

air when a carriage drew up in front of the tenement house. Two ladies and a gentleman alighted, and the three passed up the narrow stairs. At the third flight they stopped, and, after a moment's hesitation, opened the door facing the staircase. The children were still sleeping.

"Poor things," said one of the ladies, "what would have become of them!"

Carefully lifting them one by one, still sleeping, the gentleman carried them down stairs and handed them tenderly to some person in the carriage. He then returned up stairs, and the carriage drove rapidly away.

Pacific Street awoke sluggishly the next day. On the side street few were stirring early in the morning. The fumes of Christmas Eve still polluted the pure morning air of Christmas Day. Mrs. Dennis Regan, who had rooms on the third floor of the tenement house, having heard unusual noises in the next apartment during the night, peered out of her room about eight o'clock. The door opposite was open, and she saw three persons, two ladies and a gentleman, watching there. "The sick woman's dead," she said to herself, "and her rich friends have come to watch wid her. It wouldn't have hurt 'em to have looked after her a bit when she needed it more than she does now, poor soul."

The news of the death, and the interest taken by the "rich friends," soon flew through the street, which straightway began to be mollified in its usual bitter feelings toward well-to-do people. But at ten o'clock an event occurred which roused the popular indignation to the highest pitch. The undertaker arrived, accompanied by a man muffled in a great coat, under whose directions the body was soon taken away. But Mrs. Dennis Regan, happening to come up the narrow stairs as the muffled man, who seemed desirous of avoiding observation, was going down, recognized him as the much detested miser, "Old Hunks."

The theory of the "rich friends" was immediately abandoned by the street.

"The old skinflint, bad cess to him," abjured Mrs. Dennis Regan, "has garnisheed the dead woman for the rent."

"The Lord save them pore childers!" shuddered her neighbour, as she listened with breathless interest to the story of the miser's heartless action.

"To think of me takin' that deperty sheriff fer a gentleman, and them two brazen-faced things fer ladies," exclaimed Mrs. Regan.

That Christmas afternoon, Old Hunks climbed up to his little room on the fourth floor of one of his own buildings—a room for which no one would pay rent, and which he had accordingly occupied for many years. Do you know what manner of a place a miser's home is? It isn't a very inviting spot to be sure. It has a barren and desolate look, like the life of the miser himself. But some how or other, the old man had become attached to this room through all the years that he had lived there. They were weary years as he looked back on them; years rich in gold, but, oh, how poor in human sympathy and companionship! There was little pleasure that he could remember in them. He had given himself wholly over to money-getting, and his soul had shrunk, and shrunk, until the room had not appeared small and mean to him. That is the worst of a sordid passion; we lose our finer sense of the perspective and relation of things. On this afternoon, somehow, the room seemed cramped and oppressive. He sat down by the table, and leaned his head upon his hand. He was buried in deep thought. The hard expression was relaxed, and there were fine lines in his face. Observed closely, he did not appear so old as his white hair would indicate. He was evidently much distressed, and a nature capable of entire devotion to one object, even though a sordid one, is live, able, also, of intense feeling. At last an expression of pain escaped him.

"O my God! And I never suspected it."

Rising after a while, and, going to an old trunk in the corner, he unlocked it and took out a strong tin box, which he brought back to the table and placed thereon. Producing a small key from his pocket he opened it. On the top were some deeds and mortgages. Removing these he came to a small parcel, carefully tied in a piece of oil-silk. He undid this parcel slowly, and as though every movement was painful to him. It contained two old letters, and a small gold locket with a chain. He took from his pockets the trinket which he had taken from the little boy. In outward appearance the lockets and chains were exactly similar.

The one he had taken from the box containing the picture of a young, and, withal, a handsome man, and bore the inscription:

"O. H. to A. M."

The one he took from his pocket contained the face of a young girl, and in similar lettering was inscribed:

"A. M. to O. H."

The two letters in the box were yellow and discoloured with age.

"Twenty years!" he said, bitterly, to himself. "Twenty years? And we both threw our lives away for a momentary spite—she to become the wife of one she did not love, and I to become the miserable thing that I am. And I hunted her to the death! O my God! If I had only suspected it!"

He paced the floor in agitation. The past rose before him like a hideous specter, grinning in horrible triumph. Even the sweet face in the locket was turned to him sadly, with a reproachful look. A strong nature, capable of utter self-abnegation, of the demolition of every ideal and idol, of the pursuit of a repulsive object not as a matter of choice but of will, is susceptible, upon occasion, of the most bitter and intense remorse. There was no thought in his mind of the contrast between the promise of his youth and the barren and dreary fulfilment of his manhood—only the haunting suggestion of the wrong to another, of the contrast between the sweet face which looked up to him from yonder table and the agonized face which had implored him with dying eyes the night before.

