

To Err is Human.

It had been storming for hours. At early dawn the fine flakes of snow had commenced falling, covering the earth with a white and feathery mantle.

I had been very busy all the day, for my business was pressing. During the afternoon I had been called to attend a patient in the neighboring village, and it was dark when I arrived home, tired out, and thoroughly chilled.

I delivered my horse into the care of the stable boy, and was soon seated by a glowing fire in my office.

I had sat thus but a short time, when a knock at the door aroused me from the reverie into which I had fallen, and the next moment my housekeeper stood in the doorway.

"Excuse me, Doctor Parker, for interrupting you, but a lad left this letter for you early in the afternoon, and wished me to hand it to you as soon as possible."

I took the note from her hand, and, hastily opening it, read as follows—

"DOCTOR PARKER.—Come to me as soon as you receive this. I have something to disclose to you, which is of great importance, both to you and to myself. Do not fail."

Yours,

"RUPERT ELLIOTT."

"What can the man mean?" said I, to myself. "Surely there is nothing that I can think of which is of any concern to me as regards Rupert Elliott. Perhaps he is in need of my services, and takes these means to obtain them. I will go, at any rate."

I immediately ordered my supper, and prepared to obey the summons contained in the letter.

The house which Rupert Elliott inhabited was situated about a mile from my residence, standing alone on an eminence, which overlooked the surrounding country.

It was a large, old-fashioned structure, built, probably, a couple of centuries before, and once occupied by some aristocratic and wealthy family.

Many a wild tale was told of its history by the superstitious people around the blazing fire in the village tavern.

As I hastened towards the dwelling, I thought of these wild stories, and pictured to myself the loneliness of him who had dwelt there so many years alone, brooding over the wrongs of his early life.

The heavy gate grated on its hinges as I pushed it open, sending forth a dismal and discordant sound.

The old and rickety shutters swung to and fro, as the wind spent its force upon them.

Two tall poplars stood by the door, like grim sentinels. I knocked, and was admitted by an aged woman, one who, for years, had been the housekeeper.

To her inquiry, "Is the physician," I answered in the affirmative, when she immediately conducted me up a flight of stairs, to the room of the sick man.

Opening the door, she bade him follow, and proceeded to a bed in the extreme corner of the room, whereon lay the invalid.

At the sound of the opening door he was aroused from a restless slumber, and seeing that I had come, he called the woman to him.

"Janet, hand me some wine; move the stand nearer to me, and then you may retire."

Taking the glass from her hand, he drank its contents, then bade me be seated near his couch, and, as the woman left the apartment, began—

"Doctor, I have sent for you to disclose what has long lain heavily upon my conscience."

"Twenty years ago this dwelling, which is now in such a decayed state, was the pleasantest for miles around."

"At the age of thirty I married an orphan daughter of our former village parson, and brought her here to be the light and joy of my home. Of a kind and loving disposition, she had won my esteem when I was engaged in settling the affairs of her father after his death, and that had ripened into love."

"On her eighteenth birthday we were married."

"Two happy years, full of joy, passed; then the trials came."

"Would to God I had laid her in the grave, then I should have known that her spirit was safe; but the tempter instilled his insidious poison into her heart, and she was lost—lost not only to me but also to herself."

"Eighteen years ago, a young man, the brother of a classmate of mine in college, came to these parts."

"He brought letters of introduction from his brother to me, and called upon me the first evening he spent in our village."

"I invited him to make my house his home, and when the invitation was warmly accepted by my wife, he accepted."

"He was afterwards going to Scotland."

"The next day found him installed in our dwelling."

"The week which he had named as the extent of his stay soon passed, and, at our request, he prolonged it another, as I was going to Scotland myself, and proposed to accompany him."

"I had Birmingham during the second week of Seyton's stay, and, therefore, made arrangements to meet him there at the end of that time."

"The week soon drew to a close, and the day arrived on which he was to meet me at Birmingham."

"The day slowly passed, and he came not, neither did I receive any word from him."

"Thinking he might be indisposed and unable to take the journey, I thought I had better remain where I was, and, perhaps, I should hear from him."

"The next day I received a letter, and, on opening it, found that it came from my old and faithful servant."

"There were but a few words, but they came like a thunder stroke upon me."

"The letter read nearly as follows—

"Come home immediately. Mr. Seyton and your wife took the train last night for London."

The agony I suffered, as I hastened homeward, no language can describe.

"I found the house in a state of excitement."

"All that I could learn from Janet was, that on the day on which Seyton had agreed to meet me in Birmingham, he had made preparations as she supposed, to join me there."

"Late in the afternoon, a carriage had been driven up from the village, to take him as Janet was informed, to the next village to meet the train."

