

A Widow's Strategy

By George Munson.

THAT Miss Elsie Davis is a charming girl and I congratulate you highly, Mr. Norton," said Mrs. Benton. "But what a pity that she seems so jealous."

Warren Norton flushed deeply. He resented Mrs. Benton's words, but he knew that they were true.

Elsie and her mother were sunbathing at the Glen Pass Hotel, and Warren Norton was spending his vacation there. His pretty fiancée had welcomed him with glee, and all had gone well until the second day, when Warren discovered that young Mrs. Benton, the pretty widow, was the sister of an old school friend.

A half hour's conversation on his part with her had left Elsie in tears. Recriminations followed, and Warren, though the quarrel was patched up, was left with a miserable feeling that the future of himself and Elsie threatened to be a gloomy one.

That evening Mrs. Benton made overtures to Elsie, who had regarded her with sullen aversion from the moment of their introduction. However, the accomplished woman of the world soon managed to thaw the heart of the undisciplined, inexperienced girl.

"Yes, Warren is a dear boy," she said, "but like most men, I am afraid."

"What do you mean by that?" demanded Elsie, flying to arms at once on John's behalf.

"I mean, dear, that a pretty face would turn his head. A man's heart

may be loyal, but the best of them cannot resist passing attraction."

"It is not true!" cried Elsie, turning scarlet.

"Unfortunately it is true, my dear," replied the widow, laying one hand caressingly upon her arm. "It is only too true, and I can prove it to you."

"How?" demanded Elsie.

"By bringing your Warren to my feet within two days," Mrs. Benton answered. "Of course, I don't mean

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that he would lose his loyalty to you, my dear. But a new face—even mine—would make him lose his head."

"You can't do it," cried Elsie scornfully. "But I will let you try, Mrs. Benton, and, if you succeed, I will have nothing more to do with Warren."

"My dear I am afraid that if you take that view you are dooming yourself to perpetual celibacy," answered the elder woman, as she walked away.

The next few days were wretched ones for Elsie. True, Mrs. Benton did not succeed within the period that she had allotted herself, but it was evident that Warren was strongly infatuated with her. There were angry scenes between the engaged couple. To Elsie's astonishment Warren, who had always been so patient and self-explanatory on former occasions, now appeared brazen.

"Elsie, Mrs. Benton is the sister of John Benton in the Philippines," he said. "I have told you often how John is my best friend. We have not seen each other for years, and it is natural that I should like his sister. Come, be friendly with her, Elsie, and let us all be happy together."

"O, I hate her and I hate you!" exclaimed the jealous girl; and, pulling off her ring, she flung it upon the table.

It must be confessed that this scene had happened before, and Warren aghast, had knelt at Elsie's feet and begged her to forgive him. But this time, to the girl's horror, Warren very coolly picked up the ring and placed it in his pocket. Then, with an enigmatic smile, he went out of the room.

Elsie was not the type of girl who

dominates over her mother. The elder woman had seen how things were going; perhaps she thought that Warren was giving Elsie a lesson, for she offered no consolation when Elsie announced that the engagement was broken off, and that they would start home on the morrow. Instead, she packed her trunk almost as unconcernedly as Warren had taken back the ring.

Elsie did not go down to dinner that night. But afterwards a feverish desire to see Warren again forced her to dress and go downstairs. She knew he was with that odious Benton woman, and she could not go away without torturing herself by seeing them together.

Poor Elsie reached the verandah just in time to see the couple disappearing together along the most secluded of the many beautiful walks of the Glen Pass. They were walking slowly side by side, and it was evident they did not dream that Elsie was anywhere near them. With a sudden resolution which conquered scruple, Elsie plunged into the half-darkness after them.

At the end of the walk was a hedge of box, round which the road wound into a pretty little summer house. Taking her stand behind the hedge, Elsie heard the conversation.

"Poor Elsie," said Warren in a low voice.

"Poor Elsie!" said Mrs. Benton in a low very meaning one, and Elsie standing behind the hedge, set her teeth hard. To be pitied was the last thing that she could endure.

"I feel guilty of disloyalty to her having permitted you to plan this, Mrs. Benton, said Warren.

"My dear boy, it is the best thing in the world for her," replied the older woman. "A sharp lesson was necessary, and as the sister of your best friend I feel that it is my duty to give her that lesson."

