

Intemperance.

How long, oh Hely Father, Shall this dark presence dwell In our fair land, its victims...

To vanquish the dread monster, O must the countless tears, The strivings, weak but earnest...

Shall prayer be unavailing; Forever is thy ear Grown heavy, that the wailings...

Has it grown weak? Oh Father, As thou art changeless, save Our country's sons: oh conquer...

Oh weary ones take courage, Your strivings are not vain, Nor are your prayers unheeded...

SELECT STORY.

TWO LIVES.

Chapter I.

AFTER SEVEN YEARS.

RUSSEL WILDE was just settled in a home of his own—just married—and just returned to his native country.

After seven long years of exile in various parts of the world, Russel was home again—bearded, brown, and wealthy.

He was seated in one of the soft, crimson-velvet easy chairs, looking dreamily out of his study window at the gathering twilight.

He was thinking of the shy, pretty girl of sixteen he had left seven years ago, with a betrothal ring upon her finger; still another vision of her, as a matured, lovely woman of twenty-three, and how she had remained true to him all these years.

There was a soft, tender expression in his eyes, and a happy smile just visible beneath his heavy dark moustache.

He went on with his dreaming, watching the young moon rise, and the stars come out one by one.

The window was open, and he could hear the sound of water splashing in the marble basin, and the few last chirps of some bird in its nest.

So busy was he with his thoughts, that he did not hear the door open, or a light tread, until something white stood by his side.

He looked up and saw Adelaide, the moon shining in upon her fair face and white muslin dress.

You look like an angel, Adie, dear, he said. Come sit on my lap, and let us talk awhile.

It must be remembered that their honeymoon was scarcely over, and that Russel had been cheated out of all those years of courting; he was terribly in love with his young wife, and acted the perfect lover.

Adelaide Wilde accepted her husband's invitation, and seating herself, began to toy with his thick chestnut hair, she lifted the ringlets from the broad white forehead that contrasted so strongly with his sun-browned cheeks.

He told her of his travels, and how he had spent the time of their dreary separation.

She listened with the eager attention with which we listen to the life—in which we had no share—of those we love; and when he spoke of the different scenes and sunny lands, her blue-violet eyes grew bright with interest and wonder.

Now, Adie dear, he said, after a long narrative, what have you to tell me? I'm sure your life, during these long years of separation, must have had many incidents worth relating.

He was looking into her violet eyes, but her face was turned from the moonlight, and he did not see how deadly white it grew; but he felt her shiver, and thinking she was chilly, drew her closer in his arms, and asked if he should not get a shawl.

No, Russel, I'm not cold, she said. I am only a little nervous, sitting so long in the dark; let us go into the drawing-room.

Why, certainly, Adelaide, darling, How thoughtless I was! we could have had lights.

The hand he took was cold as ice; he looked at her inquiringly in the pale moonlight.

When they entered the lighted drawing-room, he asked again for her story, but she said,—

I have nothing to tell—I cannot remember—Then quickly, let me sing for you, Russel.

She went over to the grand piano, and touched a few chords, then sang a little Italian song she had learned long ago.

But she was not in voice to-night, so played Beethoven's Moonlight Sonata, and one of Mendelssohn's songs without words.

But Russel, though he listened attentively, said when she had finished,—

You are a magnificent player, my dear, but I know nothing of music, and have no ear for it. Our old friend Dudley Preston, could appreciate grand music of that sort. He was quite a musician himself, was he not? Too bad he died! I never heard a word about it till I got back.

He saw a spasm of pain cross her face, going over to her he said tenderly,—

Forgive me, Adelaide, I forgot what a good friend he always was to you, should not have spoken so abruptly. Dearest, I'm such a gruff fellow; I'm not half refined enough for you! I am afraid I shall never be able to know how sensitive you are."

He looked so grieved at his gruffness, as he called it, that Adelaide began to smile at his earnestness, and taking his hands she covered them with kisses.

You dear good Russel, she said, I adore you.

And though this was the twentieth time she had made that assertion since their marriage, his face lighted with pleasure like a boy's.

