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WEAKNESS

OF MEN AND WOMEN

Could we read the hearts of every man we must, what a load of sorrow and despair would be disclosed. Indiscretions and Blood Diseases have caused more physical and mental wrecks than all other causes combined. They strike at the foundation; they undermine the system, and not only do they often disrupt the family circle, but they may even extend their poisonous fangs into the next generation. If you have been a victim of early sinful habits, remember the seed is sown, and sooner or later you will reap a harvest. If your blood has been diseased from any cause do not risk a return later on. Our New Method Treatment will positively cure you and you need never fear any return of the disease. We will give you a guarantee, bond to that effect. We would war you electrically against the promiscuous use of mercury, which does not cure blood poison but simply suppresses the symptoms.

WE CURE OR NO PAY.

Don't Let your Life be Drained Away, which weakens the intellect as well as the body. There is no room in this world for the mental, physical or sexual dwarfs. Our New Method Treatment will Stop all Unnatural Losses, Purify the Blood, Strengthen the Nerves, Restore Vitality, and make a man of you. If you are in trouble, call and consult us. Consultation is Free. We treat and cure Dropsy, Blood Diseases, Varicocele, Stricture, Unnatural Discharges, Gleet, Kidney and Bladder Diseases. No cutting or operations. No detention from business. Everything confidential. Consultation Free. Book Free. Question Blank Free for Home Treatment.

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AN HUMBLE HERO

BY THOMAS F. MONTFORT
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Pap's thoughts were of Sim Banks and of the events attending Sim's departure from Beckett's Mill. Though four years had passed since that time, Sim had never returned, and the people of Possum Ridge were no wiser as to his whereabouts than they had been the day he left. A large reward had been offered for his arrest, and the officials, stimulated by the hope of earning the money, had made strenuous efforts to locate him. But it had been all in vain. Now and then there had come reports to Beckett's Mill to the effect that Sim had been captured; but, as is usual with such reports, it always turned out a case of mistaken identity.



"Why, howdy, Pap Sampeon?"

Pap started and looked quickly around, and his eyes falling on a bearded, sun-tanned face, his mouth fell open and he stared in stupid amazement for almost a minute. Then he rubbed his eyes and stared again. "Lord a-massy," he exclaimed at last. "Am I dreamin, or is that rally Sim Banks?"

"It is rally Sim Banks, Pap," the other replied; "what's left of him anyway?"

Pap was down off the fence in the twinkling of an eye, and the next moment he had Sim by the hand, shaking it with a heartiness that was almost painful.

"Great land of Goshen!" he cried. "What'd 'a thought it? Lord a-massy! It's shore old Sim, ain't it?"

"I guess it is, Pap. Are you surprised to see me?"

"Surprised to see you? Why, Lord, I wouldn't be no more surprised if the sky was to drop. But think of the devil an he's shore to make his appearance, as the old sayin goes."

"Were you thinkin of me?"

"Jest been a-sittin' thar on the fence a-wonderin' whar you'd gone an what had 'come of you ad if I was ever a-gwine to git to see you any more. I was jest a-gwine over them thoughts when you moughty nigh skeered the life out of me-by speakin to me like a-way. Land, don't hardly seem like it can be you, Sim."

"Don't it?"

"Shore it don't. But whar you been all these years?"

"I've been to the war, Pap."



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from home since I went away, an I don't know anything that has happened. Who killed him?"

The man who came with Sim looked quickly up and appeared to wait eagerly for Pap's reply. It was then Pap noticed for the first time how pale and emaciated that man was.

"Who killed Melvin?" Sim, repeated presently.

"I don't know," Pap answered. "The next mornin' after you left Jim Thorn found the dead body in your woods with a bullet hole through it. He had been killed several hours then."

"And nobody knows who done it?" Pap shook his head.

"Was nobody suspected?"

The old man turned away and began to thump his cane against the ground, but he made no reply. Sim saw that Pap's action meant something, and he began to put a few things together. He remembered that he had gone into those woods with his gun about the time the killing must have occurred and then had disappeared. He remembered also that he had made that day in Mrs. Mann's wheatfield. Recalling these things and noting Pap's behavior, he was quick enough to suspect the truth. Pale, but firm, he said:

"Pap, was anybody suspected of killin' Melvin?"

The old man hesitated still, but finally he replied:

"That mought 'a been, Sim; yes, I'm afraid that mought 'a been. But, Sim, I ain't never suspected nobody."

"I know, Pap. But who did the others suspect?"

Again Sim's companion leaned eagerly forward and seemed to await Pap's reply. After a short pause the old man said slowly:

"You know, Sim, thar's allus some people ready to suspect anything bad of a body if they've got a ghost of a reason. I—le's go on home, Sim. I guess you must be tired an hungry."

