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Uncle Terry

CHARLES CLARK MUNN

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"And do I understand you wish to retain me as your counsel in this matter and lay claim to this estate, Mr. Terry?" continued Frye.

"Waal, I've told ye the facts," replied Uncle Terry, "an' if the gal's got money comin' I'd like to see her git it. What's goin' to be the cost o' doin' the business?"

"The matter of expense is hard to state in such a case as this," answered Frye cautiously. "The estate is a large one. There may be, and no doubt will be, other claimants. Litigation may follow, and so the cost is an uncertain one. I shall be glad to act for you in this matter and will do so if you retain me."

It is said that those who hesitate are lost, and at this critical moment Uncle Terry hesitated.

He did not like the looks of Frye. He suspected him to be what he was—a shrewd, smooth, plausible villain. Had he obeyed his first impulse he would have picked up his hat and left Frye to wash his hands with invisible soap, and laid his case before some other lawyer, but he hesitated. Frye, he knew, had the matter in his hands and might make the claim that his story was false and fight it with all the legal weapons Uncle Terry so much dreaded. In the end he decided to put the matter in Frye's hands and hope for the best.

"I shall want you to send me a detailed story of this wreck, sworn to by yourself and wife," said Frye; "also the articles found on this child, and I will lay your affidavits before the attorneys for this estate and report progress to you later on."

When Uncle Terry turned his face toward home his pocket was lighter by \$200.

"I s'posed I'd git skinned," he muttered to himself after he was well on his way home, "an' I reckon I have! A lawyer knows a farmer at sight, an' when he catches one he takes his hay! He's taken mine fur sartin, an' I begin to think I'm a consarned old fool, that don't know 'nuff to go in when it rains! How I'm goin' to git the wimmin to give up them trinkets 'bout 'lowin' I've lost my senses is one too many fur me!"

CHAPTER XV.

THE effect of Albert Page's vigorous efforts to attain success was not lost upon his friend Frank.

After their Christmas visit to Sandgate Albert had applied himself diligently to the care of Mr. Nason's legal needs. This brought him into contact with other business men, and the fact that John Nason employed him easily secured for him other clients. In two months he not only had Mr. Nason's affairs to look after, but all his remaining time was taken up by others. He had spent several evenings at the Nasons' home and found the family a much more agreeable one than Frank had led him to expect. Both that young man's sisters were bright and agreeable young ladies, and though a little affected, they treated him with charming courtesy and extended to him a cordial invitation to have his sister make them a visit.

Since the day he had shaken his fist at the closed door of Mr. Frye's law office Albert had met that hawk nosed lawyer twice and received only a chilling bow. The memory of that contemptible contract he had tacitly allowed Frye to consider as made brought a

blush to his face every time he thought of it, but he kept his own counsel. Once or twice he had been on the point of telling Frank the whole story, but had refrained.

In his intimate relations with John Nason he saw enough to satisfy himself that Frye's insinuation against that busy man's character was entirely false. Mr. Nason seldom spent an evening away from his home, and when he did it was to attend the theater with his family.

After their visit to Sandgate Frank and himself naturally drifted into more intimate relations, and a day seldom passed that Frank did not step into his office for a chat.

"Don't mind me, Bert," that uneasy man would say when he saw that Page was busy, "and if you don't want me to talk any time, tell me to shut up. I shan't feel offended. The fact is I don't know what to do with myself. If it were only summer I'd go off on the Gypsy even if I had to go alone."

One evening at the club he made Albert a rather surprising proposition. Albert, who seldom entered into any card games and only occasionally played pool or billiards, was in the reading room as usual enjoying a cigar and the evening paper when Frank drew up a chair and sat down. They were alone, and as Page laid his paper aside Frank said:

"Do you know, I am getting absolutely tired and sick of doing nothing. Ever since I left college I've been an idler, and I can't say I'm enjoying it. I arise in the morning and wonder how I can manage to get through the day. I read the papers, go down to the store, up to the club, down to your office, back to the club to lunch and maybe play pool for an hour or two with some poor devil as lonesome as I am or go to the matinee, and in the evening only do I begin to enjoy myself a little. I am beginning to realize that a life of idleness is a beastly bore, and



"Here's my hand on it."

