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Out of the Darkness

The mother, or Mother Mary, as her brothers-in-law persist in calling her, was just one of those soft-looking women whom it was impossible not to love.

She was not very young, but as yet no gray had touched her pretty, wavy hair. She had just the same wide-open gray eyes as her husband, only perhaps they opened more softly than his, and her laugh had the same happy clear ring in it. She was one of those mothers whose arms and laps are never quite empty. Her great boys liked to rest there still sometimes. Mother's shoulders always rested their aching heads; to them it was their natural pillow. Garton, in spite of his three-and-twenty years, liked to crouch at her footstool in company with Jock and Jasper, and it was Arty's favorite place. No one could have been with

her an hour and not have opened his or her heart to her. It was not that she was so clever, but that her sympathy was always ready.

Belle, who had double her attractions, was not half so lovable; not that she was a trifle querulous, but there was no such look in her face, though mind and body were often sorely overtaxed; and only she and her husband knew with what difficulty they made ends meet and provided for their growing boys. No anxiety ever seemed to rob her for long of her sweet content. She was one of those women who take a man for better and for worse, and who, when the worst comes, make no ado, but work on cheerfully as long as strength lasts.

Belle was equally courageous, but she failed in the cheerfulness. She was quiet, but it was not the quiet of repose; perhaps her long engagement was trying her; perhaps Robert, Ord, in spite of his fondness, was not a very patient lover. Some men are apt to be a little peremptory and domineering with the woman they love. In spite of their mutual affection they were not perfectly suited to each other.

Unfortunately, Belle was of a shy reserved nature. She was not one to talk much of her own feelings at any time. Robert, who was quick and ardent, felt himself sometimes almost repulsed by her silence. At such times he would reproach her in measured words. But I don't think she ever fully answered him. He would come round presently, touched by the gentleness and sorrow in her face, and try and atone for his anger, and she would not reject such atonement; but, as she sat with her hand to her forehead, so longing to tell him that he was dearer to her than anything in the world—that, if need be, she could die for him, but that she could not open her lips to answer his reproaches. Those who did not know Belle Clinton called her cold; but they were wrong. There was no coldness about her; she would have worked her fingers to the bone for Mary and her boys. When they were ill she nursed them night and day. But not even to her sister could she fully open her heart. She would sit at her side for hours, working silently, or letting her chat about her boys and parish; but when the conversation turned to her own affairs, either evading her questions or answering them with grave reserve, till Mary was obliged to quit the subject.

The vicar used to quiz Belle rather mercilessly for this failing of hers. In her heart he thought her rather tame and spiritless. His own wife had a brisk tongue of her own, and was much given to state her opinions on all subjects rather freely; but I think he loved such briskness. Belle's reticence was rather a fault in his eyes. In his opinion she was too much given to occupy her own corner, though it must be owned that she was seldom quiet alone in it. Belle's special nook was by the window that looked over the Kirkby sands; here she could see down the village street. She knew the exact time that Robert would come from his daily work at Thornborough, and would be at the window watching for him as he went into his own gate. He and Garton would sit down every evening to their solitary meal. By and by, when the vicarage folk were gathered round their meal, Belle would hear the brothers would come in—Robert having freed himself from the dust and smoke of the day—and take their special places—Robert by Belle, and Garton under his sister-in-law's wing; but they would rarely join in the meal itself.

Austin had too many mouths to feed already. Robert always said. He would let both Austin and Mary know sometimes how it galled his pride to see his future wife dependent on their hands. He used to tell Belle so over and over again. It did not make her position more comfortable. Belle was working quietly in her corner now, while the vicar was holding out on the subject of church decorations, Mary and the boys making their comments. The lads always joined freely in their parents' conversation, sometimes interrupting after the manner of boys.

"I say, father," exclaimed Guy, the eldest, a big broad-shouldered lad, with his father's curly head caricatured to a nicety. "Garton will turn rusty if you say anything to him about it." For by a sort of tacit understanding the boys never called Garton uncle, though they were profoundly respectful to Robert, and, strange to say, their parents never disapproved of this freedom. "They can't help seeing that he's half a boy himself," as the vicar said, who was rather more indulgent to his younger brother than Robert was ever likely to be.

