

and that only she could satisfy—of the prayer for forgiveness I poured into her ear while the harvest moon shone down upon the quiet fields, upon the yellow sheaves, and upon her pale tearful face? How shall I tell of the glad hour when, beneath the pensive light of that moon, Susie and I entered the paved porch at the threshold of her home—reconciled?

Susie and I were soon married. Stenle went to pay a visit to his brother for a time—it was best to do so. Susie's aunt Crallan sent Susie a cheque for one hundred pounds, and Elgitha sent her a valuable watch. Uncle Bub, when I asked him for a holiday to be married, delicately offered me a ten-pound note, which I was not too proud to accept. So Susie and I set up housekeeping.

Stenle came back in time to spend Christmas with us, bringing the news of Elgitha's marriage to Phiny Kelly.

Six months later uncle Bub died, and by his will, of recent date, he had constituted me—the only son of his only sister—his sole heir.

Stenle is our friend—Susie's and mine. Except that his blue eyes are full of a graver light, and that his voice and smile have lost their old boyish lightness, he is the same brave, noble, true-hearted Stenle as when on that summer afternoon, half in jest, half in earnest, he proposed that I should marry an heiress.

Every summer Susie and I spend a pleasant holiday at the Laurels, which to me is become the fairest spot on earth. Anns and I are the best of friends, and, in spite of their affection for sorrel and uncooked cabbage-stalk, I think Susie's brothers the nicest specimens of boyhood in the world.

I have a charming home, a true friend, riches and all the good things that my heart can desire, but the brightest jewel in my crown of blessings is—my Susie.

Which was the Bravest?

"Will you bear that, Edward?"

The young man to whom this was addressed, stood facing another person about his own age, on whose flushed countenance was an expression of angry defiance.

The name of this person was Logan. A third party, also a young man, had asked the question just given, in a tone of surprise and regret.

Before there was time for response, Logan said sharply, and in a voice of stinging contempt:—

"You are a poor mean coward, Edward Wilson! I repeat the words; and if there is a particle of manhood about you—"

Logan paused for a minute, and then quickly added:—

"You will resent the insult."

Why did he pause?

His words had aroused a feeling in the breast of Wilson that instantly betrayed himself in his eyes.

The word "coward," in that instant of time, would have more fittingly applied to James Logan.

But, as quickly as the flash leaves the cloud, so quickly faded the indignant light from the eyes of Edward Wilson.

What a fierce struggle agitated him for the moment!

"We have been fast friends, James," said Wilson, calmly. "But even if that were not so, I will not strike you."

"You're afraid."

"I will not deny it. I have always been afraid to do wrong."

"Pah! Cant and hypocrisy!" said the other, contemptuously.

"You know me better than that, James Logan; and I am sorry, that, in your resentment of an imaginary wrong, you should so far forget what is just to my character as to charge upon me such mean vices. I reject the implied allegation as false."

There was an honest indignation in the manner of Wilson, that he did not attempt to repress.

"Do you call me a liar?" exclaimed Logan, in uncontrollable passion, drawing back his hand, and making a motion as if he were about to slap the other in the face.

The eyes of Wilson quailed not, nor was the smallest quiver of a muscle perceptible.

From some cause the purpose of Logan was not executed.

Instead of giving a blow, he assailed his antagonist with words of deeper insult, seeking thus to provoke an assault.

But Wilson was not to be driven from the citadel in which he had entrenched himself.

"If I am a coward, well," he said. "I would rather be a coward, than lay my hand in violence on him whom I had once called friend."

At this moment light girlish laughter and the ringing of merry voices reached the ears of our excited young men, and their relation of antagonism at once changed.

Logan walked away in the direction from which the voices came, while the other two remained where they had been standing.

"Why didn't you knock him down?" said the companion of Wilson.

The latter, whose face was now very sober and very pale, shook his head slowly. He made no other response.

"I believe you are a coward!" exclaimed the other, impatiently; and turning off, he went in the direction taken by Logan.

The moment Wilson was alone he seated himself on the ground, concealed from the party, whose voices had interrupted them, by a large rock, and covering his face with his hands, sat motionless for several minutes.

How much he suffered in that little space of time we will not attempt to describe.

The struggle with his indignant impulses had been very severe.

He was no coward in heart.

What was right and humane he was ever ready to do, even at the risk to himself of both physical and mental suffering.

Clearly conscious was he of this.

Yet the consciousness did not and could not protect his feelings from the unjust and stinging charge of cowardice so angrily brought against him.

In spite of his better reason, he felt humiliated; and there were moments when he half regretted the forbearance that saved the insolent Logan from punishment.

They were but moments of weakness; in the strength of a manly character he was quickly himself again.

The occasion of this misunderstanding is briefly told.

Wilson made one of a little pleasure party for a neighbouring village, that was spending an afternoon in a shady retreat on the banks of a mill stream.

There were three or four young men and half a dozen maidens; and, as it happens on such occasions, some rivalries were excited among the former.

These should only have added piquancy to the merry intercourse of all parties, and would have done so, had not the impatient temperament of Logan carried him a little beyond good feeling and a generous deportment towards others.

