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SENTENCE. FROM A TWO YEARS'

Back from a two years' sentence! And though it had been ten, You think, I were scarred no deeper In the eyes of my fellow men. "My fellow men?"-sounds like a satire, You think-and I so allow, Here, in my home since childhood-

Yet more than a stranger now!

Pardon. Nor wholly a stranger, For I have a wife and child That woman has wept for two long years, And yet last night she smiled! Smiled, as I leapt from the platform

Of the midnight train, and then-All that I knew was that smile of hers, And our babe in my arms again!

Dack from a two years' sentence-But I have thought the whole thing through-And I looked straight up in the blue Of the blessed skies with my hat off! Oho! I've a wife and child;

That woman has wept for two long years, And yet last night she smiled! -James Whitcomb Riley in Indianapolis Journal.

HELEN.

I asked Helen if I could speak to her one moment. This was on Monday. Helen was in the hall-fastening a string around a bundle of magazines. Close by stood Elisabeth Stubbs, our parlor maid, with a basket. The basket contained a complete military suit and the very miscellaneous costume in which I attended to our furnace fire.

"No, Harry," said Helen, hurriedly, "I'm late now."

The house jarred with the closing of the street door. Helen was not a violent person. She was gentle as a lamb; but a lamb with seven magazines to distribute and belated for a dress rehearsal cannot be compared to a lamb under ordinary circumstances, ?

Tuesday afternoon I made a second attempt. "Helen," I said, very decidedly, "I wish to ask you a question." We were again in the hall. Helen still wore the bonnet. I do not think she slept in it, although she always appeared with it on her head at breakfast. A bundle of German plays, very much out of the binding, replaced the magazines. That afternoon the military dress, my furnace suit and Mildred Smith's brother's dress coat were to figure among other costumes before the Tuesday German club. Elisabeth Stubbs acted as dressing maid in the green room, and graciously told me later that my furnace suit looked awful funny on Miss Mildred Smith, who was some kind of a soap man, and that the most beautiful part of the play was almost spoiled by young Mr. Smith, who came home and wanted his coat because he was going away in the train, and if it hadn't be a for his mother he would have gone right out the stage and asked for it, and that he was just horrid because he had to go off without i', and that Miss Helen told Miss Mildred that her brother Harry wouldn't have made

any fuss at all. Naturally Helen paid less attention to me this afternoon than the day before. In fact the did not seem to notice my presence, but repeated her role as she put on her gloves, and went out of the house saying, "Ich habe nur das eine Wort, ich liebe Sie." Wednesday I chose the hour of 7 p. m., judging that would be a moment of respite between the engagements of the day and the evening. I opened the parlor door and said-not very pleasantly -"Helen! I wish you'd stop long enough to tell me"- In the room sat a circle of ladies; one of them was saying: "I think each of the eight vice presidents should pledge herself to twelve suits." Helen, with a book and a pencil in her hand, quietly shut the door in my

"What's in the parlor, Jane?" I asked the

"Don't yer know, Mister Harry?" said Jane. "Sure it's the Injins as comes the first Wednesday in every month." Aunt Charlotte, warming her feet by the kitchen range, explained, "It is the Indian meeting, Harry; something Helen has an interest in. I believe she is one of the vice presidents, and chairman of the press committee."

"I told yer as how it was the Injins," came from the sink; "yer country aint treated thim well; there's a whole pile of illigant little pink papers about 'em up in Miss Helen's room. Fine names these chieftains got!-some of

em much as three and four inches long." "You didn't want the parlor just now, did you, Harry dear?" continued Aunt Charlotte, "I think you had better look at the furnace; the ladies used to meet in the church vestry, but it was too cold and damp; you know it's

half under ground, Harry." "Yes," I said. "The sexton never built the fire until just before the meeting began, and I know it must have been colder there than in any Indian wigwam-that is why we thought the

ladies had better meet here. You don't want your sister to take cold, Harry dear?" "No; I did not want any of them to take

Thursday I went down early to breakfast, det rmined to have my question answered. Elisabeth Stubbs, wearing an injured expression, stopped her work to inquire if Miss Helen were a Nihilist. It appeared that the postman had made this suggestion to our maid servant.