"Heaven is my witness that I never suspected it. I cannot——"

It was too much. His head burned, and he felt a heavy, oppressive pain at his heart which startled him. He went to the table, took a sheet of paper, and commenced to write. After a few lines he tore it up and selected another sheet. Upon this he wrote a few short sentences, then signed his name and affixed the date. Weak and exhausted, he went to the bed and lay his head upon the pillows. The afternoon sunlight came in at the little window and shone upon his tired face. The rays seemed warmer and more rosy than usual. Looking out through the panes, the west was aflame with a glory of colour. And through this radiance of the heavens the sun was sinking slowly into the waters of the limitless sea.

Early the next morning, Digby, still out of work, and still in arrears for his rent, mounted the stairs leading to the miser's room, to beg for a further delay. Digby considered himself wronged in some indefinite way, by everyone who had wealth, and by his landlord in particular. It had so happened that, on a certain day of the week before Digby had been possessed of the money to pay his rent. But the landlord, not knowing this fact, failed to call upon him, having done so without success several previous days in succession. As a consequence, the money went into the coffers of the saloon situated immediately under the Digby residence, and that worthy, by some irrelevancy of logic, considered Old Hunks principally to blame for this result. Hence it was, as he climbed the stairs, that he looked upon his errand as largely in the nature of a humiliation; and it was a little vindictively, perhaps, that he knocked with such unnecessary distinctness. Hearing no answer, with the usual directness of his class, he applied his hand to the knob, and opened the door.

He stood a moment irresolute. There is one presence which unnerves the strongest. Digby was not a bad man at heart. He took his hat from his head instinctively, and said, below his breath:

"God forgive me for the hard things I've said about him."

A doctor was soon brought, but human skill is powerless in the presence of the awful mystery of death. He pronounced it heart disease. He never knew with what unconscious truth he spoke.

Upon the table they found a holographic will, penned, signed and dated in the well known characters. It lay still open, where it had been written. They took it up, curious to read the will of a miser. After the appointment of an executor, it contained these words:

"I forgive and release all persons in my debt the amounts to which they are severally indebted. To my said executor I give one-half of all my property, real and personal in trust, to be invested by him, and the income to be applied to the relief of worthy people in distress in the city of San Francisco. All the residue and remainder of my property I give, share and share alike, to the two children of my deceased friend, Alice Benton, formerly Alice Marshall. And, with trust in His eternal goodness, I commit my soul unto Him who knoweth and forgiveth."

—Charles H. Phelps in the Californian.

A YOUTHFUL EDITOR.

A story is told of a young sophomore, the newly appointed editor of a college paper in New England, who, on his way home in vacation, some years ago, made the acquaintance of a quiet gentleman on a railroad train. "Englishman, I perceive," airily began our college boy. The stranger bowed. "You must find much to amuse you in this country. We are so very crude; so new!" said the sophomore, who was an Anglo-maniac. "There is one thing, however, on which I flatter myself we compare favourably with John Bull—our newspapers. The journalists of this country rank high, sir, high!" Having received a civil reply, he continued: "I am myself an editor. Like to look at a copy of our paper?" pulling out the small sheet from his pocket. "Now, you have no idea—nobody not in the profession can have any idea—of the labour and mental strain involved in that small sheet. Keep it. There may be a paragraph or two in it that is worth considering, even if it does come from this side of the water." His companion changed his place soon afterward; and the amused conductor, who had overheard the conversation, said to the young man: "Do you know who that was?" "No." "It was Mr. Walter, of the London Times."—E.

SAYS a Paris correspondent: I met recently, at an afternoon reception, a French gentleman who related to me the particulars of how, when quite a small boy, he went to see the great Rachel act. He was a great friend of her brother, and used sometimes to go to her house, when one day she said, patting his cheek, "Well, little fellow, would you not like to come and see me act some day?" Of course the answer to this query was an eager affirmative, and that very evening he and his comrade found themselves installed in one of those boxes called by the French the *loges infernales*, namely, the boxes situated inside of the proscenium and the curtain, and literally upon the stage. The play was "Phedre," and the child sat entranced and half bewildered while that wonderful panorama of passion was unfolded before him. When the curtain fell on the last act, the prostrate Phedre did not rise, but four men, coming from behind the scenes, enveloped her in a large, soft blanket, and bore her quickly from the stage. The boy, in an ecstasy of excitement and terror, half inclined to believe the tragedy a reality, slipped hastily from his place and followed the men till they laid their burden on a large sofa in Rachel's dressing-room. When the great actress opened her eyes she found her child admirer beside her weeping and wringing his hands. "O, Mademoiselle Rachel!" he sobbed, "do grant me just one favour." "And what is that, my little man?" "Never act again—it is too, too dreadful." Probably in all her brilliant career Rachel had never received a more genuine or appreciative token of admiration.