

thrust forward, conscious of his crippled arm.

As he dropped to his place in the boat, he leaned forward eagerly. The "Little Sister" sat near him, a child nestling in her right arm.

The sailors bent on their oars, rowed in an easterly direction from the blazing ship, the hot flames fanning their cheeks, and by the glaring light they watched the deadly U-boat still on the port quarter and to the windward of the blazing Marciette.

Slowly the blaze dwindled in size and as the boats rowed further and further out, the passengers saw only the smoke of the Marciette. All night they rowed and at dawn they struck the trough of the angry sea. Frail women and children, exhausted, lost their grip and as the waves swept the boat, they washed helplessly into the sea.

Through the day they drifted and through the night, when the cold chilled their sluggish blood, Neil Stratton crawled forward and crouched down beside the "little sister." The child was cold and he saw that it was dead, yet she held it close to her heart. She shivered involuntarily and he struggled to throw off his coat that he might wrap it around her. But she smiled wistfully and shook her head.

"You see you are as wet as I am," she told him. Very gradually had the provisions disappeared, and now even the biscuits, washed by the salt water were non-palatable. The breakers slapping the boat had forced the bung from the water cask. And now, without food or water, they drifted on hopelessly, perilously, the night giving way to cheerless dawn.

There were no words between Neil Stratton and the nursing sister, but his chilled blue hand covered her own, numbed and blue. Gradually the child slipped from her hold and as it dropped quietly to the bottom of the boat, the man saw the girl's brown eyes fill with tears.

He leaned forward, his left arm reaching out and drawing her nearer him, his sluggish blood suddenly coursing madly through his veins. Unresisting, her head dropped wearily against his shoulder and his heart pounded tumultuously. Admiration for this courageous woman flooded his soul with passion. He bent his head and kissed the wan cheeks, but there was no response. So still she lay there, that he dared not lay a finger on her pulse. He dared not look into her face.

Confusedly, blankly he crouched in the boat, the woman leaning hard against his heart. The hours passed grimly. One by one the exhausted passengers dropped unconscious to the bottom of the boat, the more hardy sailors struggling at their oars. With senses numbed, Neil Stratton sat motionless, conscious of one thing alone—the "little sister's" head rested against his heart.

Very slowly he sensed that sailor's hands were shaking him roughly. In his stupidity, he only half understood that a British ship had sighted them and was near, ready to pick them up. Half-conscious, he relinquished his hold on the nursing sister and the sailors carried her forward. Blindly he staggered toward the bow.

"Saved—saved—saved!" he muttered hoarsely, then laughed deliriously, madly. He sensed strong arms held out to him in rescue, then down, down to the depths of blackness he dropped.

Some hours later he roused to a sense of warmth and the glamour of the ship's lights with the ship's doctor bending over him.

"The nursing sister?" he questioned, fear maddening his dull senses.

"She'll come around directly," announced the ship's doctor, "you've sure had a close call and it will take some pumping to get a good flow of red blood running through your veins again."

Four days later, as the ship sailed into Halifax harbor, Major Stratton staggered on deck. He caught a glimpse of the nursing sister standing watching the shore, her face drawn and pinched, yet a luminous light glowing in her eyes.

"Thank God, you survived!" muttered Neil Stratton, looking up into her face.

"I could not give up. It would have been hard to do so. Your courage buoyed me up," she answered simply.

The man, awkwardly silent, stood gazing at the ships anchored in the harbor, his pulses throbbing madly as he remembered the night she lay so close to his heart. Ah, that had been his hour! He, who was crippled beyond active service, had no right to ask for her love. She had found some other passionate service in

which to breathe out her beautiful, young energy, and he had no right to ask her to forfeit that service.

He turned abruptly and strode along the deck. For long hours he stood by the deck-rail, watching the city of Halifax grow more distinct, watching the passengers land in little groups until he stood among the last. Then slowly, grimly, he followed on, passing with the throng to the city wharf, but never once did his eye search the people for a glimpse of the "little sister."

There was the glory of springtime in the air and the birds of all the countryside poured forth their melody in one grand musicale. Away in the distance stretched a sea of snowy blossoms.

The orchards of the valley! Neil Stratton bounded on up the hill, lingering for one breathless, impassioned gaze over the fields, green with the spring. Then, vaulting the stone wall, he hurried down through the pasture, following the birch-shaded brook. The old farm house, worn and dilapidated, gleamed silver among the poplars. He would go up there directly and find Old Ben and Marthy, but first he must ramble through the orchards.

Alluringly beautiful, they called to him to hurry. He caught a whiff of their fragrance and the blood rushed hot to his cheek. What was that he had said to Sylvia—some day the orchards would call them back? Poor, vain, foolish Sylvia!

Suddenly he stopped and stared dully at the snake fence running between the fields. What of the old ideal? He

He cried out her dear name and there flashed over his numbed brain a strange sense of reality. Sylvia—of course—it was the dear winsomeness of her that had drawn him so irresistibly; that had kept him close to her all through that awful night in the open boat. And the orchard had called her back. This was her service—the service that had called him also.