My sister sat at the breakfast table-her bonnet on. The pile of letters before her gave me a clew to the postman's attempted joke. Envelopes long, square, narrow, broad, white, blue, brown, buff; postmarks indicating remote towns in the United States; po-tmarks from Canada, England, France, Japan; a journal from Heidelberg, and a postal from Constantinople. Helen held communications with all parts of the world; she knew people everywhere; she belonged to several societies whose work was carried on entirely through correspondence; she also wrote for various periodicals-the manuscripts were often returned, thereby largely increasing her mail. They were not returned, be it understood, from lack of merit; even Aunt Charlotte and I considered them good, and we were no exception to the rule of unappreciative families.

My sister looked at me absently-tol4 me to order a barrel of flour sent that morning to the St. Margaret Orphan asylum, asked Aunt Charlotte if she had slept well and then hurriedly ran over a page of her note

"Nine to 10, French reading; 10 to 11, see about Soldiers' monument; 11 to 12, buy gingham for asylum; 13 to 1, Diet mission; 3 to 4, read paper at club; then see sick woman, tell people about change of place, and then collect magazine club fees."

Here I will explain that Helen was secretary of a club called "The Bohemians." There were 100 members, men and women, clever, charming, delightful people. They read "papers" and talked on various art topics, and it was a great honor to be of them. One of their Bohemian ways was an occasional uncertainty as to the next place of meeting, and upon Helen rested the responsibility of informing 100 people where this next place would be. This explains the brief little memorandum of "Teil people about change

of place." "Six to 7, dinner; 7 to 8, look over carly" history of the Jews in Venice; 8 to 11, Scakespeare club; 11 to 12, find play for reform school-and oh, Harry," concluded

my sister, "do you know of any play suitable for boys-semething bright and interesting, with no love making f"

I did not. "Helen," said Aunt Charlotte mildly, "I notice you never leave any time between your hours. I mean, time to go from one place to another. I am afraid you walk very fast on the street. I was watching you the other day, and it seemed to me as if your head were a long distance in front of your feet. It is very inelegant for a woman to get a bad gait,"

I did not dare ask my question that day, neither did I Friday nor Saturday-the last. of the week being always very crowded-and as for Sunday, there was morning and evening service, and Sunday school, and the organ to play at the Old Ladies' home, and several sick people to visit. No city pastor with a number of outlying mission parishes could be more occupied. Aunt Charlotte suggested that if I were very anxious to ask Helen anything, I should join her Sunday school class, that being composed of boys of all ages, whom Helen encouraged in conversation.

Three months brought no answer to my question. We lived in a perfect jumble of ideas; door bell always ringing, parior always full of strange people, all kinds of clubs meeting in the library, all kinds of things given in the house-bazars, readings, concerts, charades, operettas, cooking class, Sunday school teachers' meetings, art exhibitions, loan exhibitions, auctions of club books and comedies and tragedies in foreign tongues. The maids in the kitchen joined in this intellectual dissipation. Aunt Charlotte, teaching Elisabeth Stubbs a few geographical notions, was told three times in one evening that Cape Horn was the capital of Brazil, By way of explanation, Elisabeth added that her mind was on her Sunday school lesson; that she bad the whole book of Daniel to learn, and that next week she should have all of Corinthians and Axes! Jane did not aspiro to books, but, having lost a distant relative, indulged in the elegance of a black crape bounet, without which she would not even venture as far as the corner letter box. Neither would she use her Christmas present, a nice brown silk umbrella. Being in mourning, how could she! To keep things pleasant, we

gave her a black siik one. And Aunt Cl. rlotte and I, in our narrow sphere, grew dizzy and tired and worried. One day at lunch came the beginning of a crisis; something queer about Helen's head caught my attention. Either her bonnet was growing smaller or her head bigger, or both. Aunt Charlotte also noticed it; she put on her glasses, and said, "Helen, some one has certainly cut off the front of your bonnet; it is the smallest thing I ever saw on a woman's head."

