

Written for The Ladies' Journal.

UPS AND DOWNS.

A CANADIAN STORY.

BY L. A. H.

CHAPTER XIV.

With her own secret trouble to keep her company, Louise watched and waited for Neil.

At last he came, but she missed the elastic spring, and knew that what she dreaded had come to pass, and that the bar room as well as the parlour-table had known her brother's presence.

Sleeping softly so as not to disturb the sleeping child, she found Neil lying on the sofa, disgustingly helpless notwithstanding his vigorous manhood. His face was flushed with drink, his brown curly head falling heavily over one arm.

She stood with clasped hands looking down on the wreck of what she loved so well, and wondered how much longer that love could hold out?

She had fought against her wisest self, that 'twas his wild oats he was sowing, and that some day he would turn aside, but to see him lying there, his bright intelligence clogged with intoxication, revolting in his animal sleep, made her shiver as she slipped a pillow under his besotted head.

As he left the house the next morning, she returned, for the first time, a cool salute.

All that long day she wandered restlessly from one room to another, with a heavy foreboding of approaching trouble, even chasing her golden-haired darling for his nose with Plato, to snatch him up again and ramble and kisses on his innocent face before the child in quivering tones "to love her, oh so much!"

A ring of the bell made her limbs so tremble, she could scarcely open the door where stood two men, and she intuitively knew that what she was waiting for had come, and bidding them enter asked: "What was the matter with Neil?"

Unwittingly she had put a wrong question, for it was about him they had come, a doctor and policeman in plain clothes.

Diamonds were stolen last night, and suspicion rested on Neil Sheridan. They were gone from the jeweller's store on Church Street, the same place where Philip worked.

Neil had been there in the afternoon and again in the evening apparently to see his brother, but, evidently taking the bearings of the situation, as the entrance to the diamond was effected by one acquainted with the house.

Louise listened as if turned into stone. "Diamonds in her house seeking stolen goods, and her brother accused as the thief."

The words seemed to be written in fire on her very brain, whilst some icy hand was slowly squeezing every drop of blood out of her heart at each word she heard.

"When would her brother return?" She did not know and at her wild assertion of his innocence. "Where was he between eight and ten last night?" Again she did not know, but oh her Neil did not do it she was sure and bid them search the house which they did with alacrity, as they could not have done, not having a search warrant; but found nothing.

It was getting dusk, and as they waited for the lad's coming, hardened men as they were with scenes like this, they felt sorry for the young girl awaiting her brother's walking into the merciless grip of the law without one warning or word from her, who would literally place her head under his feet to help him.

At last she heard the well-known foot-steps, and knew not whether to be glad or sorry.

The young fellow threw a hurried glance at the two men, for contrary to his sister he recognized the sleuth hounds of the law. They beckoned him into his sister's simple room.

"God grant there may be few in this self-same City to suffer as Louise Sheridan did. Little Pat had crept into her arms, fought and at the unwonted disturbance, and faithful Plato stretched himself at her feet looking askance at the door, where the terrific examination was taking place.

Last night she thought her pain was the keenest she could bear, but as she waited and thought of her father's honored name being tarnished even with a suspicion, and more awful still, to see Kingston's grim walls looming in the distance, the white lips murmured "how long, O Lord, how long!"

She tried to bow her head to the heavy stroke that Providence permitted, but the words of "Thy will be done" were form-

ed, the rebellious young heart cried out "but it must not be Thy Will." So weak is poor humanity.

The door opened; ah! she read the verdict in their faces.

A couple of loose diamonds were in an out-of-the-way pocket, and he was under arrest.

Louise dragged herself over to the brother branded as a thief.

There they stood, locked in each other's arms, those two who had entered into the world together with a spotless future before them.

Neil passed his hand, with the old caressing gesture over the bowed head of his stricken sister.

"Do not grieve so, dear, I may be wild and reckless, but I swear to you by our dead mother's memory I would not sullify my sister's name, were it to take what would save her from starvation." Then without even a word to little Pat he passed out into the dark.

CHAPTER XV.

Next morning George Frazer was startled at his wife's pale face as she hurried into his room with a morning *World's* account of yesterday's bold robbery of five thousand dollars' worth of unset diamonds, and Neil Sheridan arrested as the burglar.

"Bless my soul, Jessie; this cannot be true!"

"Of course not," stoutly asserted Mrs. Frazer with tears in her blue eyes, "my poor Louise, I must go to her at once."

"Yes, my lass, and call into Kavanagh's office and tell him to come up immediately."

And so Louise in her lonely home bowed down with shame and sorrow had good friends working for her.

This same morning two men were standing before the Magistrate, pen in hand, giving their bond each for five thousand dollars.

