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It was a beautiful summer afternoon; the sky was a vivid blue, with fleecy white clouds now and then veiling the face of the sun and casting their shadows upon the ground beneath. The only sounds to be heard were the rustling of the full-leaved trees, the cool rushing "swish" of the clear and sparkling river, and the distant voice of the hay-makers busily at work amongst the fragrant hay. The quiet country town lay bathed in sunshine, and all was peace and tranquility, when suddenly the whole aspect of the place was changed; the air was filled with loud music, net quite discordant, although there was a larger preportion of drum than any other instrument

In a few minutes all the inhabitants of Kirkstone had turned out to see what this unusual excitement meant. The gaily. colored bills posted on the walls soon enlightened them, and they stood laughing and talking together as they waited to see the procession that was moving slowly across the old stone bridge into the quaint narrow streets; and the country children's eyes grew round with wonder and delight at the unexpected sight.

There were grand gilded carriages drawn by many horses, while beautiful "ladies were seated high up on the golden seats; there were piebald ponics with long tails, and a number of handsome cavaliers; and last of all came a magnificent white horse with trappings of bright scarlet, and on this huge creature rode a tiny child, dressed in simple white, with golden hair that hung about the sweet baby face in bright curls. All the girls and boys ran along by the side of the carriages and horses, wondering and eager, following the procession through all the streets quite away to the field out side the town, where many busy hands had already erected the large canvas tent which was a magic palace in the eyes of those children, hiding as it did so nany wonders from their longing gaze.

The gay procession went slowly through the gate and into the fields; and even then the children lingered round, gazing at the bright pictures outside the tent, and crying to peep through the canvas door to get a tiny glimpse of the splendor beyond.

"Dick, Dick!" cried the little girl with the golden locks, putting out her tiny hands to be lifted down; and Dick, who had been laying on the grass with a pipe in his ...outh, sprang up quickly and clasped her

ntly with his strong arms. . strange contrast these two presented the pretty innocent child and the careworn ated-looking man, on whose still handsome face there was so plainly written the story of the ruined life he thought so little of. And yet, in spite of the hard wild look of his fine features, there lurked in his blue eyes something indescribably tender and loving as he gazed on the child's eager happy face.

"And have you had a nice ride, Fairy, and seen many pretty things?" he asked. "Yes; the trees, Dick, are so pretty; and the water is white like milk, and makes such a funny noise.

"We will go and see it together some time -shall we, darling

"You dear old Dick - I do love you!" she answered, her voice growing brighter than ever, as she clasped her tiny arms tightly

round his neck. The tender look in his eyes deepened, and even the hard mouth that the heavy mustache almost covered softened a little at her caresses.

The gaily-dressed women changed their bright robes and appeared in their everyday apparel, standing in groups, laughing and talking together in loud tones, while

the men lounged about smoking. One of the riders came up to where Dick was standing; she was a shabbily-dressed

woman with a white careworn face, from which her dark eyes gleamed brightly. "Come with me, Fairy; we will go home now and have some tea," she said.

"And Dick, too!" cried Fairy, holding

fast to his strong supple hand. "And Dick, too, if he will come," said her

So the three passed out of the field and walked out into the now deserted streets.

It was a poorly furnished but clean lodging in a side-street which for a few short | self. days Fairy and her mother would call home, and yet, in spite of the common surrounding and the simple fare it was more homelike than any place that Dick had known

for many years.
"Wild Dick," as he was called, had joined the travelling circus only a few weeks before. He was one of the finest bareback riders in the world, and could command a high salary, but he was a restless, roving character, and could not stop in one place any length of time. So for the sake of the continual change of scenery he threw up ...is engagement with a first-class company, and joined first one travelling troupe, then

another. He had signed an agreement to stay for three months with this company, and already six weeks of the time had passed away. He had proved to be the jolliest, most reckless and foolhardy comrade amongst them, lavish with his money, and willing to take even more than his share of hard work. He was a general favorite, and even the loud-voiced careworn women, whose company he shunned, had a good word for him, for they saw how kind and good he was to their poor children, whose lives were so hard, whose aching limbs so often smarted

from the effects of rough blows, and upon whose ears kind works so rarely fell. And yet this man lived a bad, reckless life drowning any vain regrets of yearings for the past in wildest dissipation, doing such foolbardy feats that it was not unlikely would one day suddenly launch him, unprepared as he was, into eternity. His love for children led him to notice Fairy Brenham, or, as she was described on the gaily. colored posters, "the fairy rider, the wonder of the world." He saved her one day from a bad fall by skillfully catching her in his strong arms; and from that day he had won her childish love, and in spite of his hard reckless life this pure child's affection

had touched the one soft place in his heart. As Fairy, in her childish voice, said a simple grace, he felt a curious choking sensation. It was so long since he heard such words, and they brought back to his memory a vision of a pretty breakfast-room, the table bright with flowers, and he could almost hear his mother uttering the words in her soft gentle voice. His mother! If she could but see him now! It was only for a moment that the memory of the past over came him, then he was living in the present again, trying to harden his heart,

striving to torget. He looked at Fairy's lovely face, and lis tened to her merry clatter and laughter then he glanced at the pale woman whose careworn features were lightened up with a mother's love, and, in spite of his efforts,

his heart softened again. "Fairy and I are going to be fast friends always, are we not?" he aske i.