I am sick of it. I want you to let me come into your office and study law. Will you?"

Albert looked at him a moment, while an amused smile crept over his face.

"Do you know what that means?" he responded at last. "Do you know that to read law means two years perhaps of close application and perseverance? In my case I had the spur of necessity to urge me on, and even with that stimulus it was a dry, hard grind. With you, who have all the money you need and are likely to, it will be much worse. I respect your determination very much, and of course do not wish to discourage you. You are more than welcome to my office and law books, and I will gladly help you all I can," and then, after a moment's reflection, he added, "I believe it's a wise step, and I'll be very glad to have you with me. You can help me out in a good many ways also that will advance you even faster than steady reading."

He was surprised at the look of pleasure that came into Frank's face. "I had half expected you would try to discourage me," said he, "and it's very kind of you to promise to help me."

"Why shouldn't I?" answered Page. "I owe you a good deal more than that, my dear boy, and when you have been admitted we will go into a partnership if you want to do it."

"Here's my hand on it," said Frank, rising, "and I mean it, too, and if you will have patience with me I'll stick it out or own up I'm no good in this world." He seemed overjoyed, and for two hours they sat and talked it over. "When may I begin?" he said finally. "I want to go at it right away."

"Tomorrow morning at 9 o'clock sharp," replied Albert, smiling, "and I warn you I shall keep you grinding eight full hours six days a week and no let up until July 1. But tell me, when did this idea enter your head?"

"Well, to be exact, it came to me in the parlor of your house in Sandgate just at dark the last evening I was

there, and a remark your sister made to me was the cause of it."

A droll smile crept over Albert's face at this frank admission, but he made no reply, and as he scanned his friend's face, now turned slightly away from him, and recalled that last evening at home and how Alice had so persistently devoted herself to the entertainment of this young man, a revelation came to him.

"So it's that heart breaker's blue eyes that have begun to work mischief in Frank's feelings, is it?" he said to himself after he had left the club, and he almost laughed aloud at the thought. "She has some rather pronounced ideas about idleness, and maybe she has read my young friend a lesson in a few words. She is capable of it!"

When Frank came to the office next morning, Albert set him to work and gave him all possible encouragement. "I think far more of you, Frank," he said earnestly, "for this resolve, and when you get fairly into it you will be glad you took hold. I believe every one in this world is happier and healthier for having an occupation, and certainly you will be."

Frank showed a persevering spirit as the weeks went by and became an ardent student. In a way, too, he was a help to Albert, for he could call on him any time to find some references or some decision bearing on a case in law.

It was soon after Frank's new departure in life that Alice received a letter from her brother, and among other things he wrote:

What was it you said to Frank the last evening of our visit at home? He has decided to study law in my office and admits his resolution to do so was the result of a remark you made then. Knowing what a fine vein of sarcasm you are blessed with, I am curious to know what sort of an arrow you drew from your quiver that evening.

But Albert received no reply to his question.

(To Be Continued.)

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To me it brought alloys— For shadows in the primrose time, When you and I were boys.

We're old men together— The friends we loved of yore, With leaves of autumn weather, Are gone for evermore, How blest to age the impulse given, The hope that ne'er destroys, Which led our thoughts from earth to heaven.

When you and I were boys! —George P. Morris.

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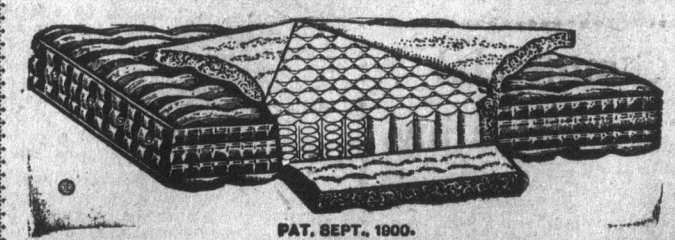
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