Helen replied that her bonnet was just the same as it always had been, and if we were coming to the Japanese tea, we had better come between 5 and 6, as then the lanterns would be lighted, and that was the pleasantest time for meeting people.

By means of Japanese screens, umbrellas, rugs, divans, fans and fancies, the first floor of an old fashioned mansion was transformed into a Japanese tea house. It was a place of fascinating color, brilliant with lanterns, and mysterious with hidden perfume. A Japanese page opened the door, Japanese maidens received the American money, and the bewildered guest passed from sunlight into lantern light. More fair maidens in beautiful Japanese dress greeted him, Japanese tea was served in Japenese cups on Japanese trays, accompanied by sugar in Japanese bowls, and, to make the charm greater, the wearers of the rich foreign dresses moved and talked and smiled with irresistible American grace. Aunt Charlotts and I, very much impressed, came home to a more substantial tea by our New England fireside. Helen was always careful to give us something particularly nice on those occasions when she could not give us her society. Of late she had, been so much occupied that her little surprises had taken the form of canned goods. This evening we had canned apricots; a pot of white primroses stood on the table. Elisabeth Stubbs remarked: "Miss Helen said if I forgot everything else I was to remember the flowers, it being Mr. Harry's birthday." There was also a very shining brass lion in repousse work on the mantel, with a card bearing "Many happy

returns of the day." "It's very effective, don't you think so, dear?" said my aunt, "only I do not approve of Helen's doing such things. It seems as if hammering must hurt the head. She hasn't the proper kind of hammer, I believe. It is certainly very noisy work, though she always hammers down cellar. Don't you think it

rather hard work for a woman, Harry!" I said it seemed to me about as hard as

hammering a board fence together. "I know you think Helen does too many things," said Aunt Charlotte, "but you need not speak in that tone, especially after she has been so thoughtful about your birthday. And she has so much on her mind, poor child! She has everything on her mind. I can't help worrying about her. How much

do you think a woman can bear?" I said, judging from Helen, I should suppose a woman's power of endurance was

Aunt Charlotte gave me a look of reproach. "Harry," she said, "don't you think that sisters of charity live a good life?"

This was an unexpected turn of conversation. I said I did not see the connection; that I thought they were feolish women.

"They are not considered so in the Roman Catholic church," replied my aunt with dignity, "and I am sure your sister leads a far more self sacrificing and higher life than even

a Carmelite nun." I said I hoped she did-which comment my aunt left unnoticed, and continued, musingly: "The nuns do everything by the hour-two hours' meditation, two hours' prayer, two hours' lying on a wooden bed, two hours' this and two hours' that-and all for the salvation of their own souls; whereas your sis-

ter also does everything by the hour, but she works for the whole world." "Excluding the family," I said, and I fear I said it in a very unpleasant way. The brass lion looked ready to tear off my head, and my aunt seemed so deeply distressed that I reconsidered and modified my judgment. Elisabeth Stubbs came in for the dishes, Aunt Charlotte took out her silk rug and I opened my books.

"Do you belong to any men's clubs, where they write papers?" asked my aunt. "I sal I did not belong to anything but the church choir."

"Then you don't know what men write about. I notice, in Helen's club, the ladies always write about things that happened several thousand years before Christ. It seems a long time ago."

The fire blazed merrily on the hearth, the brass lion took on a more friendly expression, our little family altercation had left us feeling perhaps more at peace with each other than an amiable dish of family sweetmeats, In my heart I thought there never was a sweeter, dearer girl than my sister Helen. The primrose smiled on the table. "I believe the German name for primrose means Key of Heaven," said my aunt, as she snipped an old black neck ribbon into inch pieces.

To be concluded to morrow.

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