Fairy nodded her head and laughed in answer, and her mother looked eagerly, searching into Dick's handsome face.

"I want my little girl to grew up goodhelp me to teach her," she said impulsively. And as she spoke a vivid flush of color rushed into her thin cheeks, and she put out her wasted hands with a pleading gesture.

"I should be a sorry teacher," he answered, bitterly. "Do you not yet know the sort of a man I am? They call me 'Wild Dick' because they say I stop at nothing that is reckless or wicked, and when they say that they say right!"

But I see something good in your face; I trust you," was her quick reply. He laughed a low but strangly forced

laugh that was almost pathetic. "You trust me! . Ah, but I am not to be trusted! You must know what my character is. I am a bad man-dissolute, a drunkard and yet you say you trust me." He paused for a moment, then went on quickly, "I am not fit even to touch that pure little child of yours. I realized how low I had fallen-how bad he was only when I felt her first kiss upon my face." His voice faltered, and with a low groan of despair he hid his face with his shaking hands.

"Dick's crying, mother: Dick must no cry!" said Fairy. And with her small fingers she removed his hands, then pressed tender childish kisses upon his face

"You see how she loves you; it is because you are always so good to her, so kind too all the children. Oh, Dick, it is not yet to late for you to turn over a new leaf, to be: gin life again!"

"Yes, it is too late for me now," he answered huskily; and without another word. he went down the narrow staircase and out into the street.

On he walked, passed the old bridge and into a quite wood through which a stream danced over grey rocks, and there he threw himself upon the long grass, and with tightly-clenched hands and an expression of deep anguish upon his face, looked back at all his past life, shuddering with shame at the depth to which he had fallen. He did not spare himself. He recalled every scene, however remorseful its hideous blackness made him feel now. The weight of sin that burdened his wasted life almost crushed him, and made him feel hopeless and despairing. He was too full of bitterness to try, as Mrs. Brenham had suggested, to begin his life

He knew there was still some goodness, some purity left in the world. The very thought of the poor circus-rider whom he had just left made him realize that; for, although placed amid trying surroundings, had been-his mother whom he was never to see again, for by his life he had forever shut out that hope - his sweet mother, who had died with his hand clasped lovingly in hers. With a sob of despair, he cried-

"Ah, mother, if if you had lived, I should not have fallen so low -so low!" He lay there oblivious of the flight of time, until the sound of the distant church clock made him start up. It was striking eight, and already the bright lights of the of the circus would be burning and the work of the evening would have begun. He walked back quickly, and was greeted with a shower of abuse because of his delay and shrinking of work, and language just as coarse was on his lips, when the remem brance of the simple words, "I trust you," checked it, and, without answering, he

went into the tent. The lights flared and fluttered, the band played noisily, and round the ring paced the well-trained horses, while the seats were crowded with eager spectators. It was "Wild Dick's" turn, so hastily changing his clothes, he rode into the brightly-lighted ring. Never had he ridden as he rode that night, for his hands were steady, his head was cool. The shouting and the clapping ot many hands made him smile bitterly, for his usual excitement was absent that night, and he saw the hollow falseness of his life

as he had never seen it before. As he retired from the ring, he passed Fairy, who was sitting on a small stool just outside, trying to keep her eyes open. Her share of the entertainment was over, and she was waiting for her mother, who had still one more part to undertake. She stood patiently waiting her turn, her dark eyes looking strangely bright and wistful, while such a vivid color flushed her cheeks that she stood quite young and pretty.

"You look better to-night, Mrs. Brenham,

said Dick as he passed her, "Do I? I am very tired. I was just thinking how nice it must be to rest, to have nothing to do but rest." She uttered the works dreamily, as it speaking to her-

"And Fairy is tired, too," said Dick, lifting the child in his strong arms as he spoke, and stroking her fair head tender-

"There is no rest for any of us until our work is done," remarked Mrs. Brenham. Fairy fell fast asleep in Dick's arms, and he was still holding her when the riders

came slowly back. The grand quadrille was finished, and Mrs. Brenham's work for the evening was over. She was the last to dismount, and got down slowly, holding up her gaudy habit with careful hands. Her face had lost its bright crimson flush, and looked gastly pale in the dim light. She glanced at Fairy with a smile. "Is she asleep?" she asked.

"Yes; poor little mortal, she seems quite tired out," Dick answered. Then he added "If you are going home now, I will carry her for you.

"Thank you : but won't you be wanted!" she asked gently. "I can very scon run back again," he

answered. "Then I will be quick and change my dress." She made a move forward, then suddenly stopping, looked up at Dick with eyes full of languish. "I feel so faint, so ill," she whispered; and even as she spoke she staggered and fell, a stream of blood rushing from her pale lips and dyeing the

tawdry yellow habit that she wore. In a moment all was confusion. Dick handed the sleeping child to a woman wh was standing near, and went and knelt by Mrs. Brenham's side. Another of the men had rushed to fetch a doctor, who in a few

minutes was at her side. "It is a case of a very few minutes; she is in the last stage of consumption and has no strength to sustain such severe hemorrage," he said, and at his words a murmur of pity and sorrow came from the crowd of sympathetic lookers-on TO BE CONTINUED.

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