cabin' & the opera house and the bandstands did some great growling."

"Idea." "Yes," said when the audience went out nearly everyone was growling."