Shortly after, when he had left the room to finish a letter he had begun before dark, Adelaide Wilde stood with her hands pressed tightly over her heart, as though to stifle some great pain.

Her face was deadly pale, and as she happened to catch her reflection in one of the long mirrors, she started back with an exclamation, thinking for a moment that it was not herself but another.

There was a large, half-sized picture of Russel hanging over the wall; she went and stood before it a long time.

When Russel returned she was still standing gazing at it.

There was an imploring, half frightened look in her eyes he had never before seen, and he failed to understand it.

She never stirred at his entrance, and seemed, unconscious of his presence.

Why, Adelaide, dearest, what makes you look so strange?

She turned as quickly as if she had been shot, the blood mounting to her forehead, then leaving it whiter than before.

And throwing her arms around his neck, and hiding her face in his bosom, she sobbed,—

Oh, Russel, my life, my own, promise—promise that you will always love me!

I married you for better or for worse, he solemnly said; then drawing her to a sofa, sat down, and with his arms still around her, and her face still buried in his breast, he asked her to tell him why she doubted him.

I do not doubt you, Russel, indeed I do not. But oh, if you would cease to love me, I should die!

Then she wiped her eyes upon her little lace handkerchief, looked up in his face, forcing a faint smile.

I believe I am not well to-night Russel, I am so nervous! When you spoke of our being so unlike, I was weak enough to fancy that—that you were beginning to regret that you married me.

Oh, what a little chicken you are! Adie, my dear girl, without your life to me would be unbearable.

Adelaide's face was now radiant with happiness, and she did not show again that evening that anything troubled her; but when they had retired to rest, and Russel was soundly sleeping, Adelaide was weeping softly, and thinking of the little farm, not a long way off, where her old nurse lived.

Chapter II.

THE FIRST SHADOW OF DOUBT.

DELAIDE had not been in her new home three months before she felt an uncontrollable desire to visit the country.

Russel felt a little annoyed at such a request from his young wife so soon; and what vexed him more was that she did not want to wait till a few weeks later, when his business would allow him to accompany her.

Adie, if you will wait three weeks longer, I will accompany you, and we will stay as long as you like.

Oh, no, Russel, I want to go while the mood is on me. I will only be gone two weeks; I'm sure, dear Russel, you can do without me that little while.

Russel didn't like his wife's tone, so he said,—

Oh, yes, certainly, as long as you can do without me.

had not spoken to her in that manner since they had been married.

I can't do without you a day, you know I can't Russel, but oh! I do so want to go! Won't you let me go now, dear, even if I must go alone?

The pleading, blue-violet eyes were raised to his; he was ashamed of his recent anger, for he still saw the tears on her long lashes.

If you really wish to go, Adelaide, I shall not forbid it; and he turned away as he spoke.

Her face was all sunshine now, and she ran after him asking if she might go that day. He did not turn back, but answered Yes, and took a walk up town.

When he returned, all traces of vexation had left him; and when he accompanied his wife to the train, and kissed her good-bye, his face bore so glad an expression Adelaide did not know what to make of it; she did not like it at all.

The old nurse was overjoyed to see Adelaide again, and kissed her heartily on both cheeks.

Seeing how tired and hot and dusty she looked, she placed a chair for her, and ran down to the cellar for a cup of cool milk with which to refresh her; but while the poor old woman was gone Adelaide opened the little parlor door and went in.

Upon the floor was a bright new rag-carpet, a chintz-covered lounge, a few rush-bottomed chairs, and a little purple-velvet chair, with wheels to roll it around easily; and in this chair was seated a pale child of about three or four years of age.

Oh, my darling, my darling, she cried, springing forward and clasping the little form in her arms, are you not glad to see Adie?

The little boy's pale face flushed with joy, and he clung closely around her neck.

Oh, Adie, why didn't you come before? I'm so 'onesome, and so sick.

Oh, but you are stronger than you were, my darling, I've been away a great many weeks, but I couldn't come sooner. Did you want to see me very much?

