

and looked up miserably into my eyes. "Poor old Rollo," I murmured. "I'm afraid I've done all I can to save your little mistress; but I seem to be of no use."

He whined strangely, and something urged me to follow him as he walked round the yard, looking back at me, from time to time.

"He seems to want something," I thought. I wondered what it could be. He was at his kennel now, and burying his nose in the snow, he unearthed what looked to me to be part of an old skirt. I went nearer and then my heart almost stopped beating, for Rollo dragged out the rag doll! I took it carefully from him and examined it. Yes, it was all right. Not even an arm nor a leg were missing. But it was pretty cold, and so I carried it to the kitchen stove and warmed it.

Then, opening the other door softly, I entered the sitting-room. One glance at the flushed, fevered face of the patient told me that things were pretty bad by this time. The doctor did not even turn his head as I entered. He held Elsie's hand in his, as if he were feeling the pulse. At a far corner of the room Mrs. Everett now sat in speechless agony. Crossing over to her quickly, I laid the old rag doll in her lap. She looked up at me suspiciously; then a light seemed to dawn on her, and, swiftly crossing the room, she stood by her little one's bed and tenderly, oh so

tenderly, she placed the old rag doll in Elsie's arms. I had not thought her capable of such tenderness! Breathlessly, I watched, as the curly head turned on the pillow and the little wasted hands felt the doll. At first, a vacant, half-frightened look spread over the childish countenance; then, gradually, the old expression came back—the wrapt mother-look I had seen so often on that baby face, and then the little voice spoke gently, and I had to bend low to catch the words:—"Rag dolly! My own rag dolly!"

The doctor remained another half-hour and then, as he was leaving he turned to me and said:—

"The crisis is over. You came just at the right moment. You have saved Elsie's life."

"I had nothing to do with it," I assured him. "It is all thanks to Rollo."

He did not seem to understand me. Indeed, I think he was not listening; for he had already taken his bag and was on his way to his next patient.

I re-entered the sick room softly, and was not slow to perceive that my services were no longer required; for there, in Mrs. Everett's arms, lay her little daughter, her head pillowed on her mother's breast, and her breath coming evenly as she slept. One childish hand held her mother's tightly, whilst the other hugged her long lost treasure—her old rag doll!

For Valor

Written for The Western Home Monthly by Harry W. Laughy

THERE'S no use talking, May, we just can't make this farming proposition pay. Here we have devoted two solid years of slavery and hardship to this cursed homestead and what have we got to show for it? We could have made it go had it not been for last night's frost, but now just look at that field—hundreds of acres of first class wheat absolutely ruined, not worth a dollar, not even fit for feed," and the speaker, a young man of about twenty-five, turned away in disgust.

The girl who stood beside him laid her hand upon his arm with a gesture that suggested a world of sympathy and drew herself closer to his side as he replied:

"I know we are hard hit, Billy, but it will take more than an early frost to put my Billy Boy out of the running. There's luck in odd numbers, you know, so we'll try once more and surely we can't have three crop failures in succession."

The man's arms went about her slender form and he held her close for a moment before he said, in a voice that broke in spite of him.

"You know that I don't mind the disappointments and the set backs, dear. You know that I could stick it out though I wore my fingers to the bone; but here I have enticed you away from a good home to come to this God accursed land of frosts and gophers where I've kept you in poverty for the last two years, always promising that the silver lining lay at the heart of each succeeding cloud, and now look at the consequence. There," pointing to the field of blasted wheat that lay outstretched beneath them, "I bet the last resource we had on earth and the labor of two long years. Now look at it."

"Never mind, Laddie," the girl replied, nestling close against him. "If this old homestead and everything on it was blown to kingdom come and nothing left to us but your empty hands and hard old head we would get along, somehow. You just stop worrying about that old field of wheat and we'll go to the shack and have a good, big eat. Then we'll catch up the bronks and drive to town for the mail and forget all about it," and with the ready guile of a tender woman she drew him away with her, though her heart was the heavier of the two, for she knew that their prospects were ruined.

Over a well cooked dinner, and the roping and harnessing of the bronks she badgered him into a semblance of his usual cheerful good nature and when at last they took the bridge across the Ribstone on the high slope he reined in the half wild team with a whoop and a ringing laugh.

A twelve mile drive over the rolling

prairie trail brought them to the village they called "town"—a cluster of tumble down shacks encircling a tank and an elevator—and here they proceeded to celebrate. They bought a half dozen magazines a sack of bananas and one of chocolates at a Chinaman's restaurant. A pair of silk stockings, a bottle of gherkins, a can of honey and the biggest bottle of olives they could find in the grocery store and while the general trading was going forward this new-made farm woman sandwiched in a couple of boxes of shot gun shells to be used on chicken and wild duck and a pickled trowl with a generous supply of line. The last of their business was to get their mail, for the perusal of their letters was always left to the privacy of the long drive home.

To-day they had a miscellaneous collection, a batch of papers a couple of weeks old, a circular from a farm machine company, one from an insurance agent and a big fat one from Bill's brother back east.

The letter from home was left to the last, that it might hold its place in memory, but was read at length with mingled comments of wonder. War had been declared some time before but had created very little excitement on the big ranges of the west. Now, however, England had thrown down the gage in support of martyred Belgium and the eastern provinces were ringing with enthusiasm. The boys at home were rallying to the colors, so the letter ran, everyone was going and of course it was taken for granted that Billy would be going too.

After the reading of the letter their tongues ran like wild fire and the situation was canvassed from every possible angle. Though May could see that Billy was on tenter hooks to go, yet he made no sign, contenting himself with recalling the days when he and the others rode with the Hussars at home, speculating as to whether the regiment would be called and which of the boys would be chosen. May watched him furtively, drawing her own conclusions and that night as they sat beside the fire reading the war news from their batch of old-date papers she started with a little twinge of pain each time he swore beneath his breath, reading of the sweeping drive through Belgium and of the murderous desecration wrought by the German soldiers.

Next day he moped about his work while May steeled herself for what she knew must come, but the chores were done and the lamp lit in the living room before he spoke again of the war. Then he laid his hand upon hers as he sat beside her and asked abruptly, "May, do you think I'd ought to go?"

For a long moment she sat gazing into

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