

away on a boat—they must be followed—” With the first return of consciousness he had taken up again that battle against circumstances which had been his only thought for five years.

But now, suddenly he was aware that his sister was also in the room, sitting upon the opposite side of the bed. Her hand came forward and clasped his; she bent over him, holding him and fondling him.

“It is all right, Hugh,” she whispered—“Oh, Hugh! it is all right now.”

“All right?” he questioned dazedly.

“Yes; Mr. Santoine knows; he—he was not what we thought him. He believed all the while that you were justly sentenced. Now he knows otherwise—”

“He—Santoine—believed that?” Eaton asked incredulously.

“Yes; he says his blindness was used by them to make him think so. So now he is very angry; he says no one who had anything to do with it shall escape. He figured it all out—most wonderfully—that it must have been Latron in the study. He has been working all night—they have already made several arrests and every port on the lake is being watched for the boat they got away on.”

“Is that true, Edith? Lawrence, is it true?”

“Yes; quite true, Hugh!” Hillward choked and turned away.

Eaton sank back against his pillows; his eyes—dry, bright and filled still with questioning for a time, as he tried to appreciate what he just had heard and all that it meant to him—dampened suddenly as he realized that it was over now, that long struggle to clear his name from the charge of murder—the fight which had seemed so hopeless. He could not realize it to the full as yet; concealment, fear, the sense of monstrous injustice done him had marked so deeply all his thoughts and feelings that he could not sense the fact that they were gone for good. So what came to him most strongly now was only realization that he had been set right with Santoine—Santoine, whom he himself had misjudged and mistrusted. And Harriet? He had not needed to be set right with her; she had believed and trusted him from the first, in spite of all that had seemed against him. Gratitude warmed him as he thought of her—and that other feeling, deeper, stronger far than gratitude, or than anything else he ever had felt toward any one but her, spread up in him and set his pulses wildly beating, as his thought strained toward the future.

“Where is—Miss Santoine?” he asked.

His sister answered. “She has been helping her father. They left word they were to be sent for as soon as you woke up, and I’ve just sent for them.”

Eaton lay silent till he heard them coming. The blind man was unfamiliar with this room; his daughter led him in. Her eyes were very bright, her cheeks which had been pale flushed as she met Eaton’s look, but she did not look away. He kept his gaze upon her.

Santoine, under her guidance, took the chair Hillward set beside the bed for him. The blind man was very quiet; he felt for and found Eaton’s hand and pressed it. Eaton choked, as he returned the pressure. Then Santoine released him.

“Who else is here?” the blind man asked his daughter.

“Miss Overton and Mr. Hillward,” she answered.

SANTOINE found with his blind eyes their positions in the room and acknowledged their presence; afterward he turned back to Eaton.

“I understand, I think, everything now, except some few particulars regarding yourself,” he said. “Will you tell me those?”

“You mean—” Eaton spoke to Santoine, but he looked at Harriet. “Oh, I understand, I think. When I—escaped, Mr. Santoine, of course my picture had appeared in all the newspapers and I was not safe from recognition anywhere in this country. I got into Canada and, from Vancouver, went to China. We had very little

money left, Mr. Santoine; what had not been—lost through Latron had been spent in my defence. I got a position in a mercantile house over there. It was a good country for me; people over there don’t ask questions for fear some one will ask questions about them. We had no near relatives for Edith to go to and she had to take up stenography to support herself and—and change her name, Mr. Santoine, because of me.”

Eaton’s hand went out and clasped his sister’s.

“Oh, Hugh; it didn’t matter—about me, I mean!” she whispered.

“Hillward met her and asked her to marry him and she—wouldn’t consent without telling him who she was. He—Lawrence—believed her when she said I hadn’t killed Latron; and he suggested that she come out here and try to get employed by you. We didn’t suspect, of course, that Latron was still alive. We thought he had been killed by some of his own crowd—in some quarrel or because his trial was likely to involve some one else so seriously that they killed him to prevent it; and that it was put upon me to—to protect that person and that you—”