Without due reflection, yet in no sarcastic spirit, Edward Wilson made a remark on some act of Logan that irritated him exceedingly.

An angry spot burned instantly on his cheek, and he replied with words of cutting insult; so cutting, that all present expected nothing less than a blow from Wilson as his answer to the remark.

And to deal a blow was his first impulse.

Out he restrained the impulse; and it required more courage to do this than to have stricken the insolent young man to the ground.

A moment or two Wilson struggled with himself, and then turned off and marched slowly away.

His flushed and then paling face, his quivering lips and unsteady eyes, left on the minds of all who witnessed the scene an impression somewhat unfavorable.

Partaking of the indignant excitement of the moment, many of those present looked for the instant punishment for his unjustifiable insult.

When, therefore, they saw Wilson turn away without even a defiant answer, and heard the low, sneeringly-uttered word, "Coward!" from the lips of Logan, they felt that there was a craven spirit about the young man.

A coward we instinctively despise; and yet, how slow we are to elevate that higher moral courage which enables a man to brave unjust judgment, rather than to do what he thinks to be wrong, above the mere brute instinct which, in the moment of excitement, forgets all physical consequences.

As Edward Wilson walked away from his companions, he felt that he was regarded as a coward.

This was for him a bitter trial, and the more so, because there was one in that little group of startled maidens for whose generous regard he would have sacrificed all but honor.

It was, perhaps, half an hour after this unpleasant occurrence, that Logan, whose heart still burned with an unforgiving spirit, encountered Wilson under circumstances that left him free to repeat his insulting language, without disturbing the rest of the party, who were amusing themselves at some distance, and beyond the range of observation.

He did not succeed in obtaining a personal encounter, as he had desired.

Edward Wilson had been for sometime sitting alone with his unhappy thoughts, when he was aroused by sudden cries of alarm, the tone of which told his heart too plainly that some imminent danger impended.

Springing to his feet, he ran in the direction of the cries, and quickly saw the cause of excitement.

Recent heavy rains had swollen the stream, the turbid waters of which were sweeping down with great velocity.

Two young girls, who had been amusing themselves at some distance above in a boat that was attached to the shore by a long rope, had, through some accident, got the fastening loose, and were now gliding down, far out in the current, with a fearfully increasing speed, towards the breast of a milldam some hundreds of yards below, from which the water was thundering down a height of over twenty feet.

Pale with terror, the poor young creatures were stretching out their hands towards their companions on the shore, and uttering heart-rending cries for succor.

Instant action was necessary, or all would be lost.

The position of the young girls had been discovered while they were yet some distance above, and there happening to be another boat on the milldam, and that nigh at hand, Logan

and two other young men had loosed it from the shore.

But, the danger of being carried over the dam, should anyone venture out in this boat, seemed so inevitable, that none of them dared to encounter the hazard.

Now screaming and wringing their hands and now urging these men to try and save their companions, stood the young maidens of the party on the shore, when Wilson dashed through them, and springing into the boat, cried out—

"Quick, Logan. Take an oar, or all his lost."

But instead of this, Logan stepped back a pace or two from the boat, while his face grew pale with fear.

Not an instant more was wasted.

At a glance Wilson saw that if the girls were to be saved, it must be by the strength of his own arm.

Bravely he pushed from the shore, and, with giant strength, born of the moment and for the occasion, from his high, unselfish purpose, he dashed the boat out into the current, and, bending to the oars, took a direction at an angle, with the other boat, towards the point where the water was sweeping over the dam.

At every stroke the light skiff sprang forward a dozen feet, and scarcely half a minute elapsed ere Wilson was beside the other boat.

Both were now within twenty yards of the fall, and the water was bearing them down with a velocity that a strong rower, with every advantage on his side, could scarcely have contended against successfully.

To transfer the frightened girls from one boat to the other in the few moments of time left ere the down-sweeping current would bear their frail vessels to the edge of the dam, and still to retain an advantage, was, for Wilson, impossible.

To let his own boat go and manage theirs, he saw to be equally impossible.

A cry of despair reached the young man's ears as the oars dropped from his grasp into the water.

It was evident to the spectators of the fearful scene that he had lost his presence of mind, and that now all was over. Not so, however.

In the next moment he had sprung into the water, which, near the breast of the dam, was not more than two feet deep.

As he did so, he grasped the other boat, and bracing himself firmly against the rushing current, held it poised a few yards from the point where the foam-crested waters leaped into the whirlpool below.

At the same instant his own boat shot like an arrow over the dam.

He had gained however, but small advantage.

It required his utmost strength to keep the boat he had grasped from dragging him down the fall.

The quickly-formed purpose of Wilson, in thus springing into the water, had been to drag the boat against the current.

If he were to let the boat go, he could easily save himself.

But not once did such a thought enter his own heart.

"Lie down close to the bottom," he said, in a quick, hoarse voice.

The terror-stricken girls obeyed the injunction instantly.

And now, with a coolness that was wonderful under all circumstances, Wilson moved the boat several hundred yards away from the nearest shore, until he reached a point where he knew the water below the dam to be more expanded and free from rocks.