"Garton will not like your interfering, Austin," observed Mary. "The decorations are quite in his province." And then she took mental measurements, to judge from the way in which she was eyeing a piece of black serge.

"Garton should choose a more efficient staff of workers, then," retorted the

vicar; "his designs are very good—rather elaborate, perhaps—but then he's such a capital hand himself; all I complain about is, that there is no such thing as satisfying the women-kind—they are always taking offense. If you appoint one to wreath the font she is sure to turn sulky because she is not chosen to do the chancel. Why, there was quite a mutiny last harvest festival amongst the Misses Travers, and all because Miss Knowles had the pulpit and the lectern, and they only the reading-desk. I wish no good Garton having the management if they are to come and bother me for weeks beforehand."

"But there can be no talk about a harvest festival for months to come, Austin; why, this is only the end of June." And Mary put down her black serge with a sigh which the Misses Travers' wrongs had certainly not evoked.

"Can't you make that do?" interrupted the vicar, with some appearance of interest.

"No, it will want another breadth. Arty grows so. I wish I could afford a suit for him. He does look so shabby at church on Sunday morning."

"I never see anything but his clean collar," replied the vicar, leaning forward to pat the head of a very small boy curled up on his mother's footstool. "Never mind, Arty must wait, that's all. No, of course, there's no question of another festival till the harvest is in, you silly woman. What put it in my head was, I was walking down toward Leatham with Farmer Dykes, and he was showing me his crops. 'I hope I shall have a few sheaves, as usual, this autumn,' I observed; and he promised me I should have some oats and barley, as well as wheat, and then I remembered that you always get them from another man."

"Never mind; we shall only have a double supply," retorted Mary. She was rather absent, for a wonder; her mind was still running on the serge. "I can't help wishing I could have done without that new dress, Austin; but my old one was too shabby, I am afraid."

"I don't know how you could have avoided putting on mourning for my aunt, Mary, if that is what you mean." The vicar's voice was a little displeased.

"My dear Austin, what an idea! I should have worn my old black gown, of course; but I dare say you are right, and new mourning is more respectful. There, I will not say any more about it. Arty must go shabby this summer, poor little fellow!" and Mary put away the serge resolutely, and consoled herself with kissing the yellow glossy curls.

"I do wonder," she continued presently, looking up at her husband cheerfully, "what has prevented Robert from writing to us?"

"Writing?—nonsense! Belle has a letter, I believe."

"Yes, just a line to say why he was detained. But he must know how anxious we all are."

"No news is good news, mother," observed Guy.

"I don't know," she repeated doubtfully; "it does seem to me that if he had any good news to impart he would not have kept us in such suspense—it is not like him."

"No, it is not," returned the vicar slowly. "If it were Garton, he would delight in keeping us all in the dark, and startling us by a sudden burst of good news when we had ceased to expect it. But Robert is different—and then he has Belle to consider." And she looked across significantly at her sister; but Belle did not raise her head.

"There's Garton himself! Talk of the cat cetera, you know," he said, laughing; but his father shook his head warningly. He never preached long sermons to his boys, but he was quick in rebuking them. In a minute there was a rush of all four lads to the window-seat in the greatest hurry of all.

The two younger boys were very contrasts to each other. Rupert was a long, loose-limbed fellow, rather plain in face, and somewhat freckled; Laurence, or, as he was generally called, Laurie, was a slight fair boy, very tall and slender, and carrying himself with a slow, sleepy grace.

Which won for him the name of Lazy Laurie. All three boys sang in the choir, but Laurie's voice was the sweetest of all.

"Halloa, Garton, where's the Shadow?" shouted saucy Guy, as he leaned over his brother's head. "Heard of a new man, but his father shook his head warningly. He never preached long sermons to his boys, but he was quick in rebuking them. In a minute there was a rush of all four lads to the window-seat in the greatest hurry of all."

