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REMORSE and REPENTANCE.

—OR—
For Daisie's Sake

CHAPTER XXXVI.
THE STRENGTH OF LOVE.

"I cannot tell you what joy I felt, what triumph it is beyond words," he cried. "My first thought was for Daisie—to go to her, to hear her rejoice over my restoration. But they sent for me to Raymond, who had been taken to the hospital. I had to go. He wished to tell me something before he died—a secret—so I cannot tell you any more," he added, with a meaning look at Annette.

She sobbed aloud:

"And he is dead, brave soul?"

"No—not when I came away. He might linger some time. It was impossible for the doctors to say."

"And you deserted his dying bed, Royall Sherwood, when he had given his life for yours? Cruel!" she cried, with passionate indignation.

He looked abashed for a moment, then answered:

"Poor fellow! I could do him no good staying till the last, and I was eager to see Daisie, of course. Who could blame me?"

"Let me go home!" the girl cried chokingly, rushing from among them to seek her mother's sympathetic arms.

Passionate sobs, a meek confession, eager entreaties, and mother and daughter set out on the first train for New York.

In the gray dawn, they reached the hospital.

"Is he alive yet?"

"Oh, yes; and there is the barest chance he may pull through, in spite of his awful injuries. So glad that some of his friends are come at last. Poor fellow! He seemed so lonely," said the kind nurse.

Soon she was kneeling by his cot, her lips against his cheek, sobbing:

"Ray, do you know me—your little Annette? My hero, will you forgive me?"

"Oh, my darling, how noble of you to come to me before—I died! I have done all I could to atone. It is for you to forgive," the weak voice murmured.

"Oh, Ray, you will not die. I will pray, pray, pray, as you did when you brought Royall through the fire to



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sun peeped in through the shutters. He rose in a tumult of fear, and began to dress, but almost immediately Doctor Burns came in, exclaiming: "Good news! She passed the crisis safely at midnight, and will live."

CHAPTER XXXVII.
FOR ROYALL'S SAKE.

She was better, sweet Daisie—with care and good nursing her life would be preserved to her friends.

But that obstinate nurse, so clever and opinionated, would not permit Royall Sherwood to see his wife for a week. She said:

"I don't profess to understand it, doctor, not at all, but facts are stubborn things, and I know that the presence of her husband has a distinctly injurious effect on Mrs. Sherwood's health. Perhaps they had quarreled before she left home; I don't know; but if he wants her to get well tell him to stay out of the sick room for a week at least."

Royall was secretly furious, but he had to obey.

"A week is not long," encouraged the sympathetic old doctor. "And we have to humor the whims of nurses as well as invalids, you know. After all, it will do you more good to exercise your newly gained strength in the open air than pottering about a sick room."

Royall grumbled, but he obeyed, taking rooms at the hotel, and calling each day at the cottage.

And he managed to kill time and enjoy himself in many ways, despite his solicitude over Daisie. He boated, drove, and walked with some congenial friends he made at the hotel, and his strength and his good looks returned fast. The days flew fast and pleasantly.

When the week was up, the grim nurse herself came to meet him when he called to inquire for Daisie.

"She is improving every day, but very slowly, and I have let her sit up in an easy-chair to-day for the first time," she said.

"Does she know I am here?" he asked hopefully, eagerly.

"I broke it to her gently this morning, but still the shock was great. Perhaps it was from joy at hearing you were well again," said the nurse, who could not understand a fact that she easily perceived—that the invalid seemed to have a secret shrinking from him.

As she knew none of the circumstances of the strange marriage, she felt convinced that the young wife must have had a quarrel with her husband before she came to visit her aunt.

How could she gauge the strange despair of Daisie when she learned that her duty would be harder than ever now? That instead of playing the role of friend and sister, as heretofore, she must assume the real status of a wife?

No wonder that she fainted, and that the nurse was sadly frightened ere she restored her to consciousness.

She felt sorry for the anxious young husband, and said gently:

"My dear young lady, if you could bear to see him a little while it would make him very happy."

Daisie was silent a moment, then she said gently and hopelessly, it seemed to the attentive nurse:

"Of course I will see my husband. It is his right and my duty—I mean, my pleasure."

So the woman let her sit up after a while, and made her as pretty as she could—poor, pallid, wasted Daisie, with her shorn head, where the golden locks were just peeping out again, covered with a soft lace scarf; and so she awaited his coming.

She had been so sorry for his affliction that she was unselfishly glad of his restoration to health, and the tears came to her eyes when he entered, stepping with his free grace of old.

"Daisie!"

"Royall!"

(To be continued.)

The wish came to him that he had never seen the fair face that he had determined to make his own in spite of opposing obstacles.

"She was not for me—Heaven never meant it so—she will die to punish me for my masterful will," he groaned to himself, in passionate rebellion against his untoward fate.

He went back to the house, and they told him she had been lying quietly for some time, almost ever since he went out.

He went in to look at her, to press a tender kiss on her damp, white brow; but again she became restless, tossing wildly, and calling:

"Dallas! Dallas! Dallas!"

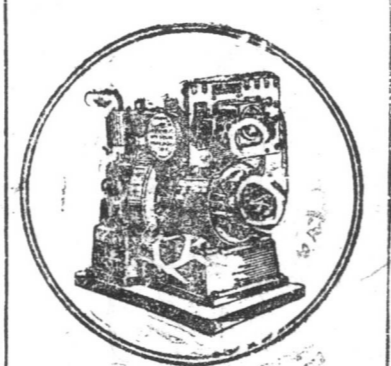
"It is quite evident that your presence disturbs her, sir, so you had better go to bed and rest. You can do no good here," the nurse said candidly.

Mrs. Bell led him to a quiet chamber, and begged him to retire.

"After your thrilling experiences of last night, you must be very weary, and a night's sleep will refresh you. Have no fear for Daisie. We will do our best," she said kindly.

He retired; but it seemed to him at first that he could never rest again, so keen was his humiliation that Daisie, even in unconsciousness, could never endure his proximity, and kept calling on the name of his hated rival.

But at last weariness overpowered him, and he fell into a heavy, dreamless sleep that lasted till the morning



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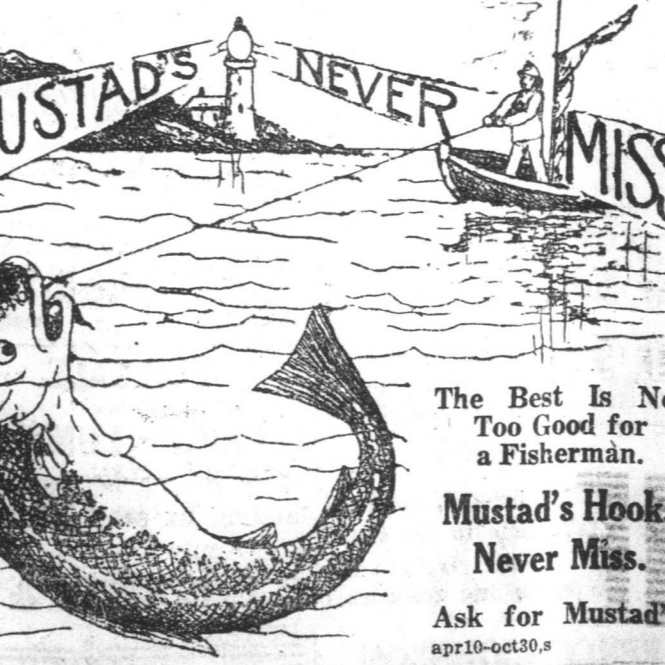
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