

The First Sign

falling health, whether in the form of the Sore Throat and Nervousness, or in a case of General Weakness and Loss of Appetite...

Failing Health.

Two years ago my health began to fail, and I was troubled with a distressing Cough, and Sore Throat, and Nervousness...

Dyspepsia Cured.

It would be impossible for me to describe what I suffered from Indigestion, Headache, and general debility...

I have been greatly benefited by the use of Ayer's Sarsaparilla. It acts on the digestive and assimilative organs...

Ayer's Sarsaparilla.

Prepared by Dr. J. C. Ayer & Co., Lowell, Mass. Price \$1; six bottles, \$5.

Low's Worm Syrup will remove the seeds of Worms from children or adults.

Laurier's Eloquence.

There is apparently a spirit of intense rivalry among the people of London, and it is not surprising that the name of Laurier has become a household word...

Little and Lively.

It is a time when we are all suffering from the effects of the late season, and it is not surprising that we are all feeling a little more nervous and irritable...

Another White Lie.

The Haldimand Advocate severely castigates Minister Thomas White for his conduct in public meetings in New Brunswick...

Woman's Work.

Woman's Work is safe in cases. They destroy and remove the seeds of worms from children or adults.

"Wirt" Fountain Pen.

EVERY PEN GUARANTEED. CAN USE ANY INK. The "Wirt" Fountain Pen is a new and improved pen, and is guaranteed to write as well as any other pen...

THE DREADED LETTER.

"Are you quite sure?" Her color paled slightly as she spoke. "Dead sure! The firm's gone up, beyond the peradventure of a doubt. They were loaded up with Sierra Nevada at two hundred; it went down to fifty today; hence those tears. Saw his partner this morning; the poor wretch's looks gave the whole thing away—white as a sheet; no backbone left. Talcott should have been here himself—he can discernable-man with the iron mask, that!"

The speaker was an unpleasant specimen of the old-young-man type. His contracted features, restless eyes, and anaemic frame were indicative of the fierce greed which, like a sword, was wearing out the scabbard of his body. He peered curiously into his companion's face as he rattled on.

"I am sorry," she said, with soft composure. "Mr Talcott is a great friend of ours. He returns from Virginia City tomorrow, I hear. What a lovely costume that is trimmed with humming-birds. Oh! here comes Mr Bretz to claim me."

"Good luck, that girl," he thought. "Not a nerve quivered; yet I know she's engaged to Talcott. She's handsome, too. How I could love her if she were worth a few hundred thousand! Ah, there is the carrot-topped divinity of my aspirations, the being for my money, or rather, the money for my being."

And, smiling at his own weak wit, he pressed eagerly forward. The most brilliant ball of that brilliant season in San Francisco was drawing to a close. It was remarked that Miss Tracy had never seemed gayer, never more charming and coquettish. She had danced incessantly; and yet, when she stood at the dressing-room door, she looked as blooming and radiant, under her soft, white hood, as at the beginning of the evening. A dozen admirers pressed round her to the last. For each she had a smile and a word. Through the grand gallery, with its paintings, murals, and splendor of perfumed flowers; down the broad staircase, where pink-shaded light threw a softened lustre; even when she stood for a few moments in the open air—her spirits were still at concert pitch. But when the door of the carriage was slammed to, and she sank back upon the cushions, a sigh, light as thistle-down, floated from her lips.

"So that is over!" she exclaimed. "You seem awful solemn about it." "The sleepy voice of the other occupant of the carriage—a jolly-looking dame, whose opulent figure overflowed her gorgeous costume of swarming colors, as she fanned herself violently. "I'm all hot up; but I never saw a finer ball—and surely you were the belle."

"I was not thinking of the ball, Auntie. Did you hear the rumor of Hugh Talcott's failure?" "To tell the truth, dearie, I did. But I thought that I wouldn't worry you with the news tonight. It's so. Mr Osborne, his best friend, spoke about it to me! He seemed terribly troubled about him. What will you do, Evey?"

"How can you ask? I am a pauper, and must marry money. I sent away a man I preferred for that reason. It is probable that I will embrace poverty for Mr Talcott's sake!" "Money's a good thing; I'm not denying it; but I kinder think I was happier a cookin' my husband's dinner, than I've been since he made his pile. Not but what I'm pretty comfortable now. But young heads is cooler than old ones, now-a-days. I don't presume to advise you—I know my place." And she laughed a jolly laugh. "Only one thing you must be sure of—I'm in no hurry to be rid of you."

Int thought of the cruel blow she was preparing for a man who loved her with the absorbing passion of a strong nature. Her engagement with Hugh Talcott had been of short duration. He was not the type of man she admired, but the match had been most desirable; he was rich, well-born, and so distinguished in appearance that he excited general interest, although his manner, save to a favored few, was very cold and reticent.

