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Women and Children
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**REMORSE and
REPENTANCE.**

For Daisie's Sake.

CHAPTER XXXV.
"GOD HELP US!"
"I don't like the look of you, Daisie. You've been falling steadily ever since you came here, ten days ago. I don't believe you've ever smiled since you came, and you don't eat as much as a bird. Now you don't feel well enough to rise from your bed, your face is red and feverish, and your pulse fairly frightens me. I'm going to send for Doctor Burns, and write for your husband to come."
"No, no—you must not let Mr. Sherwood know unless I should be dying, and—there's no such luck as that. The wretched are long-lived," bitterly. "But you may send for Doctor Burns, Aunt Alice, for I believe you are right. I am going to be ill."
She fell back among her pillows, shut her eyes, and seemed to sleep; then, before the doctor came, she had passed into delirious babblings. While she sat by the bed, watching her with the greatest uneasiness, she had a lucid interval, in which she begged him not to let Royall know of her illness.
"He is not strong, and the shock might kill him. You can take care of me," she said pleadingly.
But when she was quiet again, he whispered to her aunt and Annette: "But, good heavens, this is brain fever! I fear that she will die!"

CHAPTER XXXVI.
THE STRENGTH OF LOVE.
The anxious days came and went until Daisie had been ill almost two weeks, with scarcely a conscious moment; but still no word went to Royall Sherwood of her illness, because of the promise she had extracted not to let him know unless she was actually dying.
And, though the fever rose to its greatest height, and her delirious ravings made their hearts ache with the fear that she could not live, still the crisis had not come yet, and the letter was not sent.
There was no lack of skillful nursing, no lack of medical care, no lack of love, for Aunt Alice and Annette were her all their time; but it almost seemed as if nothing could hold Daisie back from the land of shadows to which she was hastening. She had no



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hold on life, because she was weary of it.
On that beautiful day when the sun came out so brightly, and the blue waves lapped the golden shore at Gull Beach, Doctor Burns thought he saw a subtle change in his patient, whether for better or worse he could not yet say, but he told them that the crisis would come that night.
"Had we not better telegraph Mr. Sherwood now?" he asked anxiously.
"No; I would wait the result of the crisis," Annette answered, so decidedly that he hesitated and gave in.
About sunset he came again, but he found no change in his patient, who still remained in the stupor that had fallen on her at noonday.
The trained nurse had gone out for a breath of fresh air, and Annette sat by the window watching the sunset lights upon the sea, her eyes sad and her bright face pale with anxiety.
Doctor Burns sat down at her side, and whispered abruptly:
"I have news for you. Royall Sherwood's Fifth Avenue residence was burned to the ground just before daylight this morning."
Annette gave a wild start of surprise, and he added:
"I read it a while ago in an even- ing paper—a telegraphic item."
Annette thought with horror of the help she was receiving.
"Up rose up in her throat, almost smothering her, as she gasped: "Don't tell me that Mr. Sherwood—"
"Forgive me for alarming you—I read your thought—he is safe."
"Thank Heaven!" she breathed, clasping her little hands in joy; and the doctor continued:
"He was saved by the heroism of a gentleman staying in the house, who carried him out through smoke and flame. In his arms. But here is the paper. You can read it for yourself. Very short, but I suppose the morning papers will give us full particulars."
The tears sprang to her eyes, almost blinding her, as she grasped the paper and devoured the short paragraph from New York:
"The elegant Fifth Avenue house of the millionaire, Royall Sherwood, was burned to the ground this morning just before daylight, by a fire whose origin could not be discovered. Mr. Sherwood, who is a helpless cripple, must have perished in the flames but for the heroism of a Mr. Raymond, his private secretary, who carried his employer out in his arms through dense fire and smoke at the peril of his life, and sustained fatal injuries in the performance of his noble act."
"Oh!" gasped Annette; and there rushed over her memory the last words she had heard from Ray Dering's lips.
It was when they were leaving New York that day when Daisie had turned to him in the hall and begged him not to let Royall miss her, but to try to make him happy, he had answered so earnestly:
"Have no fears, dear madam—I will devote my life to him."
To Annette he had bowed, without a word, feeling that she preferred it so; but the sad, yearning glance of his fine dark eyes had haunted her painfully ever since.
"I will devote my life to him," he had promised; and in those two words, "fatal injuries," Annette read the story of that devotion.
Freshly, gladly he had sacrificed himself in atonement for the wrong he had unwittingly done Royall Sherwood in a moment of jealous rage and madness.
Something seemed to snap asunder in Annette's tortured heart, and she astonished the good old doctor by sinking back unconscious in her chair.
"Good gracious, what a nervous little thing!" he ejaculated, hastening to apply restoratives; and when she opened her eyes presently he exclaimed:
"Tut, tut! You are too tender-hearted."
"Oh, you do not know—you do not understand," shuddered Annette, leaning her little dark head against the windowpane.
At that moment the rattle of carriage wheels stopped at the gate drew her attention down into the street.
She started in wonder, and swept her hand across her eyes, as if to clear their vision, exclaiming:
"I must be dreaming! This cannot be reality!"
The old doctor was looking, too, and he blurted out, in amazement:
"Bless my heart! If that is not Royall Sherwood stepping out of the carriage, too, with two strong legs as limber as mine. It's a miracle!"
But their eyes had not deceived them. It was indeed Royall Sherwood, stepping with old-time grace and lightness, and Aunt Alice met him at the door and led him in.
They waited with bated breath five minutes, and they came upstairs together.
Royall Sherwood did not seem to see any one but the wreck of beautiful Daisie, lying so still and silent on the bed. He went and stood by her, gazing in horror at the wasted face and form, and the shorn head whence all the golden curls had been clipped away, so as to apply ice to the burning brain.
"Can this be Daisie—my wife, Daisie!" he muttered, in grief and dread, and fell on his knees, his arms clasping the unconscious girl, his slight frame heaving with emotion.
They stood around in reverent silence till the storm of grief spent itself, and he looked up indignantly, crying:
"Why was I not told of this? How