Then throwing his body suddenly against the boat, and running along until he was within a few feet of the dam, he sprang into it and passed over with it.

A moment or two the light vessel, as it shot out into the air, stood poised, and then went plunging down.

The fearful plunge was made in safety.

The boat struck the seething waters below, and glanced out from the whirlpool, bearing its living freight uninjured.

"Which was the coward?"

The words reached the ears of Logan, as he gathered, with the rest of the company around Wilson and the pale, trembling girls he had so heroically saved.

Fair lips asked the question.

One maiden had spoken to another, and in a louder voice than she had intended.

"Not Edward Wilson," said Logan, as he stepped forward and grasped the hand of him he had so wronged and insulted. "Not Edward Wilson! He is the noblest and the bravest!"

Wilson made an effort to reply.

But he was for some moments too much excited and exhausted to speak.

At last, he said—

"I only did what was right. May I ever have courage for that while I live."

Afterwards he remarked, when alone with Logan—

"It required a far greater exercise of courage to forbear when you provoked and insulted me in the presence of those who expected retaliation, than it did to risk my life at the milldam."

There is a moral heroism that few can appreciate.

And it will usually be found, that the morally brave man is quicker to lose the sense of personal danger when others are in peril.

SUNSET AFTER A SHOWER.

Over the hill-tops, fold upon fold,
Like blood-stained banners within the sky,
Braided with crimson and fringed with gold,
In a sea of amber the spent clouds lie.

Down in the valley the slumb'rous trees
Droop, heavily jewelled with fallen rain;
And a spicily-scented, tremulous breeze
In ripples crosses the bending grain.

The winding river, like silver, gleams
Through dreamy vistas that melt and fade,
And the sunlight, falling in slanting beams,
Strikes deep in the heart of the forest's shade.

On distant uplands the lonely pine
Is ringed with purple and bound with fire;
The stones in the churchyard glance and shine,
And the weather-vane is a gilded wire.

The tapering cedar, like a spear,
Shoots out of the cliff, where stands revealed
The rocky ledge; and the herd appear
Like spots of color within the field.

And the braided banners of cloud are seen
To fiercer burn, as with sudden shame;
While the vale below and the hills between
Are drowned in a yellow mist of flame.

And a farmer's boy, all aglare with light,
Looks over the cliff where the cedars grow,
And shades with his hand his dazzled sight,
And calls to his comrades down below.

Then the brazen woodlands echo and ring,
And the earth and the sky seem to shout with
him;
A pearly arch is the hawk's fleet wing;
And the sweltering landscape seems to swim.

On yonder hill-side a cottage shines—
The window westward flashes and glows;
It nestles amid its sheltering vines
Of glistening ivy like a rose.

And there in the porch two lovers woo—
Her slender figure his arms enfold,
White doves in the dove-cote bill and coo,
And ruffle their necks of green and gold.

THE POISONER.

A great many people knew Pietro Farroll and had seen his pictures; everyone in the city had heard of him and his talents.

His patrons were amongst the wealthiest and refined; nearly everybody was enthusiastic over him and his wonderful likenesses; yet no one really loved dark, morose, unhappy Farroll except his wife, Celeste.

Even old Ijo Kugil, who had come from Italy with the artist years before, would have told you that there was something about him that he kept to himself, or tried to, a certain wild undercurrent in his nature that would occasionally, and only at long intervals, burst from its cloak of morbid reserve and startle you with its ungovernable, half-sane force.

Celeste was a gentle little woman with a clear-cut face and large liquid brown eyes that had an odd habit of hiding under their long lashes when one addressed her suddenly or looked at her unexpectedly.

Once she had been a happy, laughing little thing, singing in her sweet childish voice, snatches of Italian love songs from sunrise to sunset; and all of her energies seemed to be bent to serve one purpose—that of making Pietro Farroll a happy husband.

She was changed now.

No one could have lived with Pietro Farroll eight years, as she had done, and yet have the heart to go about laughing and singing gay songs.

Although she was subdued, her purpose never changed, and still she was trying to be as good a wife to him as he would let her be.

She loved to sit by Pietro and watch the faces grow little by little under his magical hand; but, when she saw by the little deepening creases across his forehead that he did not want her to bother him any more then, she would retire to the little nook by the window behind the easels and read and read for hours at a time, or talk with old Ijo Kugil about their far-away sunny Italy.

It was so little that it took to make her happy—she gained a great deal herself by trying to be so good to Pietro—that she would have been as joyous as any woman in the city if, with the pride she took in his fame, she could have heard him call her oftener by the pretty pet names he was wont to use in their early life.

But with all his morbid inattention to her, she was far from being miserable, and always contrived to keep a little ray of sunshine from one source or another shining on her narrow life.

So, in company with her books and old Ijo Kugil, and better than all, with Pietro's occasional flashes of good nature—which, unfortunately, were like angels' visits—she got along very well indeed, and was never very unhappy except when Pietro allowed himself to rage about the house and hurl Italian curses at her and Ijo and himself and his pictures, and find fault with everything on earth and under it and above it, as he did sometimes.