

tears, he touched the surgeon's hand with weak, clinging fingers that trembled as he whispered: "Pull me through—for my little wife's sake! We—we love each other so!"

A few minutes later the two doctors, clad in spotless white operation suits, their faces covered in gauze masks, entered the operating-room, where already the nurse and other doctor had the patient in readiness. As Carter sank into oblivion under the chloroform, Hallam ordered the removal of the towels covering the man's body. He took up the first necessary instrument and turned briskly, bending over the prostrate man.

Then suddenly he paused. He stared with a terrible, overpowering fascination at the helpless body waiting to receive the touch of the razor-sharp knife. He was looking at three distinct disfigurements across the skin—the marks left from a burn. He felt numb, powerless.

Bickersteth leaned forward. "He has three similar marks down his back," he said. "They look like burns to me; but I never could get him to tell me what they actually were."

"Yes—burns!" muttered Hallam, slowly, and his eyes gleamed with a terrible light. He leaned over and looked at the unconscious man's face with a new interest. It was a handsome face, but a face marked by suffering. And once again he lived through the agony of anguish that he had lived through in those far-off days away in the hills of Colorado. Into his mind sped the swift, searing memory of Amy, his wife—of the man who had gone to his home in secret.



A street in Shelbourne, Ontario, after the snowstorm of January 15th, 1918. Reeve Prett is seen to the left of the picture.

This was the man who had stolen his wife—this was the man who had ruined his home and made his life a dreariness! Fate had delivered him into his hands—at last—at last!

Not a muscle of Dr. Hallam's face moved, but deep in his soul he laughed aloud—mocking, savage laughter. It only meant a slip of the knife, a little dilatoriness in gathering the ends of the cut veins, and his revenge would be complete!

His knife made the first incision, and in his mind he recalled the man's words a few minutes ago: "Pull me through for my wife's sake; we love each other so!"

His wife! The very words mocked with exquisite cruelty the man in whose hands his rival's life lay. But Hallam never wavered. He worked with an exquisite, refined skill that held the watchers dumb in admiration.

An hour later he turned away. His task was completed; never had he done his work so well, and he heard the wonderment in Bickersteth's tone as he murmured the one word: "Marvellous!" Then he hurried from the room.

He never quite knew how he lived through the rest of that day, he clenched his teeth, and then smiled wistfully when Bickersteth rang up to say that David Carter was doing wonderfully.

That evening he sat in his study alone, and all the world seemed quiet. He felt very tired; these operations always made him feel very tired; and the evenings were still lonesome, even as that other evening long ago when—. But he would not think of that. Colorado had taken away his wife and had given

him gold. But memory still had the power to hurt. Presently his servant entered.

"Pardon, sir, but there's a lady wants to see you—to thank you, she said. She begged that you would see her a moment."

"What lady?" asked Hallam.

"A Mrs. Carter, sir."

There was a swift tightening of the heart, a dizzy throb through his brain that left Hallam weak and almost shivering. A mad longing to see the woman he had loved all through the years took possession of him. Common sense whispered "No!" But the flesh is weak, and—

"Show her in, Dobson!" he said, and waited, his eyes on the door.

He bade his visitor good evening, and sank back in his chair. Then out of the chaos of silence he heard distinctly a voice, too well beloved and well remembered to ever be mistaken, say distinctly in the hall:

"My sister's gloves. I think she must have left them in the doctor's room."

Amy's voice that! Or was it that his brain was losing its balance? Hallam jumped up and dashed across the room; he flung open the door, and stared straight into the face of the woman he had flung from him years ago in far-off Colorado. He stretched out his hands to her.

"Amy!" he cried aloud, and drew her in, slamming the door.

"Alan!" she muttered, staring at him. "Are you—are you the doctor who—who saved Dave for us to-day?"

"Amy, tell me. Who is he? I thought

—God—I thought you were—." He stopped. His hands slipped down her arms and grasped her wrists.

"He is my brother!" replied Amy slowly. "That night in Colorado he came to me to hide him. He had got mixed up in a bad gang, and they had thrown the blame on him. I swore I would never tell even you that he was hiding there. Then the sheriff's men came up on the stage, and I was frightened. I daren't tell you then; you were so mad. I did not know until after that you had reached him with that—brand!"

"Heaven forgive me!" groaned Alan, turning away. "I was mad, I think."

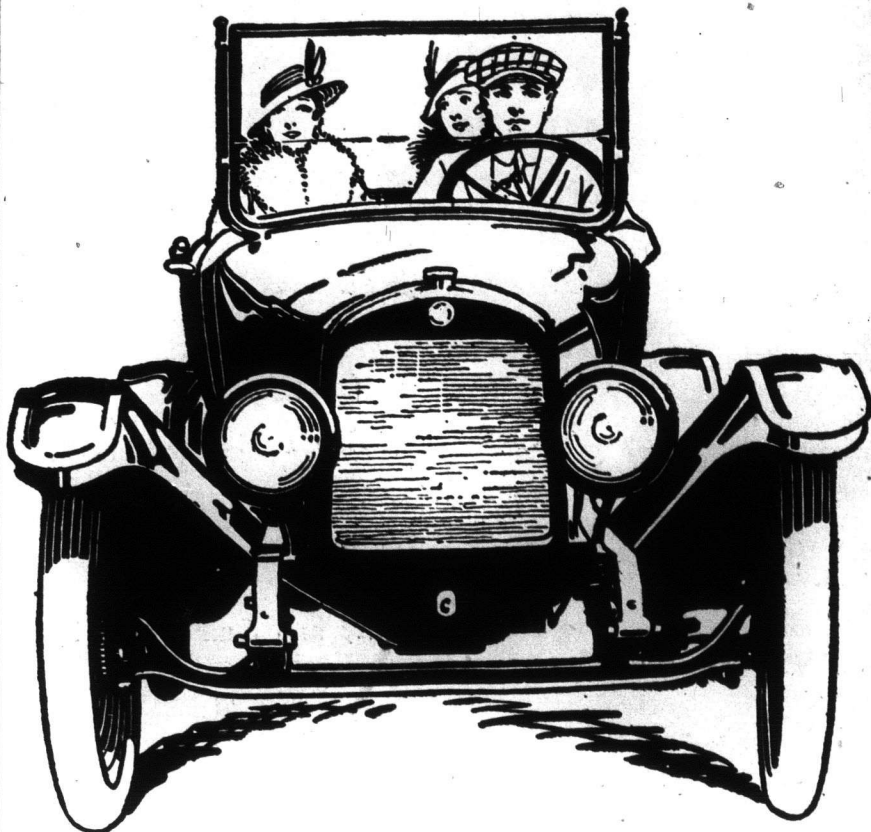
Amy crept up behind him and touched his shoulders. "He forgave you long ago, Alan. And he made me go back, long afterwards, two months after, I think. But you had vanished, and I—well, you had thrown me away. Alan!"

"Amy, I was mad then! I was mad again this morning, because I nearly—nearly committed a worse crime than that other. But I saved him for you. I thought you were his wife! Forgive me—if you ever can!" He knelt before her, and lifted the edge of her cloak to his lips.

"Alan, to-day your love conquered over your other self. To-day my love forgives all because of that. Is my love anything to you now, Alan?" she said wistfully.

Hallam jumped up. "It is my life!" he cried. And he laughed like a boy as he drew her into his arms and kissed her.

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