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"All right; I am coming in directly. Robert's up at Blackacre."

Belle put down her work and listened breathlessly. The interjection came from the vicar.

"Yes, he is; he has a little business detaining him, but he asked me to come on and let you know he was here."

"There's the church of Garton," said the vicar. "Never mind. I must come up a moment. I want to speak to Mother Mary."

Two of the boys ran down to open the door directly, with Arty trotting after them, sure of a ride up-stairs again on his uncle's shoulder, and true enough there he was a minute afterward, his small face completely hoodwinked by Garton's wideawake, and shouting lustily.

[To be Continued.]

WHERE IS DIXEY?

New York, March 11. Walter N. Lawrence, who shows "The Man on the Box," in which Henry E. Dixey is starring, received a telegram last night from John Warren, the road manager, saying that both Mr. Dixey and the leading woman, May Nordstrom, had left the road, which played Saturday night at Ottumwa, Ia.

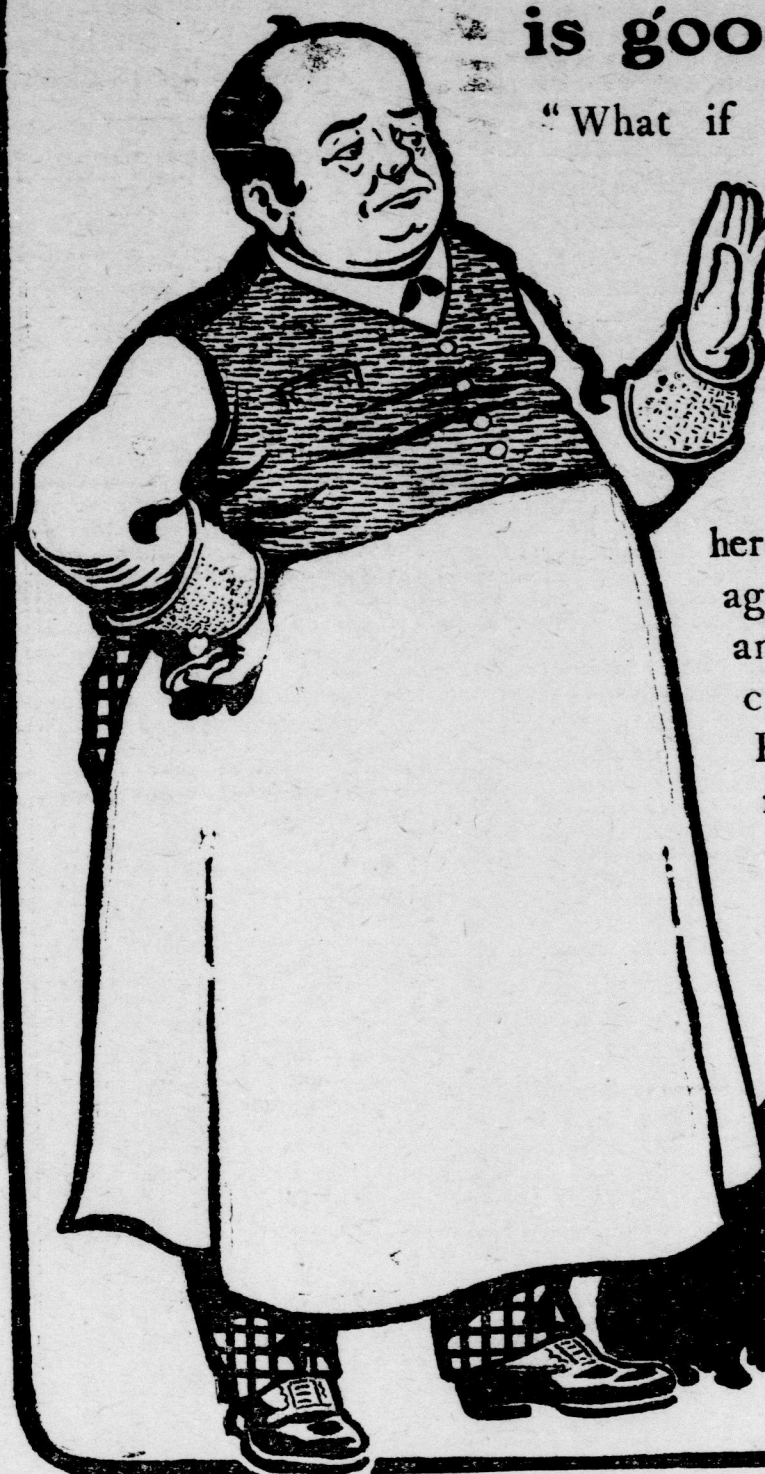
With the exception of the two principals, the company arrived in Keokuk last night. Manager Lawrence said he could not understand why Dixey and Miss Nordstrom should leave. He said Dixey was under a three years' contract, which still had a year to run.