"When all was ready, Agnes had told her that she should accompany Mr. Seyton to the station, and, possibly, might go on with him to Birmingham, and meet me there, and accompany me as far north as I intended to go."

The suspicion that all was not told her forced itself upon the faithful servant's mind, and, hastening to my wife's chamber, she found the greater part of Agnes's wardrobe gone."

"She instantly despatched Reuben to the village to enquire whether the carriage was destined."

"He returned with the news that it was gone to the next station south, and had been chartered to take Seyton there in time to meet the next train southward."

"He immediately drove to the station, and found, on inquiry, that a man corresponding to the description of Seyton had procured tickets to London, and had left by the last train."

"The next morning I had received word, as I have before stated, and had immediately returned to a desolate and dishonored hearth."

"All the following night I paced my chamber, beating my forehead, and cursing the day which gave me birth."

"Towards morning better feelings gained possession of my mind, and I wept like a child."

"Yes, the first tears I had shed for years fell then, and sank upon the head of our infant daughter, the only pledge left me of the love my lost Agnes had once borne me."

"But the fount was soon dry, and the one thought of 'How I should have revenge' took possession of my soul."

"I determined to give up the practice of my profession, and devote my time to the education of my child as soon as she should become of suitable age."

"I instructed the servants to utter no word of the sad affair, but let it remain buried in the past, and, in a few years the little Agnes should ask concerning her mother, to tell her she had died when she was but an infant."

"Five years passed, and at the end of that time I heard that Agnes, deserted by her betrayer, had died in a distant city."

"He who had tempted and triumphed over her in her purity, had deserted her in her shame, and she died alone and forsaken."

Here a convulsive shudder passed through Rupert Elliott's frame, and he fell back in a fainting fit.

"I was soon brought back to consciousness by applying the proper restoratives, and he soon continued—

"Had Herbert Seyton cherished and protected her I should have never committed the act I afterwards did, and which has weighed so heavily on my mind."

"But when I found that he who had been the instrument of her downfall had deserted her, then I swore I would have my revenge."

"And sweeter it would be, after waiting so many years than the joy of the miser over his gold."

"For nearly a year I followed in his path, and then, on a wild and stormy night, I met face to face."

"He recognized me, as I pressed forward and laid my hand on his shoulder."

"With a start of surprise he stepped back and would have fled; but my hand was clasped upon him, and he vainly tried to shake it off."

"Herbert Seyton, you know me! You remember Rupert Elliott. You remember how you robbed me of my wife, and after a time deserted her. For nearly a year have I been upon your track, and now we meet face to face. 'Tis my time to triumph. Your hour is come."

"Mercy—have mercy! I cried the doomed man."

"Had you mercy on Agnes, when she pleaded for food only to keep her from starvation? And shall I prove more merciful to you than you did to her? No; her spirit prompts me to do the deed, and bids me have revenge!"

The report of my pistol rang out, and Herbert Seyton's spirit went forth to meet

that of his victim at the Judgment bar.

"I fled immediately from the scene of the tragedy, and hastened home to bury myself again in the solitude of my chamber."

"For eight years I remained here, cultivating the mind of my daughter, and teaching her what I deemed essential for her education."

"At the age of fifteen I sent her to a seminary to complete her education, and determined myself to spend the three years allowed for that purpose in foreign travel."

"I visited all the places of ancient glory—now treading the streets of Rome or Athens, and now sailing the blue waters of the Mediterranean."

"But my conscious was ill at ease. The voice of Herbert Seyton, pleading for 'mercy,' was ever sounding in my ears, and his agonising look, as he had fallen lifeless at my feet, was always haunting me by day and by night."

"Then I found my health was fast failing me; and I knew that the bond so rudely broken would soon be joined again in Heaven."

"I hastened home, and have sent for you to lay before you the incidents of my life."

"To you, and you alone, are all the facts known."

"Why I have selected you as the one to whom I should disclose my secrets, I will now explain."

"Herbert Seyton had a sister, and she, early in life, was married to a man named Parker."

"They had but one child, Vincent, and while he was but a babe, the father was stricken down by a sudden epidemic. And soon the young wife followed him."

"And that woman was my mother, and Herbert Seyton was my uncle!" I exclaimed.

"He was," continued the dying man; "and you are the only surviving relative of Herbert Seyton. I have watched you in your daily life ever since your boyhood, and in you, I know, I have found a man worthy of the trust I am about to impose upon you. Will you be a guardian and friend to my child when I am gone?"

"I answered that I would do all in my power to protect his daughter."