Miss Tracy's first act on reaching her room that night was characteristic. Late as was the hour, she made the crystal chandelier a blaze of light, filling the pretty blue nest of room with warmth and radiance; then she stood before the mirror, and gazed intently into it. Her beauty, fresh and delicate as that of a bluish rose, suggested the same ephemeral bloom. Did this thought strike home as her eye appreciated each beauty—the glitter of the golden hair the luminous blue eyes, the saxon purity of the complexion, the softly rounded arms and neck of Venus? The feeling which moved her was not the artist's joy before a rare painting or statue, but that pride of the possessor of a masterpiece into which enters an acute sense of its own value.

"I shall write him to-morrow," she murmured. "I could not face him; I should be afraid. If I am very candid, as one can be on paper, I shall be spared reproaches or reproaches. His pride, his strength of will, will forbid that."

On the following afternoon, as Evelyn was reposing tranquilly on her sofa, in preparation for a reception she was to attend that evening, her aunt burst tumultuously into the room. "Eve," she panted, "I've come near running as I could, to tell you I've met Mr Osborne on Pine Street. He'd just seen Hugh; he'd just got back. I'm all right with him. It seems when he got to Virginia City he heard from an inside man something—I don't know their stock lingo—but he shorted that stock he was broad on—on, long on—through a broker in Virginia. He was bound not to tell his partner, even. Maybe I don't tell it just right, but Osborne says he is richer than ever."

She stopped short, amazed at the white face and dilated eyes of her niece. "I—I—wrote to him this morning?" Miss Tracy gasped. "You did! Oh, well, he's overlooked it, being as it's all right with him now, and he's so terrible in love with you," said sanguine, common Mrs. Harper, comfortingly.

"He will never forgive me," said Miss Tracy, with tragic conviction. As the words passed her lips, a note was brought to her. It ran thus: "Have just returned, dearest, but must go to my office on important business, so am prevented from rushing at once to see you. May I hope to find you at home this evening? Yours, ever devotedly, and bore the well-known signature, 'Hugh Talcott.'"

"How strange," said Evelyn, re-reading the note; with a mystified expression on her face, in which, however, a pale gleam of hope showed itself. "He wrote from his room, but had not received my letter. Could Jones have neglected to leave it? Oh, call him at once."

"Send Jones here!" cried Mrs. Harper, in flustered tones to a passing servant. In a moment the butler stood stiff and pompous on the threshold. "Did you leave that note at Mr Talcott's this morning?" "Yes, mum," promptly, "that is, mum, more hesitating, 'I beg pardon, Miss, but Master 'Arry was with me, and I had to stop. I handed to something, and I made bold to ask him to 'and it in for me. Hit was so near, and a quiet neighborhood. I thought there wasn't any risk."

intention. He would as soon have doubted his own fealty as hers. For a few days Evelyn lived in a state of constant dread, drowned only in raptury and excitement. She felt that she was playing a game of chance; that were her letter discovered and returned to Talcott, she would be placed in the most humiliating of positions.

"I am a gambler; I have imbibed the spirit of this gambling community," she told herself, with charming candor. "Well, I am playing for high stakes—I must risk it."

Though she tried to treat the matter lightly, the strain on her nerves was great, and when, one afternoon toward the close of the week, Talcott, who made a virtue of promptness, was slow in appearing, she would be placed in a state of feverish anxiety. He arrived breathless.

"I was unavoidably detained," he said, as he seated himself on the sofa beside her; "as soon as I was free I hurried, when I didn't even stop to read a letter handed to me under peculiar circumstances. As I am leaving my room a stranger presented it; said he had picked it up on the street a few days ago; intended to deliver it sooner, but had been prevented."

As he spoke, he drew near the letter from his pocket. Evelyn's heart gave a great bound, then stood still. She sat as if turned to stone. This shock, following the severe tension her nerves had suffered, completely overcame her. "Why?" he exclaimed, "blurred as it is, and though all you ladies write the same highbrowed hand, I can't be mistaken; this is yours—darling! What! My God, she is fainting!"

He made a quick rush to the next room for water; and as he rose from the sofa, the envelope, still sealed, dropped from his agitated fingers and fluttered almost to her feet. She saw it. Her sudden reaction of hope gave her for a moment false strength. She learned toward it; her fingers clutched it, then relaxed; a blackness came before her eyes, and she fell forward in a dead faint, covering with the folds of her dress the fatal letter. She was borne to her room still in a semi-conscious state, and for a time the exhaustion that followed reanimation dulled and deadened thought.

Talcott, after hearing that she had recovered and was resting quietly, had left; and as the memory of the scene returned distinctly to her, a faint hope awoke that he might in his distress—which her aunt represented as terrible—have overlooked the letter. The hope proved fallacious. She questioned the servants—all the household; no one had seen it. Yes, he must have picked it up—by this time had read it. She returned to her room, accepting the inevitable.