"She thinks I am in love with you," said Warren.

Mrs. Benton laughed merrily. "When my fiancé, Mr. Boyd, arrives tomorrow she will be undeceived," she said. "Now, Warren, a word of advice. I am going to tell her that it was all a plan of mine in order to bring her to reason and cure her absurd jealousy. You stay here till I come back, and I shall bring her with me."

And she stepped off along another path toward the hotel, while Elsie heard herself sob in the darkness.

What a fool she had been! She saw it now, she remembered all Warren's misery in the past, caused by her doubts of him. She was not worthy of him. She—she—

Suddenly she felt two arms about her. Very miserably she raised her head. Warren stood beside her.

"Elsie! You heard?" he cried. "O, what a fool I have been!" she said. "What a wretched jealous fool I deserve this, Warren, to teach me to trust the man I love. Do you really love me, Warren?"

Warren slipped the ring on her finger again. And in the consciousness of their new-born trust they were so absorbed in each other that hardly Mrs. Benton, approaching in the darkness, took a by-path back to the hotel instead.

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LOST 624 MEN IN 2 DAYS' FIGHT

Queen's Regiment Meets With Hard Luck in the Campaigning in France—Almost Wiped Out

NEWSPAPERS have come to hand of serious losses to the Queen's (Royal West Surrey) Regiment. The Queen's Regiment has a brilliant history of 250 years and is the only regiment in the service which has a naval crown superscribed on its colours.

For nearly three months the 1st Battalion has been fighting in Belgium and France. On October 25, it occupied a line of trenches in a farm, and pluckily maintained the position for two days in the face of heavy artillery fire and infantry attempts to drive them out. But on the morning of October 31 the Germans delivered a violent attack along the front in overwhelming force. The Queen's with the spirit of old, clung tenaciously to their position. The attack, however, supporting them on both flanks and these were compelled to retire.

Hopeless Position. The enemy apparently pierced the line on either side of the Queen's, who were isolated and surrounded. The Germans turned their machine guns on to the battalion and their position quickly became hopeless. Many were killed and wounded and the majority of the remainder fell into the hands of the enemy. In the two days the Queen's were holding the position they lost 624 officers and men, and afterwards the battalion mustered only three officers and 198 men—less than two companies.

In the Thicket of It. The 2nd Battalion of the regiment, which returned from South Africa, has been in the thick of the fight for two months. It has suffered almost to the same extent as the sister battalion, only 290 officers and men being left. The losses were sustained in two brilliant bayonet charges southwest of Ypres.

The 1st battalion has had three commanding officers—and anxiety is now felt as to the safety of its present chief, Colonel Pell—and the casualties among the officers of both battalions number to date 16 killed and 41 wounded or prisoners of war.

FRENCH BOXER GOOD SOLDIER

Georges Carpenter at the Front With the Army of France in Capacity of Wireless Operator

A story of Carpenter, the famous French boxer, who left the ring for the field of battle, is told by Gunner William Powell, of the 3rd Siege Battery, Royal Garrison Artillery, who has returned from the front to his home at Sevington, near Ashford, Kent, with an injury to his left foot.

Carpenter is with the French army as wireless operator signalling to aeroplanes. For a week he was engaged with the 3rd Siege Battery, when, at Soissons, one of its guns was put out of action through a German shell smashing the axle of one of the wheels. Shells were falling all around, and one of them smashed the apparatus with which Carpenter had been receiving messages from the aeroplanes telling the battery range.

Another shell burst quite close to Carpenter's motor-car as he coolly drove away. "He used to chat to us in his broken English," said Gunner Powell, "and was quite affable."

For three weeks Powell was in the battle of the Aisne, and his siege gun destroyed a German convoy.