"To-morrow," continued he, "I wish you to go and inform her of my illness, and bring her home to me. In a small baggage at the bottom of that trunk,"—pointing to the further corner of the apartment—"you will find a manuscript containing the whole of the incidents of my life. When a sufficient time shall have elapsed after my death, read it to Agnes, that she may know what I have so long concealed from her; then destroy it."

He ceased speaking and lay back on his couch.

Seeing that the invalid had sunk into a quiet slumber, wearied by the recital, I departed, and again sought my home."

The next day I took an early train and went to the seminary."

"Presenting my letter of introduction to the principal, I made known to her the situation of Agnes's father."

Everything was at once prepared, and we were soon on our return."

I found Agnes Elliott young and interesting."

She could not be called handsome. Her features were not so regularly formed as that term would require; but there was a depth of feeling in her deep blue eyes, and a sad expression hovering over her countenance, which enchanted the beholder."

As night was throwing her mantle of darkness over the earth, we arrived at the village station, and found old Reuben awaiting us."

With a fervent "God bless you, Miss Aggie!" he met her and conducted us to the carriage."

The moon was just rising as we rode along, and the snow glittered under its rays."

The stars came out one by one, and twinkled forth their bright light, as though everything below were bright and joyous too."

At the door we met Janet, waiting impatiently for her young mistress."

"Is my father living? Is he better?" were the first words which Agnes uttered as she met the old nurse."

"Hush! don't get alarmed, Miss Aggie!" replied she; "he is asleep now, and seems more comfortable."

We proceeded to his chamber, and softly entered."

As he lay in a restless slumber, Agnes bent over him and imprinted a kiss upon his forehead."

"I did not kill Herbert Seyton! No, I did not! Ah, but he was a villain, though, and he murdered my own dear Agnes!" murmured the sleeper, as he turned restlessly on his couch."

"Your Agnes is here!" interrupted his daughter, bending over him again and winding her arms tenderly around his neck. I withdrew from the room, deeming the interview too sacred for the presence of another."

I left the house, leaving word with the domestic that I would call again the following day."

For nearly two weeks the sick man lingered. Then the summons came, and the spirit of Rupert Elliott went forth."

For nearly a year Agnes remained in the seclusion of her own dwelling."

During that period I was a constant visitor, and the regard I had at first felt for her soon ripened into love."

At the end of two years we were married. We had made arrangements to pass the winter in the South of England with an old acquaintance of mine."

One day we visited an asylum for the insane, situated in the neighbourhood of our temporary abode."

We had passed through the greatest part

of the establishment, when we entered a room occupied by a woman, who as the physician informed us, had been confined there for nearly twelve years."

No one knew aught of her history before that period."

She had been found in an insensible state, late one night, near the asylum."

When we entered the apartment where she was confined, she was sitting on a low stool, humming a sad melody."

I turned to Agnes, and calling her by name, mentioned the song—one which I had often heard her sing."

As I uttered the name, the woman started."

"Agnes! Agnes!" she cried, while she swept her hand across her forehead, as if trying to call to mind something buried in the past. "They called me Agnes once!"

Suddenly her eyes lighted up with a more intelligent gleam; and, rising from her seat, she gazed long and earnestly upon my wife."

Then, with a quick bound, she stood before her."

"Yes, it is my own Agnes—my darling child! I told them I should see you yet—for I knew, when you learned they would not let me go, that you would come to me."

She sought to clasp her in her arms."

But Agnes, frightened by her wild look and manner, clung to me, and shrank from her touch."

"Yes; you will leave me, even as I left you long years ago! You will leave me, as he left me, after he had borne me from my happy home—leave me here alone—to die!" And she again sought to clasp Agnes."

"Let her do as she wishes," I said, turning to my wife. "She is harmless—and, besides, it will gratify her."

She wound her arms tenderly round Agnes's neck, and held her for a moment to her bosom."

"There, now I am satisfied," she continued. "You are happy—happy as your mother once was. May you always be so!" Agnes seemed riveted to the spot."

At the name of 'mother,' she had started."

The words she had heard her father murmuring in his sleep rushed back to her memory; and here was the solution to the mystery which had hung so long over her life."

That night I related to her the whole history of Agnes Raymond, as it had been confided to me by her father."

The next day, I visited the asylum, again to bear some message in regard to the patient's treatment, but it was too late."

The third spirit, in the quiet of the night had gone forth on its last journey."

And I knew that Agnes, the erring, was at rest."



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IN HUMANITY'S CAUSE.

Heart Full of Song Because South American Rheumatic Cure Has Healed Her.

