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A HAPPY ENDING.

(Concluded from page 21.)

continued. "I had promised to go to a
card—a gambling party, you would call
it—that night. In your presence I forgot
my promise."

He paused. She did not look up.

"When I left you I went straight to
my rooms and burned every pack of cards
I owned, and destroyed my whole stock
in trade as a professional gambler. Then
I did what I had not done since as a
child my mother taught me—he faltered
and stopped abruptly.

Still she did not speak or move.

"I prayed. Can you understand what
that meant to such as I was then. I
prayed that God would help me so that
some day I might win your friend-
ship."

A little cry escaped her.

"It was your eyes, dear—Your beauti-
ful gray eyes that brought home to me
that night the thought of my dead mother.
She had gray eyes."

His hands clenched nervously. He
stepped closer to her.

"You came into my life when I had
lost faith in womanhood and God; when
I lived for self alone; when I was all
what you have said. That night a new-
born hope came to me. That is three
years ago. Since then, and I do not say
it boastfully, I have lived as a man
should live, true to himself and true to
humanity. The thought of you—my love
for you, your love and belief in me, made
me strong. You brought me back to real
life, from a course that could have ended
only in blackest misery—and—and—per-
haps in self-inflicted death."

"Not that," she gasped.

"Yes," slowly, "for I was troubled, or
blessed, with a conscience, but fancied it
too late to make amends." His voice was
broken now, his words halting.

"We have been such true friends these
happy years. You know my life during
that period. Can you point to any one
action of mine and say it was mean, con-
temptible, unworthy of you?"

"No, dear," she answered softly.

His face flushed, his eyes glowed.
He bent over her and kissed her hair.

"No, he continued more hopefully.
"No. And now I will go. The firm
have offered me a responsible position in
their New York branch. I leave to you
next week. I had thought—that—but,"
weakly, "that is past. Perhaps some
day you will forgive me and trust me
again. But, whatever happens"—there
was a ring of triumph in his voice—"the
old life cannot call me back. I can
thank you for that. I shall live as I have
lived for the three happiest years of my
life. Let us say good-bye—"

"No," she cried. She lifted her head.
There was a glorious light in her tear-
dimmed eyes. Her whole face was
radiant. She stretched out her hands
impulsively. He lifted them to his lips.
Kissing them again and again. Then he
kissed her lips and her eyes.

"Phil," she said joyously, while the
blushes came and went on her bonny
face, "when you leave town you will
take me with you?"

With a happy sigh he answered, "Yes."
and even as he spoke the words the bells
from a neighboring church rang out the
Christmas chimes.

LOU'S CLARINET.

(Concluded from page 24.)

Lou jumped to the conclusion that her
victory was complete and final; but the
rector kept Jerry at his top speed, and
scrutinized the underwood apprehensive-
ly.

The panther appeared again in four or
five minutes, returning to the road, and
leaping along some forty or fifty feet be-
hind the sleigh. His pace was a very
curious, disjointed, india-rubbery spring,
which rapidly closed up on the fugi-
tives.

Then round swung Lou's long instru-
ment again, and at its piercing cry the
animal again shrank back. This time,
however, he kept to the road, and the
moment Lou paused for breath he resum-
ed the chase.

"Save your breath, child," exclaimed
the rector, as Lou again put the slender
tube to her lips. "Save your breath and
let him have it ferociously when he be-
gins to get too near."

The animal came within twenty or
thirty feet again, and then Lou greeted
him with an ear-splitting blast and he fell
back. Again and again the tactics were
repeated. Lou tried a thrilling cadenza;
it was too much for the brute's nerves.
He could not comprehend a girl with
such a penetrating voice, and he could
not screw up his courage to a closer in-
vestigation of the marvel.

At last the animal seemed to resolve
on a change of procedure. Plunging into
the woods, he made an effort to get ahead
of the sleigh. Old Jerry was showing
signs of exhaustion; but the rector
roused him to an extra spurt—and there,
just ahead, was the opening of Fillmore's
settlement.

"Blow, Lou, blow!" shouted the
rector; and as the panther made a dash
to intercept the sleigh, it found itself in
too close proximity to the strange-voiced
phenomenon in the pung, and sprang
backward with an angry snarl.

As Lou's breath failed from her dry
lips, the sleigh dashed cut into the open.
A dog bayed angrily from the nearest
farmhouse, and the panther stopped short
on the edge of the wood. The rector
drove into the farmyard; and old Jerry
stopped, shivering as if he would fall be-
tween the shafts.

After the story had been told, and
Jerry had been stabled and rubbed down,
the rector resumed his journey with a
fresh horse, having no fear that the
panther would venture across the cleared
lands. Three of the settlers started out
forthwith, and following the tracks in the
new snow, succeeded in shooting the
beast after a chase of two or three hours.

The adventure supplied the country-
side all that winter with a theme for con-
versation; and about Lou's clarinet
there gathered a halo of romance that
drew rousing congregations to the parish
church, where the music was to be heard
every alternate Sunday evening.

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