Yes, yes! and, Adie, I've read all the pitcher-books frough, said the pale little boy, lifting one slender hand, and pointing towards a shelf of child's books that hung upon the wall.

I've brought you some more, darling, and some pretty new toys, she said, kissing his pale cheek again and again. Then Ann, the old nurse, came in with a cup of cold milk for Adelaide.

So you found the little snipe, did ye? Mrs. Wilde, lay aside yer wrapping first, and drink this; I know yer thirsty, ridin' in the sun.

Adelaide did as she was requested, and drank the milk feverishly.

Oh, Ann, please unlock my trunk, and you will find a dress for you, and some books and toys I want this little child to see; and she commenced kissing him again.

You'll spoil the child, Mrs. Wilde. I'm afeared I can do nothin' with him when you're gone again, she said, looking smilingly at the pair.

When she had gone to do Adelaide's bidding, the boy said,—

I like to be spoiled by you, Adie. Oh, I wish you were here always.

She did not speak and he went on,—

Why don't you take me with you sometimes? You give me pitcher-books and playthings, but I want you, Adie, a great deal more!

Dear child, you are much to ill to go away; Ann can make you strong and well, and then maybe I will take you to my home.

The boy, forgetting about the picture-books and toys he was yet to see, closed his eyes wearily and went to sleep, resting his head on Adelaide's breast.

She did not move until Ann came in and took him away from her, and laid him on the lounge.

How long can you stay? she whispered.

But Adelaide placed her finger on her lips, and when they were in the broad low kitchen, she answered,—

Only for a week or two. Oh, Ann, tell me all about him.

He's better, Mrs. Wilde. I think he'll be strong in a few years, that is, as strong as can be expected. The doctor said he'd be stronger as he grew older.

The doctor! What doctor? asked Adelaide, placing her hand upon the woman's arm.

The new Dr. Reynolds. He's a good man, Mrs. Wilde, and knows a heap. Adelaide's eyes grew thoughtful.

I suppose he must have a doctor, she soliloquized; then turning again to Ann, will he be here while I remain? she asked.

I don't think so; he don't come often. I am very glad of that, Adelaide said, and then went out to have a walk in the orchard before supper.

Adelaide Wilde had been in the country a little over a week now, and nearly every day had received and written letters to Russel.

little invalid, who was made so happy by her presence, changed her mind again.

I will stay as long as I can, she said to herself. As much as I love Russel, and wish to please him, I cannot go yet; I know not when another chance will offer that I can come again.

It was twilight. They were sitting out in the cool garden in front of the house—Ann, the boy, and Adelaide.

The boy was seated in Adelaide's lap, his arms around her neck, and his head on her shoulder.

Ann had just said,—

What if Mr. Wilde should take it in to his head to come here?

They were so busily talking they did not hear the latch click at the garden-gate.

God forbid! Russel must not come here. I would not have him see Dudley for the world. What would he think? Dudley, darling, I must go back to-morrow; I cannot stay longer, it is such a risk. Russel must not come here!

Russel Wilde had paused, hearing his name spoken, but he turned softly away, and closed the gate behind him.

What did it mean?

Russel mustn't come here! rang in his ears still.

What was his wife keeping back from him?

The poor fellow was deeply wounded. The day before she had left his home, he had arranged matters so that he should be able to follow her in a week's time, and give her pleasant surprise.

He had thought how glad she would be to see him!

Had not every letter said how lonely she was without him?

Who was that child she clasped so lovingly in her arms?

What was he to her?

Ah! this, then, was why she had been so anxious to leave home!

Such were his thoughts as the train bore him homewards.

Some of her strange conduct of late was more comprehensible now.

Why had she refused to tell him of her life while he was toiling to get a home for her?

Why had she made him promise, with such agitation, to love her always, when she knew he had been true to her so long?

A horrible thought crept in his mind, and he shuddered and sickened at it, and tried to put it from him.

Late that night, when he had reached his home, he shut himself in his study, and throwing open his window, sat resting his face in his hands till the grey dawn appeared; and not till the east grew rosy and bright did he leave his post.