The prisoner's face twitched as he wrung the hands of Beverleigh Romney and Edgar Atheling, telling them that he would prove they had not misplaced their confidence.

On leaving that dark court where crooked ways are tried to be made straight, they met Arthur Kavanagh coming from his interview with George Frazer and in his private sanctum they weighed the pros and cons of the case.

Neil could recollect but little of what occurred that fatal night, as never before being under the influence of liquor, it completely upset his mental equilibrium, hearing nothing distinct about where he was or what took place.

He had left home about eight o'clock, and sometime afterwards met a Mr. Fife, who invited him into a saloon. This Fife worked beside Philip and was a prominent Sunday school teacher in St. X's church and noted for his zeal in his pious work, yet strange that he should be the first to raise the cursed glass to the lips of a youth.

Neil could remember meeting no one that night who might prove an alibi.

Where could he have been?

They interviewed Fife, and he swore to meeting Neil after ten and seeing him very much shaken, thought some cognac would do him good, not dreaming that it would so affect him.

Neil's friends began to wish it were all safely over.

CHAPTER XVI.

The day of the trial came, and there was an unusual crowd to watch it, as it had been rumored around the city. There was a witness for the defence of high standing, some thought 'twas the mistress of the Government House.

In the box stood the prisoner, for the plaintiff's side had been heard. Louise sat with her pale face turned towards him watching every question of the cross-examination by the plaintiff's counsel; and her head sank as Neil's deplorable story of how he had passed the hours between eight and twelve on Wednesday night, and there were the visible proofs of the theft, and lawyer Hick, held up the two diamonds that seemed to glitter with sinister brilliancy. Then was drawn out Neil's manner of living, nothing really damaging but still against him.

Louise gazed appealingly at her friends as if for help, and there was Zita Heatherleigh, approaching to comfort her no doubt, but it was not sympathy she wanted, but liberty for her brother.

But Zita passing her by took Neil's place, and Louise hardly understood as that rarely beautiful girl, after raising the book to her lips, turned to the Judge, and told of how on the night of the robbery and at the alleged time it took place she saw the prisoner, Neil Sheridan, in St. X's church on King street.

Then followed the story of the "scene" and

"order" was not called in the court, for in person of the Judge sat one of the instruments of Neil's, for once a fortunate practical joke.

And the lad proved his possession of that strange power by deciding in the judge's voice, "Neil Sheridan was free," and the sour old decreer of criminals' fate, was seen to move his rusty ribs, as he declared Neil acquitted by an unprecedented alibi.

Sudden relief, like sorrow, often snaps the tense nerves, so that Louise could only gasp, "Oh Neil," and swooned in his arms.

A short time afterwards the pious Fife was convicted as the real thief. He had, after drugging him with the liquor, slipped the two stones into Neil's pocket.

CHAPTER XVII.

Myles had come home enrolled in the orders of the Gospel and was to raise his voice for the first time in the interests of religion within the dim religious light of his cathedral church. It was a "charitable sermon," and as Toronto is a church-going city there was a goodly number assembled.

Louise, on entering, saw a seat vacant and took it. In a few minutes a stout, red-faced woman (as if engaged in the brewing business), stood at the door ordering all to leave her pew, regardless of the fixed rule that seats are free in the evening, and then this Christian woman bent her knee in lowly homage to the Meek Lamb.

As Myles mounted the pulpit all eyes were turned to him. They saw a spare, but well-knit figure, with a closely-cropped, black head, and hard, dark face.

As he commenced, taking for his text, Our Lord's sign of how his followers would know one another, Louise was conscious of only the natural feelings of trepidation lest he break down.

But she soon forgot the form in the matter, and listened with breathless interest as the youthful servant of his Master unfolded some of what that Divine decree contained:

"Love one another." And poor ladies were made to acknowledge their culpableness as they heard the relentless voice declaring God's love for his poor and lowly, and his vengeance on those who trampled where they should have embraced, seeing in them a perfect likeness of His thirty-three years; and men of influence moved uncomfortably in their seats as they thought of their opposite life to that of justice, bordering on charity when they showed no mercy to the widow and the orphan, but exacted their pound of flesh.

The face lost its harshness as he pleaded for more Samaritans in this great city, regardless of their race or creed, and not to leave their good intentions within the church where they were born, but help them to grow strong by world-wide exercise.

To the right of the pulpit sat Clarice Hale fighting the deadly fight between right and wrong, God and Mammon.

"Would she give up what belonged to the orphan, and so lose her hold on the pleasure her worldly heart beat for alone?"

"No," and her face grew sullen, as her bad spirit glared to the Eternal One, "I will not serve."