More than an hour passed, and she still lay motionless upon her pillow, with closed eyes. All at once she was conscious of a perfume, sweet and penetrating, stealing toward her. She opened her eyes languidly. Her maid had approached with noiseless footsteps, and held out to her a bouquet—an arrangement of the diamonds, of the pride in displaying them; it was still present with her when, that evening, pale and languid, but looking exquisite in her opera costume, she stood for a few moments with her aunt in the library awaiting Talcott. Happening to glance at Master Harry, who was unusually quiet, she perceived him standing deeply absorbed before the identical volume in her thought. It then flashed upon her that the book, an illustrated copy of Dante's Inferno, had a special fascination for this young gentleman.

gleams, as though each one were an evil eye. But to this momentary feeling succeeded a desperate resolve—a cold hope—which fired her soul and excited her to action. The sight of those jewels brought to her nature, perhaps, the highest inspiration of which it was capable. She leaned very near him; a soft carmine suffused her cheeks; her lovely eyes shone with a brilliancy before which the diamonds paled.

"I have a caprice, a fancy," she said; "you shall yourself deck me in them." He gazed at her, dazzled, spell-bound by her marvellous beauty, infatuated with love, thrilled by her touch. She held out to him one diamond drop, and as he took it with the hand which still held the letter, she asked smilingly: "Can you not part for a second with that? It will keep."

Touching his hand, she drew the letter away; his fingers closed for one moment involuntarily upon it, then opened, and she placed it carefully on her lap. "I fear I shall make but a clumsy tire-woman," he murmured fondly. "Only fairy fingers should deck those little shell-like ears."

But none the less was he eager for the privilege. While with rather awkward gentleness he was endeavoring to fasten one of the ear-drops, she suddenly exclaimed that there was not light enough, and suggested that he should raise the window-shade. He crossed the room. In one instant she had slipped the letter between the leaves of a large volume which lay on a table at her elbow. She was saved. Once more she breathed freely. As he turned from the window, she advanced to meet him. Taking his arm, smiling up into his face, she said: "I must see the dazzling effect in the mirror in the next room."

Accustomed to humoring her caprices, he allowed her, without protest, to lead him from the library. Her dainty coquettish, her pretty wiles, her radiant delight, completely enthralled him; and she, wearying of this successful acting before he did, closed her manoeuvres triumphantly by gaily challenging him to a game of billiards, and carrying him off to the billiard-room, where they played until late in the afternoon. Before leaving, however, he demanded his note, and was surprised when she repudiated all knowledge of it. Together they made a circuit of the rooms through which they had passed, but their search, needless to say, was unsuccessful.

"I believe there was more in this than you tell me," Talcott remarked laughingly. "No ordinary document could be capable of such unmeaning illussions." No sooner had he gone than with a light heart Evelyn retraced her footsteps, thinking with almost fierce pleasure of the hundreds of aroids into which she should tear that hateful, haunting paper. She opened the book eagerly, went through its leaves at first rapidly, then more carefully—all in vain. The note was gone.

It seemed impossible to credit the testimony of her own eyes; she thought her very touch must deceive her; how—how, save by supernatural agency, account for this third disappearance. This mystery haunted her, dimmed the glory of the diamonds, of the pride in displaying them; it was still present with her when, that evening, pale and languid, but looking exquisite in her opera costume, she stood for a few moments with her aunt in the library awaiting Talcott. Happening to glance at Master Harry, who was unusually quiet, she perceived him standing deeply absorbed before the identical volume in her thought. It then flashed upon her that the book, an illustrated copy of Dante's Inferno, had a special fascination for this young gentleman.

"Harry," she cried, "were you looking into that book this afternoon?" "Yes, I was." "And you found a letter in it? Bring it to me at once," she demanded, with palpating eagerness. "Can't. Oh, that's all right! It was sealed up, ready to go; so I put it in the box at the corner, where you are always a-sending me with your letters." Evelyn's dismay as the consequences of this freakish act crowded upon her mind may readily be imagined. But while, with tearful eyes she was murmuring her distress into Mrs. Harper's sympathetic ear, a sudden idea struck her. "Auntie!" she said excitedly, "it was unstamped, and will not be delivered. We may recover it from the office." "That's so," agreed Mrs. Harper. "We'll drive there the first thing in the morning and get it. Now dry your eyes; it will be all right."

What do you mean by daring to keep it from her?" said Mrs Harper, her blood rising. "What will become of it if left unstamped?" interrupted Miss Tracy. "It will be passed to the Dead Letter Office at Washington; from there, returned to the person addressed."