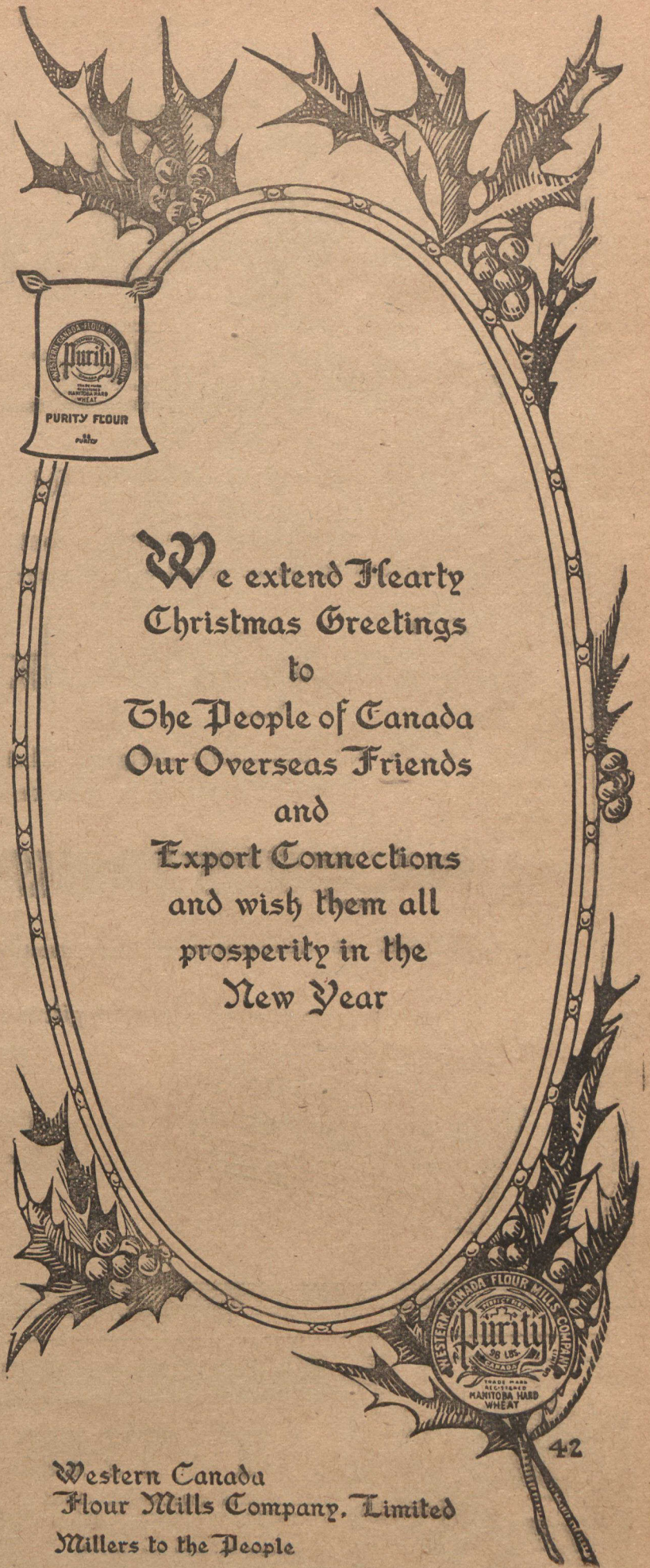
Eaton hesitated. “Go on,” said Santoine. “You thought I knew who Latron’s murderer was and morally, though not technically, perjured myself at your trial to convict you in his place. What next?”

“THAT was it,” Eaton assented. “We thought you knew that and that some of those around you who served as your eyes must know it, too.”

Harriet gasped. Eaton looking at her, knew that she understood now what had come between them when she had told him that she herself had served as her father’s eyes all through the Latron trial. He felt himself flushing as he looked at her; he could not understand now how he could have believed that she had aided in concealing an injustice against him, no matter what influence had been exerted upon her. She was all good; all true!

“At first,” Eaton went on, “Edith did not find out anything. Then, this year, she learned that there was to be a reorganization of some of the Latron properties. We hoped that, during that, something would come out which might help us. I had been away almost five years; my face was forgotten, and we thought I could take the chance of coming back to be near at hand so I could act if anything did come out. Lawrence met me at Vancouver. We were about to start East when I received a message from Mr. Warden. I did not know Warden and I don’t know now how he knew who I was or where he could reach me. His message merely said he knew I needed help and he was prepared to give it and made an appointment for me to see him at his house. He was one of the Latron crowd but I found out, one of those least likely to have had a hand in my conviction. I thought possibly Warden was going to tell me the name of Latron’s murderer and I decided to take the risk of seeing him. You know what happened when I tried to keep the appointment.

“Then you came to Seattle and took charge of Warden’s affairs. I felt certain that if there was any evidence among Warden’s effects as to who had killed Latron, you would take it back with you with the other matters relating to the Latron reorganization. You could not recognize me from your having been at my trial because you were blind; I decided to take the train with you and try to get possession of the draft of the reorganization agreement and the other documents with it which Warden had been working on. I had suspected that I was being watched by agents of the men protecting Latron’s murderer while I was in Seattle. I had changed my lodgings there because of that, but Lawrence had remained at the old lodgings to find out for me. He found there was a man following me who disappeared after I had taken the train, and Lawrence, after questioning the gateman at Seattle decided the man had taken the same train



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