He stumbled forward, his arms outstretched. He could no longer wait. He crushed her against his heart, the apple blossoms breaking and falling unheeded. His hot lips kissed her cheeks and he sensed her answering caress. "Dear heart—dear heart! It is beyond my understanding that I was so blind that I did not know you. Yet you knew me—"

Sylvia raised her face, the radiance of her eyes sending the blood leaping through his veins. She smiled wisely, answering softly: "I did not know until that night in the boat, when you put your arm around me and then I saw in your eyes the old flash of fire. You didn't believe Sylvia Marr capable of anything worth while or heroic. You were right—they did spoil me in Aunt Lexis' social set. Oh, they made me pitifully selfish and foolishly vain. Then one day the bitter throbbing of the warring world woke me up and I offered to serve. Oftentimes there was hardness to endure and I thought back to the orchards—"

"Thank God for the blessed, old orchards," breathed the man passionately, "they called us home."

"To serve together," added Sylvia joyously.

#### Mr. Peaslee's Retort

The pretty little waitress in the hotel in Dilmouth was very prompt and efficient—as if to atone for the cuisine of the hotel, which was frankly bad. She was perhaps inclined to be a little pert at times, but that may have been merely her means of defense against the complaints of the patrons about the quality of the food and drink.

So when Mr. Peaslee asked for his fourth cup of coffee, she brought it speedily. As he thoughtfully stirred the weak, yellowish solution, the waitress remarked:

"You seem to be fond of coffee."

Mr. Peaslee, nothing abashed, smiled upon her benignly. "I be fond of coffee," he admitted placidly. "My! Ain't you quick to notice things! I'm dretful fond of it. If I wa'n't," he concluded, slowly, while his pleasant old face lighted whimsically, "I don't believe I'd drink so much water for the sake of getting a little coffee."

#### The Necessity of Works

The Saturday Journal tells us that Rev. Father O'Leary was off to catch the Dublin express, and that on the way to the station he ran into his bishop.

"Well, what's the hurry, O'Leary?" said he.

"Sure, it's the Dublin express I'm after, your lordship."

The bishop pulled out his gold watch.

"Well, there are seven minutes yet. Let us walk together and both catch it."

They arrived at the station just in time to see the train steaming out.

"Do you know, I had the greatest faith in that watch, O'Leary," said the bishop.

"Ah, my lord, what is faith without good works?" replied the angry O'Leary.

#### A Natural Mistake

Little Eunice was very fond of her mother's friend, Mrs. Clayton, who had stopped in for a few moments on her way to an afternoon party. She was wearing a beautiful new gown.

Little Eunice gazed at her for several seconds, speechless with admiration, and then burst out delightedly, "O Mrs. Clayton, you look just like a fashion dish!"



The first general of the Allied armies seen by these peasants since the beginning of the war in 1914. A Canadian field commander enters a Belgian town and receives an enthusiastic greeting. He happily takes notice of a Canadian badge one of the women is wearing.

stretched out his left arm gropingly. Yet he could not understand. The "little sister" had usurped the place of his boyhood's ideal.

Slowly he clambered over the snake fence, his mind confused and bewildered. Then leaning forward, he looked deep into the heart of the orchard, where spread the beautiful pink and white blossomed canopy of shade.

Ah, the orchard! should prove his salvation! The world was calling for fruit. He would make a bargain with Old Ben and take possession of these orchards. Here he would work out his energy perfecting the orchards and still serve his country.

He walked stealthily through the avenues, carpeted with drifting petals, stopping to break an alluring twig of blossoms. Straight ahead was the old gravenstein. A rustling of the branches startled him and leaning forward, he discerned a girlish figure breaking branches from the old tree. He caught a glimpse of a blue skirt, then a sweet, laughing face peering through the blossoms. Stunned, he stood there motionless, dimly conscious of his pounding pulses.

"Little sister!"

He could say no more for the wonder of it all numbed his brain. What had brought the little nursing sister to the orchards? There were depths in the brown eyes that haunted him. The blossoms covered the cruelly empty sleeve and gave her wan cheeks a delicate flush. The lips quivered, but she looked straight into Major Stratton's eyes.

"Neil, you remember you said that some day the orchards would call us back—"

#### A Message

What can I hope for thee?  
A little less of care than weighs me  
A little less of woe than makes my crown,  
And fewer pains than 'round about me frown,

Are what I hope for thee.

Yea, these I wish for thee!

A sweeter peace than I have ever known,  
And sturdier good than I have ever sown,  
And that thou be to manliest manhood grown,

These do I wish for thee!

For, lo, I find in thee  
The chance to be all that I wished to be,  
The chance to see all that I wished to see,  
The chance of joys that could not come to me,

These do I find in thee.

And I petition thee:

Be brave whatever sullen cares assail,  
Be good, whatever tempter would prevail,  
And smile serene, however, men may rail.  
This I petition thee.

And let me counsel thee:  
Nourish no dream that springs within thy heart

To draw thee from the work-world's busy mart,  
For, at the last, thou and thy dream must part:

And so I counsel thee.

This is from me to thee:  
And one day when my work falls from my hand,

So much to-day thou canst not understand,  
The reason of the things that I have planned

Will be made plain to thee.

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