"No, Pap, not now. You must tell me the truth."

"Oh, Lord, Sim, I can't tell you no more."

"Yes, you can tell me who was suspected."

"I'd rather not."

"Then it's true, Pap. It is me?"

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Pap remained silent.

"Tell me," Sim insisted. "Is it me?"

"I'm afraid so, Sim; yes, I'm afraid thar's some as thinks it was you. But I don't think it."

Sim had known what was coming, but Pap's admission was a hard blow for all that. His head drooped, and an expression of bitter pain came over his features. Pap saw and understood and, placing his hand on Sim's shoulder, said consolingly:

"But I don't b'lieve it, Sim, an nobody'll ever make me b'lieve it for a minute if they swar to it on a stack of Bibles—never."

The old man's act and words did Sim good. It was a great comfort to know that he had one true friend at least.

"I know, Pap," he said, "that I can always trust you. You'll stand by me to the last."

"That's what I will, Sim, 'cause I know you're not guilty."

"An thar's others," Sim said. "Thar's Sam Morgan an Jason Roberts. They'll never b'lieve me guilty either, will they, Pap?"

Pap was seriously troubled, and he showed it.

"Sim," he said, "I know you uns must be tired an hungry. Le's go on home an talk afterwards."

"No," Sim replied. "I want to know the truth, the whole bitter truth. So Sam an Jason b'lieve me guilty of such a terrible crime as that?"

"I dunno," Pap answered. "They don't want to b'lieve it, Sim. I know they don't want to b'lieve it."

"But they do," Sim said, with a sigh of resignation. "Waal, so be it. An Lonesey—"

Pap raised his hand instantly, and a beam of pleasure lighted his face.

"No, Sim," he interrupted. "don't you say the Lonesey don't b'lieve it an never has b'lieved it. When she first heard you accused, she said it was a lie, an she's stuck to it from that day to this."

"Thank God!" Sim cried fervently. "If she don't b'lieve it, I don't care what anybody else thinks."

"She don't, Sim. You tella you the God's truth. She don't. An now we're said enough for this time, so le's go on home."

But Sim did not move, and he had become deeply thoughtful. After a little he said:

"I don't know what I had best do. This is all so new an unexpected to me that I can't just see my way clear. If I stop here, I'll be arrested."

In his excitement Pap Sampson had forgotten this, but he knew it was true. If Sim's presence in the village became known, he would certainly be arrested, and then the gallows, or at least the state prison, would no doubt await him.

"You had better hide somewhere until night," he said anxiously, "then go away again. That is the best you can do now."

But Sim deliberated a long time, then said slowly:

"Maybe you're right, Pap, but I don't know. A body may as well be dead or in prison as to be a wanderer on the earth, with neither home nor friends an always in dread of something. No matter what anybody says or thinks, I'm innocent."

"I know it, Sim; I know it," Pap said assuringly. "But, then, courts mebbe won't see us we do."

"Maybe not, Pap," Sim replied after a pause, "but I'm innocent, an I'm goin to stay."

"But think, Sim, or—"

"I have thought of it all, Pap. I'm goin to stay an face it out."

Then Sim's companion, who had listened intently all this while, spoke up again. Laying his hand on Sim's arm, he said earnestly:

"I'd you'll never be hurt, Sim. Never so much as a hair of your head shall be touched."

Pap Sampson looked at the speaker doubtfully.

"How do you know that?" he asked. "It doesn't matter how I know it, the other answered. 'I know it, and that is enough.'"

"Who are you, an what do you know 'bout this affair?" Pap questioned.

"My name is Thompson, and I am Sim Banks' friend. I have been his friend since that day he saved my life at the risk of his own."

"That was nothing," Sim said. "Anybody would have done all I did."

"Anybody would have rushed into that hall of shot and shell after our men had retreated and carried a wounded comrade off the battlefield to save him from the enemy? You'll never make me believe any such thing. Nobody can ever make me believe that there's another man in the world besides Sim Banks who was brave enough to have done it."

To be Continued.

W. PRODRIGY.

The Cockatoo—"Have you been talking long?"

The Parrot—"Well, I guess I have! Why, my father lost all his friends trying to tell them the cute things I said when I was only three months old."

HIS TURN NOW.

"Jones is a man of remarkable foresight."

"How do you make that out?"

"Why, he insisted upon his relatives from Buffalo visiting him last winter."

Penner—What are you doing now?

Scribbles—Writing songs.

Penner—Any of them become popular yet?

Scribbles—No; but I turned out a "Mother" one yesterday that had fifteen grammatical errors in it.

"Ah!" exclaimed Miss Peppery, whom Mr. Slocum had been entertaining with insane confoundments, "that reminds me of the best thing going!"

"What's that?" he asked.

"A man who is stayed too long."

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