"For the benefit of suffering humanity I consider it my duty to inform you of the great and lasting benefit I have received from the use of South American Rheumatic Cure. I was a great sufferer from rheumatism for a number of years—all remedies I tried failed to cure until I commenced to use this wonderful preparation. It worked a great cure. I trust other sufferers may follow my example with as satisfactory results." Mrs. Bates, 71 Gloucester Street, Toronto. Sold by E. C. Brown.

SERGEANT FERGUSON'S ADVENTURE.

He Came Nearly Within Reach of the Murderous Filippians.

When the United States army lay along the southern shore of the Rio Grande River, on the island of Lazon, near Calumpit, on the night of the 25th of last April, Colonel Funston formed the plan of taking a few by night across the broken girders of the iron bridge which the Filippians had sought to destroy. Once across, those men were to make a great shooting and shooting, supported by the infantry fire from the southern bank, and it was expected that a panic would be spread in the ranks of the insurgents. But Colonel Funston first sent Sergeant Fergusson of his regiment, the Twentieth Kansas, across the bridge to reconnoitre. What happened to him is told by Mr. John F. Bass in Harper's Weekly.

Clouds covering the moon made it somewhat dark. The bridge was about eighty yards long; the rails and upper girders had been removed by the insurgents, leaving only the lower girders to walk on. The cross girders were about seven feet apart, and those running the length of the bridge about four feet apart. The iron uprights which originally held the upper girders were still in place, and hindered Fergusson's progress.

He started in his underclothing, and

slowly and cautiously crept from girder to girder. The distance between them was so great that he immediately realized that he were wounded he would surely drop into the river.

Slowly he approached the northern bank. At every girder he halted and listened. The dim heavy mass of the insurgent trenches in front of him began to take shape. From one side of the river naturally no sound came, and on the other the insurgents were either asleep or were silently watchful to guard against surprise. This latter conjecture proved to be the true one.

Had Fergusson made a false move, so as to strike in the darkness any portion of the iron bridge, the reverberation would have been the signal for a general fusillade from the insurgent side.

By and by Fergusson was within ten feet of the Filipino's end of the bridge. He listened; at first there was no sound, and then he heard the tread of sentry. The sentry was barefooted, and therefore got almost to the bridge before Fergusson heard him. Perhaps the Filipino kicked a stone with his foot, or it may be that the sense of hearing is abnormally acute under such conditions. At any rate, Fergusson heard the sentry before he reached the end of the bridge.

There the sentry hesitated a moment. Whether some noise aroused his suspicion, or whether it was part of his regular beat to go a little way out on the bridge, is not known. Whatever the reason, the sentry advanced along the bridge on the girders toward where Fergusson lay crouching.

On came the Filipino; Fergusson was sure that he would come within touch of him. This meant death for Fergusson, for even if, unarmed, he could succeed in tipping the sentry into the water, the noise would alarm the camp, and a fusillade would be opened on the bridge which would send the Kansan after the Filipino. The sentry came within a few feet—then turned and went back again. Fergusson kept still as death. The sentry resumed his silent march up and down on the bank.

Fergusson saw that it would be impossible for armed men to cross the bridge and surprise the insurgents. Men with rifles and ammunition would make so much noise that fire would instantly be opened from the Filipino trenches. He, therefore, crept silently back, and reported to Colonel Funston, who then formed a plan for crossing with the aid of rafts.

New Battle-Ships With Historic Names.

To those who remember the famous sea-fight off Cherbourg, France, in June, 1864, when the United States corvette Kearsarge sunk the Confederate cruiser and commerce-destroyer Alabama, it will seem an interesting coincidence that new battle ships for the United States navy bearing these names should have had their trial trips within a few days of each other. The new Alabama was built by the Cramps at Philadelphia, and the Kearsarge at Newport News. Both developed a maximum speed greater than required by the contract. No Alabama has been born on the naval lists of the United States since the outbreak of the Civil War. There was at that time a ship-of-the-line Alabama, but she was renamed the New Hampshire when the State of Alabama seceded, and is now doing service as the practice-ship of the New York naval reserve.

DOCTORS IN LINE.

Frejudices all Vanish, and They Prescribe Dr. Agnew's Ointment Because its Virtues Demand Recognition.

Dr. M. Barkman, of Binghamton, N. Y., writes: "Send me 12 dozen more of Dr. Agnew's Ointment. I prescribe large quantities of it in my practice. It is a grand remedy for tetters, salt rheum, eczema, and all skin diseases, and a never-failing cure for piles." The strongest evidence of its virtue is that doctors can so highly recommend it. One application relieves. Sold by E. C. Brown.

Sally Farmer—If that summer boarder proposes to me tonight what shall I tell him?

Mrs. Farmer—Put him off for a week. I think he's got money enough left to pay for another week's board.