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dared you keep it from me that she was dying?"
They could pardon his very gentle for the sake of his grief, and they gently they explained the reason.
But Royall Sherwood would not be pacified. He insisted that he had been badly treated—that they should not have listened to a sick girl's ravings—that his place was by her side.
But, as if disturbed by his complaints, Daisie moved restlessly, threw her wasted arms about, and called pleadingly:
"Dallas! Dallas! Dallas!"
Royall Sherwood started as if stung, and stifled an oath between his blanched lips, while Annette bent and whispered in his ear:
"You see now why it was better for you not to come. She is always calling for him."
The kind-faced nurse came in, and said frankly to the doctor:
"I am afraid there is too much excitement for my patient. Please leave her alone with me."
They led Royall most unwillingly into the next room, and then Doctor Burns exclaimed:
"But, my dear fellow, we are just dying, to hear about your recovery from paralytic state. When you arrived we were just reading of your rescue from your burning house, and—"
"That was it, doctor; that was what wrought the miracle of my recovery," exclaimed Royall radiantly, and he went on to explain: "You see, I woke up in the midst of blinding smoke and flame. I shrieked for my valet, who usually slept in a little room opening off from mine. There was no answer. The wretch had escaped, leaving me to perish. In my agony, I tried to spring from bed. My crippled limbs refused assistance, and I hung face downward, stifling, dying, in that hell of fire and smoke, shrieking and cursing. I am afraid, too, in my despair. After an eternity of waiting, till I was almost dead, I heard a voice in the room calling and praying: 'Sherwood, where are you? I am coming. God help me to save him if I perish myself! God, be good to me—let me atone by a noble death.' It was Raymond, my companion. He got to me somehow, clutched me, wrapped me in bedclothes, and staggered away with me. Oh, it was so long before he got me to the outside! I thought we both must perish in the fire, but he battled on, praying, always praying, that same prayer: 'God, let me save this man, if I perish myself!' But I must not harrow up your feelings. His prayer was granted. He staggered to the door with me, and fell. When they got us up, he—poor fellow!—had such horrible burns on his legs and shoulders he could not live. But for me—oh, for me, a miracle had been wrought. The shock, something—perhaps the fellow's prayers—had cured my paralysis, restored me to myself—I could walk!"

The tears ran down their cheeks, while his face glowed with joy.
(to be continued.)

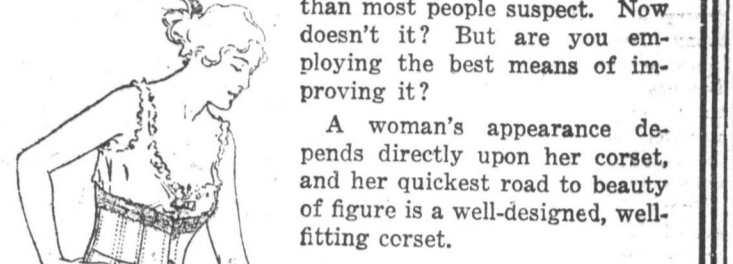
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