Beside her sat Zita Heatherleigh. She had come to hear Louise's brother, and for that alone, for this fragile girl with a face as if caught at its birth from the smile of an angel acknowledged no Supreme Being. She would not injure the slightest insect that crawled the earth, with a generous spirit and a detestation of all that was not truth, she had lost the priceless jewel of faith, between her mother's cant and her father's carelessness.

And her face too grew fixed as she cried out from the depths of a troubled heart "Lord, save me or I perish."

CHAPTER XVIII.

In her little room Louise sat thinking of how at last it seemed as if she were to get her due, for Arthur Kavanagh had won her case. He had been unphussed with the proof that Louise's mother had never landed on the American side, as her sister had gone to meet her, not too willingly, and found the young wife with capriciousness born of weak health determined to take the return trip back to her husband.

For a time work was suspended when much to Kavanagh's surprise Edgar Atheling came to his assistance.

Edgar had heard of the pending case, and the necessity of finding the name of the captain of the "Bowman" which sailed on the 23th of October some twenty years ago.

When relating the story to his mother, she arose and going to a cabinet drew out an old packet of letters.

"Your father's half-brother owned a

steamer of that name, and it may be he is the man," and she continued calmly knitting, only to be startled at her son's shout, "Eureka," with the newsboy's science of long ago. Her eyes grew moist as he described the poverty of this family, dwelling with unconscious feeling on the young girl who bore the heaviest share.

"Edgar, my son, I'd rather it was the quiet Philip you think so much of than the sister."

"Why, mother," and in the strong man's heart, there was a childish longing to hear his well-guarded secret put into words by reverent lips.

For Edgar Atheling was hopelessly in love, and could no more fix the time when the welcome exultation befel him, than he could tell the exact moment when wakefulness merges into sleep.

It had crept on him with thrilling fierceness, meeting no obstacle in the man whose passions though strong, were held down by a stronger will.

"Edgar, I always hoped to see Zita Heatherleigh wearing your name," and in the mother's voice lay a wistfulness that told how much she longed for this marriage, for, woman-like, she saw how one would bring the prestige of society, and the other only herself.

"If there were no Louise it might be otherwise," without seeming to see the implied confidence of Zita's willingness to accept.

But 'tis the man's prerogative "of asking" which tinges his words, but woman has also a counter strength to meet him with.

With Edgar's information Kavanagh's chief clerk was soon searching for a trace of Captain Nelles, of the Roman.

In a small village near the Bay of Quinte there lived Captain Nelles. He had long ago numbered the three score and ten and yet clung to the worn thread of life.

He was a miser of the worst type in strong contrast to the open hand of those who lead a sea-faring life.

At first he refused to give any information, but on the clerk hinting at remuneration, the glazed eyes sparkled with something more than the pain of stiffened joints, as he hobbled into an inner room returning with a dog-eared book.

Ah, there it was, but the old man closed it leaving one shrivelled finger as a book mark, till the golden lever that lifts open all but heaven, should be plied.

The young clerk gave him a pitying glance and placing an X snatched the book and darted out of the house.

"On the 23th of October, 1865, just as the Roman had weighed anchor word was brought the Captain that a birth had taken place," and the record went on giving the name of the mother, Louise Sheridan. The twins being christened, the Captain standing sponsor giving the names Neil and Louise.

Though not born on American soil it was within the three miles limit, and their mother and father both born American citizens. Edgar then had won the day.

So Louise sat trying to grasp the one idea riches, and her heart gave one bound at the thought of how her brothers should have all that money could buy.

How they could throw off the garment of poverty which always clung so tightly for one's love and comfort.

Myles should have all his charitable heart wished for his poor. Neil had his own share and would perhaps with its responsibility rise to meet it.

Philip need work only under himself and her little Pat, would have his life more smooth than his older brother, and everyone and everything was to be one bright panorama.

Was it the flutter of the fallen angels, that our grandmothers tell us inhabit the air, made her face darken and change into the old time shadows.

"My turn has come at last," she muttered.

Just then Myles opened the door. "What is it, little sister? You look as if contemplating a deadly thrust for some unlucky one."

"I was thinking of Clarice Hale's haughty pride humbled at last."

He half smiled, "what pleasant thoughts to have."

Up went the graceful head. "What makes you talk like that, Myles?" But you cannot understand all I have suffered, and with a choking sob over bitter memories, she dropped her face in her hands.

He stroked the bowed head with a soothing touch. "Yes, I do, Louise, understand just how a lacerated heart will smart and burn, but now that they are in your hands will you not show some mercy?"

"No, never," she cried, "they did not spare me or mine, and I will have justice to the last farthing."

"You are not the Louise I thought I knew if you do. They will be left without