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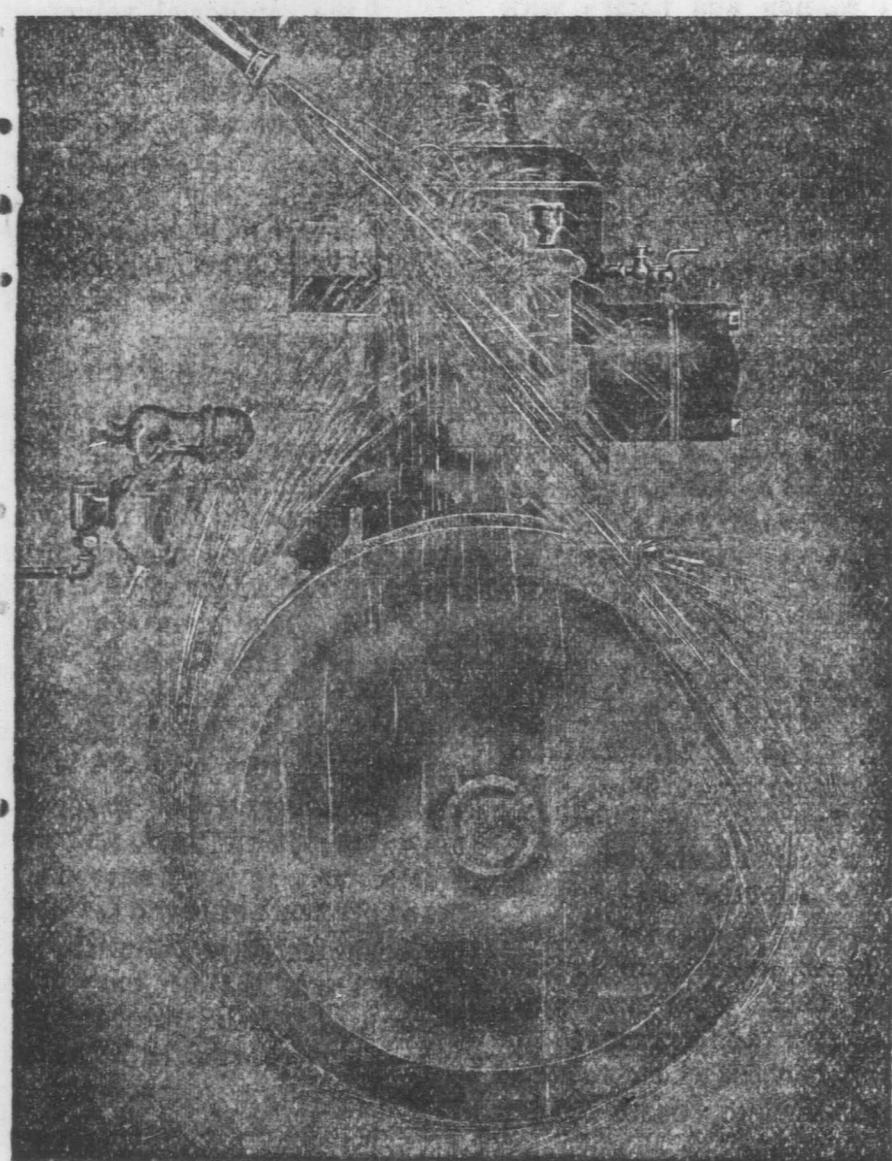
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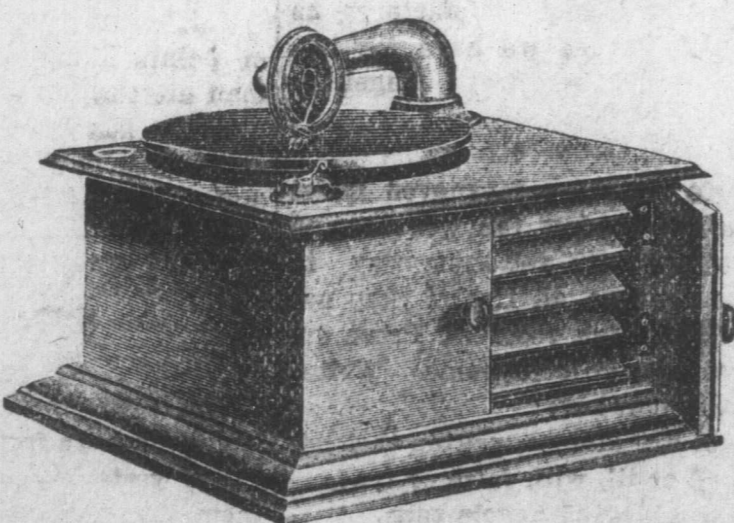
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