She shall come home, he muttered, and his face grew dark with an awful determination.

He drew his writing materials towards him, and wrote,—

"ADELAIDE, come home immediately, RUSSEL WILDE."

After sealing the letter, he carried it about in his pocket all the morning, then he went home and wrote another.

She will clear this mystery when she comes back. I know she will. Often, of late, I have thought she had something to tell me. I will not distrust Adelaide until she has given me more cause than this.

So he wrote:—"DEAREST ADELAIDE, come home, for I cannot do without you. I shall expect you to-day."

"Always your faithful, "RUSSEL."

Adelaide received the letter that afternoon, and late that evening she was home again.

Russel met her at the train. His manner, she fancied, was constrained; and though he tried to be gay, he fell into long fits of abstraction, and answered her at random.

Adelaide's heart was too heavy to question him, and he waited and waited for her to tell him the "mystery," but she spoke not a word.

Ah! the agony of those two young hearts that night!

Chapter III.

AT THE GRAVE OF HER LOVER. ADELAIDE, why not adopt a child? Adelaide Wilde was seated at the piano, practising some of her old pieces.

She turned upon the stool; her face was flushed, and her breath came quickly.

Russel went over to the window, and looked out; he did not care to have her see how dark and suspicious his face had grown.

He broke the silence soon by saying,—

What is this child's name that interests you.

His voice, though low, reached her. His name? she repeated, her voice shook a little now, and could he have seen how white her face had grown, he would have forbore to question her further. It is Dudley.

A grey pallor passed over his face; his hands were clenched so tightly that his nails left their mark in the palm.

His voice was hoarse as he asked,—

Dudley! Well, what is the other name?

I—I don't think I remember, dearest, coming toward him, and laying her hand upon his arm. Had we not better see the child? I'm sure you'll like him.

Russel made an impatient movement, and the hand dropped from his arm.

Then he turned quickly and faced her, his dark eyes were burning.

Yes, we had better see him! I will go myself for him—

No, no, no! Russel, I must go; he would not come with you; he would be frightened. Indeed, indeed, I must go by myself, and alone! What could you say to convince Ann that he—that little, delicate Dudley, would be better here? she said, with visible agitation.

Russel only said, in a low tone, As you will, and abruptly left the room.

Adelaide hurried to her room, and wrote a letter to Ann saying she might expect her the next day.

When Russel Wilde left his wife, he also left the house; and Adelaide, not knowing what to do with herself, so impatient was she for the morrow, arrayed herself for a walk.

It was a strange route she had chosen for her walk, for it led to Rose Hill Cemetery, which she entered.

It was late in the afternoon, and the cemetery was strangely quiet; and deserted.

There was no one there to watch her movements, and pry into her grief. Perhaps this was why she had chosen this hour of the day to visit it.

She did not seek the graves of her parents, for she hardly glanced that way, but moved rapidly on until she stood beside a grave upon whose marble slab was engraved these words:

Sacred to the memory of DUDLEY PRESTON, aged 24. Died, June 25, 18—.

'May his soul rest in peace.'

Adelaide kept her veil down closely, her head bent in an attitude of deep grief and humiliation.

Once she stooped and pulled a tiny weed from the well kept grass.

She stood so long, with her head bowed on her breast, and the silent tears coursing down her cheeks that she did not seem to note the passing time.

She seemed lost to all around her.

The sun sank lower in the west, and the sky was gorgeous with coloring; yet Adelaide knew it not, but stood silent and bowed.

Russel Wilde, by some strange chance had been walking in the cemetery when his wife entered it.

He had been searching for some grave and a few moments before Adelaide's arrival, had stood before the same grave and read its inscription.

He was about to leave by one of the nearest gates, when a woman, coming in an opposite direction, attracted his attention, and caused him to pause.

There was something strangely familiar in her dress.

He did not leave, but walked down a shady path out of the range of her vision, should she happen to look up, but where he could still watch her movements.

(TO BE CONTINUED)

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