If Harry Thaw is sane, it need not be feared he can hoodwink the jury in thinking him otherwise. Sanity may be simulated by the insane, but to feign insanity successfully taxes the genius of the greatest actors.

If being too good is a crime, fortunately it occurs but rarely in civilization.

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"I have no use for those 'just as good' things. And I will not have 'cheap', impure baking powder in my store at any price."

"No, sir! People, who deal here, expect me to protect them against doubtful goods. And I am not going to risk losing good customers by selling a Baking Powder that I can't intelligently recommend."

"I know that ST. GEORGE'S is a pure Cream of Tartar Baking Powder, it gives satisfaction and I'll stick to it."

"You are just wasting your time (and mine) trying to sell me anything else."

"Good morning!"

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LONDON WONDERS
THAT KING LEFTHis Departure on Eve of Arrival
of the Queen's Sister Causes
Some Talk.

London, March 12.—The absence of King Edward during the visit of the Dowager Empress of Russia, who had not been to England for forty-four years, not indeed since her elder sister, Alexandra, married the then Prince of Wales, is causing some talk, but it is said to be purely accidental. The journey of the King was arranged long before it was known the empress would come to this country and there was no sufficient reason why he should change his plan. Her visit is simply of family, or rather of sisterly, character, and it is entirely devoid of state functions or great festivities. It is natural that the two sisters should desire to spend some time in each other's company, and this they will be able to do in comparative quietness while the King is abroad. It seems that the royal authority is unimportant, so smoothly does the country vend its accustomed way while the King is at Biarritz, but the telegraph has annihilated space and to all intents and purposes his majesty is as near parliament as if he were at Windsor. It is pretty well known that he tips with lavish profusion, but it is not generally known that he pays for special trains by which he always travels at exactly the same rate as a private individual would, plus a certain extra percentage for the expense of the pilot engine which goes on ahead.

I have just learned King Edward's latest joke, which was perpetrated at Victoria Station before his departure. He was speaking on the platform and said: "Have you heard that the latest Biblical research has revealed that there was not only a telephone in Eden but the very number is now known? It was 231-Apple." And as he laughed over this his majesty shook hands finally with the heir apparent.

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to those of any other make. And while a few grocers in this country, for the sake of a little extra profit, may urge you to buy imitations of our lines, don't be led astray. Remember, the energy and experience of over fifty years goes into every box of Eddy's Matches. And in the future, as in the past, all other lines are simply down and out.

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Advertiser
Patterns

DESIGNED BY MARTHA DEAN.



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6826—SIZES 32, 34, 36, 38, 40 and 42 inches bust measure.

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Measurement: Bust..... Waist.....

Age (if child's or misses' pattern)

CAUTION.—Be careful to inclose above illustration and send size of pattern wanted. When the pattern is sent measure you need only mark 32, 34, or whatever it may be. When in waist measure, 22, 24, 26, or whatever it may be. If a skirt, give waist and length measure. When misses' or child's pattern, write only the figure, representing the age. It is not necessary to write "inches" or "yards." Patterns cannot reach you in less than one week from the date of order. The price of each pattern is 10 cents in cash or in postage stamps.

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