His attention being at this moment demanded, the clerk turned away, and the ladies retreated, discomfited. "Hugh'll never think of reading the list of unclaimed letters," said Mrs Harper, who had so vaguely assimilated the information acquired. "He's too busy a-readin' the stock-list."

Evelyn did not attempt to enlighten her aunt; neither did she share her rose-colored views. She was depressed and silent as they drove home, and started with alarm when, as they entered, she saw through the open door of the parlor Talcott, walking up and down the floor, his face white and agitated. Not even the assurance of a respite, which she had just received, could lessen her fear that he was there to denounce her. He came hurriedly forward.

"You are amazed to see me at this hour," he said. "I have received sad news from the East. My father is very ill. They have telegraphed for me. I leave in an hour. Dearest, I have only time to say farewell!" Evelyn burst into tears. "If you leave me now, I feel that I shall never see you more," she sobbed. "And—and to postpone a marriage is so—so unkindly."

He took her into his arms as gently and tenderly as though she were a weeping child; then releasing her, he pressed her tightly to his heart. "Darling," he cried, "only be as true to me as I shall be to you, and we may defy the evil omen of a postponed marriage."

Another moment and he was gone. Talcott's absence proved of shorter duration than he had anticipated. When he reached his home in the East, his father was dead, in less than three weeks from the time of his departure, he was again in San Francisco. The postponement of the marriage was therefore unnecessary. Despite his bereavement, Miss Tracy was strenuously opposed to a private wedding; but he showed himself so resolute on this point that she was forced to compromise with an agreement that she should be married in a costly dress prepared for the occasion. This disappointment still rankled, even on the afternoon of the marriage, when she awaited, with Talcott and a few intimate friends, the arrival of the priest before proceeding to the parlor.

"Isn't it too bad so few persons should see me?" she asked with all the pride of conscious beauty, as, spreading out her snowy splendor of dress and veil, she executed swan-like movements to and fro, for the admiration of the assembled group. "By the way, Talcott," Mr Osborne said at that moment, "I was in your office a few minutes ago, and your clerk asked me to hand you these letters, which had just arrived. One of them bears the mark of the Dead Letter Office, I see."

"A dead letter! Ugh, isn't it just awful on your wedding-day?" cried a volatile young creature present. "Oh, do open it, Mr Talcott! I never saw one." Evelyn's hand tightened convulsively on the back of the chair against which she was leaning. She stood motionless, with downcast eyes, her long lashes sweeping her burning cheeks. What an hour had fate selected for the long dreaded divulgement! A moment—which seemed to her many—and she looked up in startled amazement as Talcott's laugh rang out. "Send two hundred California, buyer thirty," he read aloud. "Rather late for that order, certainly." And he tossed it aside. Let the sibyls to whom alone the secrets of the Dead Letter Office are entrusted reveal for what reason those brief lines were promptly returned, while the letter which might have changed the tenor of two lives was consigned forever to oblivion.

Day and Night

During an acute attack of Bronchitis, a ceaseless tickling in the throat, and an exhausting, dry, hacking cough, afflict the sufferer. Sleep is banished, and great prostration follows. This disease is also attended with Hoarseness, and sometimes Loss of Voice. It is liable to become chronic, involve the lungs, and terminate fatally. Ayer's Cherry Pectoral affords speedy relief and cure in cases of Bronchitis. It controls the disposition to cough, and induces refreshing sleep.

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Without Relief, I tried Ayer's Cherry Pectoral. It helped me immediately, and effected a speedy cure.—G. Stovell, M. D., Carrollton, Miss. Ayer's Cherry Pectoral is decidedly the best remedy, within my knowledge, for chronic Bronchitis, and all lung diseases.—M. A. Rust, M. D., South Paris, Me. I was attacked, last winter, with a severe Cough, which, from exposure, grew worse and finally settled on my Lungs. By night sweats I was reduced almost to a skeleton. My Cough was incessant, and I frequently spit blood. My physician told me to give up business, or I would not live a month. After trying various remedies without relief, I was finally

Cured By Using two bottles of Ayer's Cherry Pectoral. I am now in perfect health, and able to resume business, after having been pronounced incurable with Consumption.—S. F. Henderson, Sausburg, Penn. For years I was in a decline. I had weak lungs, and suffered from Bronchitis and Catarrh. Ayer's Cherry Pectoral restored my health, and I have been for a long time comparatively vigorous. In case of a sudden cold I always resort to the Pectoral, and find speedy relief.—Edward E. Curtis, Rutland, Vt. Two years ago I suffered from a severe Bronchitis. The physician attending me became fearful that the disease would terminate in Pneumonia. After trying various medicines, without benefit, he finally prescribed Ayer's Cherry Pectoral, which relieved me at once. I continued to take this medicine a short time, and was cured.—Ernest Colton, Logansport, Ind.

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