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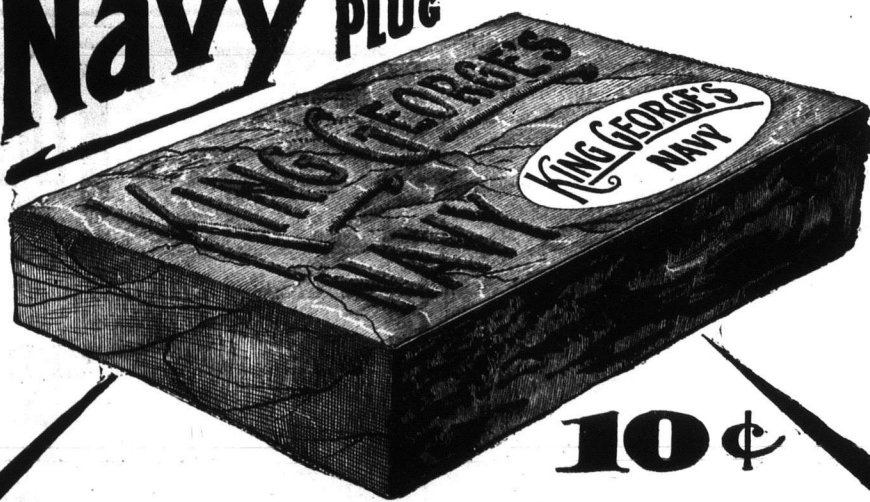
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Why didn't he make an effort to support her, even though he had to lower himself to any kind of work? The handsome, lazy, good-for-nothing!

I thought about Charlie until at last I became angry with myself, because I couldn't think about anything else.

After all, I reasoned, those people were nothing to me, and their affairs ought not in any way to concern me, yet they haunted my thoughts.

After the first meeting I saw Charlie often—and snubbed him on every occasion. He often passed my boarding place, and sometimes my school. Once, unprecedented event! I saw him in church!

But I was always careful to take my washing, or call for it, when I knew that he was not at home, so I was never annoyed by having to speak to him.

But a day came on which I did not escape meeting Charlie. A raw, chilly November wind was blowing, and I was glad to step into the house when I called for my washing. The house itself was dreary and cold, and Charlie's mother greeted me with an old shawl around her shoulders. Her eyes looked red and watery and her hands trembled as I handed her the money for that week's wash.

"Wait just a minute and I'll get it for you," she said, seizing the money eagerly. "I've just got to step out and I'll be right back."

As she spoke she pinned on a dilapidated hat, and almost before I had time to remonstrate or question, she was gone, still wearing the old shawl.

Her behavior puzzled me at first, then it occurred to my mind that she had been hungry, and a feeling of horror passed over me!

Just at that moment, Charlie entered. He looked very much surprised, as well he might, when he saw me, then he glanced around curiously as though in search of his mother.

I was terribly embarrassed. "Your mother has just stepped out for a moment," I said coldly. "She asked me to wait until she returned. I just called for my washing."

"Your washing!" Charlie echoed the words with eyes and mouth agape. "So that's it, is it? I have suspected that she was getting money from somewhere, so, of late I have been staying at home." (truly a son to be proud of, I thought).

"Didn't you succeed in getting any of it from her?" I asked in a scornful voice, but my scorn was lost upon him.

"No," he replied, "I didn't, I never saw a cent of the money, but I saw its damnable effects." A dull, painful flush had overspread his fair face.

"Miss Rowhead," he said, his voice was sad, but it held a strain of righteous anger, "Didn't you suppose that I was capable of supporting my mother without the aid of your washing? Didn't it ever occur to you that the money she got from you might be put to some wrong use?"

"I thought that—I thought—" I began, then stopped.

Ah, that was it! I had thought, and I had done nothing but think. I had never supposed that Charlie might have a story to tell.

"I know what you thought, of course," he said, after a moment's painful pause, "and I suppose I can't blame you, but every cent of the money you have so kindly brought to my mother, has added to her shame and mine. I'm sorry to have to tell all this to you, but I want you to know. Will you listen?"

He looked at me eagerly and I was only too glad to hear what he had to say for himself.

"Yes," I answered, "I am sorry if I have misjudged you."

"Mother inherited the accursed taste for liquor," Charlie began. "Her father died of it. Father kept it from her while he lived, but he died when I was sixteen and then she had things her own way. Father left her a fortune. She gambled and drank and wasted it. At last, one night when I returned from a friend's home at midnight, I found my mother on the door-step dead drunk. I carried her into her own room and told the servants she had fainted at the door. They, of course, supposed that we had returned together."

"After that we came here, and I insisted upon dropping our right name. My father's name was too honorable to be brought to this," he indicated the miserable surroundings.

"Our money was gone," he continued. "The sale of our home little more than paid our debts. I could have taken better care of her had I not had to earn our living. She will not keep a servant, or they will not stay, and as you can see, everything movable or saleable in this house has been pawned off, in my absence, for drink. I have tried by every means known to me to help her to overcome her weakness, but it has been too strong for us. I have not been able to trust her with money for years. If she had any other desire in the world, I would work my hands to the bone to gratify it, but she cares for nothing but drink, and that I can't give her. Does she—does anyone else bring washing to her?" he asked suddenly.

"Yes," I said, "two other girls, but I will tell them—"

"Tell them not to bring it any more," he broke in bitterly. "Tell them that I am going to reform, and that I will support my mother, tell them anything but this. Don't, out of pity for me, tell them this. I only wanted you to know the truth about me, because—because I've had the audacity to fall in love with you."

I do not know just what I should have said to Charlie in answer, had our conversation not been broken into by a drunken cry, that was half laugh, half scream, coming from the rear door.

"Please go now," Charlie entreated, holding out his hand to me. "You have been very kind."

"Let me stay and help you, I am sorry for you," I answered, but I gave him my hand. He pressed it gently and opened the door.

"No," he said "Please leave me alone with this." And as I went through the front door, I had a glimpse of a grey haired woman in an old shawl, staggering in at the back. Then I went out and left Charlie alone with his terrible load of misery.

Sympathy is an awful turn-out. A few days later, as I passed the house, I saw a white-capped nurse pass one of the uncurtained windows, and before a week, a long black crepe was hanging on the door. Charlie's mother had at last escaped from her inherited curse.

After her death he left the city, and took again his own and his father's name.

Before going, he came to say good-bye to me, and I promised—well never mind what I promised, for that was over a year ago. He has written to me regularly since his departure and in a few days I expect to see him again.

For I am going to marry Charlie, and my children will bear the old, honored name—the name that was so nearly dragged in the dust by a weak and unfortunate woman.

### Good Tip

"Everything all right, sir?" asked the waiter.

The diner nodded, but still the waiter hovered near.

"Steak cooked to suit you, sir?" he asked again, presently.

Again the diner nodded.

"Potatoes the way you like 'em, sir?"

"Yes."

Another period of silence.

"I hope the service is satisfactory, sir?"

"Are you asking for a tip?" demanded the diner.

"Well, sir, of course we get the tips sometimes, and I've got to go to the kitchen for another party, so—"

"So you'd like the tip, now, to be sure of it?" Well, I'll give you one."

"Yes, sir."

"Here is the tip; I have a powerful voice that I am capable of using. If anything is wrong, I'll let out a roar. If you do not hear from me, you can know that I am dining in peace and comfort and not in the least regretting your absence, for it's no fun to have to pass verbal judgment on every mouthful I eat."

"But the tip?"

"That's the tip, and a mighty good one it is, too."—Boston Post.