

THE MAN WHO HOPED HE WAS FORGOTTEN

A SHORT STORY

The man looked around with a start. He fancied he heard the sound of foot-steps in the little grove behind him. He listened intently. There was no repetition of the noise. His keen, gray eyes resumed their watch of the long shadow.

And while he fished his mind was busy. That he was wasting the best years of his life there was no question. Yet he did it voluntarily. He willingly effaced himself. Of course, there were moments of regret. But he lived them down, just as he had lived down the earlier desire to die and end it all.

For two years he had feared being found. Every stranger that had chanced that way he looked upon with suspicion. Gradually the feeling wore off. He hoped he was forgotten. He hoped they thought him dead.

When he let himself remember the past, which was on rare occasions, his thoughts turned first of all to the young wife whom he had disgraced. Their happiness had been brief, indeed, it was a beautiful episode that seemed like a misty dream. No doubt she was well and happy—having forgotten him.

He laughed aloud. This was the life for him. He looked at his sinewy hands and the swell of his broad chest. He had come there a pale and nervous wreck. This was what outdoor life had done for him.

He started again. This time he heard the crackling of a twig across the creek. The noise might have been made by a squirrel or a rabbit. What a fool he was!

Yet for days he had seemed to know that he was being watched. What was the matter with him? Was he threatened with illness?

He raised the pole and drew in the line. His hands actually trembled.

Then he heard the noise again. A child was standing on the bank opposite him. A child of perhaps five years; a chubby boy with a mass of wavy brown hair. The man rubbed his eyes. When he looked again the child was still there. It was the first child he had seen in nearly a half dozen years.

Whence had the child come? The nearest house, save his own cabin, was two miles away. The nearest settlement was ten miles beyond that.

"Hello!" said the child. The man fancied it was the first time a child's voice had been heard in that quiet region.

"Hello!" he answered. "Fishing?" called the child. "Yes."

"Can I come over?" The man hesitated. The friends of the boy might be in the immediate neighborhood. There was a highway beyond the ridge. He must have strayed from that direction.

There was the trunk of a tall tree lying from bank to bank. "Can you cross the bridge?" called the man as he pointed to the tree.

The boy laughed. "That's a funny

bridge," he said. "Is it strong?"

"Yes. Are you afraid?"

"No," the boy stoutly answered. "I ain't afraid—only it's a funny bridge."

He took a half dozen steps and then paused above the deep current.

The man on the bank watched him intently. He felt an almost savage delight in testing the little lad's courage. "You're not afraid?" he cried.

"A smile lighted the childish features. 'I'm coming,' he cried."

He took a step forward, his foot slipped on a knot, he tried to keep his balance—then he toppled over into the deep water and sank with a little gurgling cry.

The man on the bank gave a quick gasp. Then he splashed into the water.

With strokes he reached the boy and clambered with him on the log. His cabin was less than a mile away. He ran swiftly, with the child held close to his breast.

He laid the boy on the rude couch and started a fire in the big fireplace. As the brush blazed up he swiftly, yet gently, stripped the lad of his clothes, wrapped him in blankets, and pushed the couch nearer the fire.

"How are you now, son?" he hoarsely asked, as he chafed the little wet hands.

The boy's dark eyes smiled up at him. "I'm all right," he answered.

"Not cold?"

"No. I ain't now. That's a fine fire."

The man continued to chafe the little hands. "You're a brave boy," he murmured.

"It's too bad I stubbed my toe," said the child. "You're very strong, ain't you?"

The man turned away and brought from a cupboard a cup. "Drink that," he said to the child. "You mustn't catch cold."

The boy winced a little as the mixture slipped down his throat. "That's pretty hot," he gasped. "And so's the fire."

The man pushed the couch back a little.

"You're quite sure you're all right?" he asked.

"I'm all right," the boy answered. "Is this where you live? Did you build it yourself?"

The man turned away and brought from a cupboard a cup. "Drink that," he said to the child. "You mustn't catch cold."

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ently, no doubt. That couldn't be helped.

The man had no desire to meet anyone from the outside world. He could take the child and set him down on the highway close to where he strayed away. He could wait there with him until the searchers came in sight. Then he could go.

No, he would enjoy the boy's society as long as he could. It was a treat he had not known for many years. What a splendid little fellow he was!

"I'm going to be hungry pretty soon," said the boy.

The man laughed. "I was afraid of that," he said. "What do you generally eat?"

"I can eat anything," the boy replied. "You don't happen to have any milk, do you?"

No. We don't happen to have any cow. But there is a neighbor who sends me butter once in a while, and I have a little on hand."

The boy laughed. "Ain't it funny," he said, "how it makes you hungry to talk about food? Don't you think you'd better make that soup pretty soon?"

The man laughed. Then he set about the preparation of the simple meal.

When the corn bread was taken from the ashes and the soup was almost ready to serve, he carefully felt of the little garments along the line and decided they were quite dry enough to be worn.

The dressing of the lad was a task. The child helped, as far as his skill would go, but it was evident that loving hands had directed the operation.

The man's big fingers stumbled over the buttons and the hooks and the strings, and made mistakes to which the child delightedly called attention.

And when it was found that a long stocking was on wrong side out, the hilarity of the little lad was quite infectious.

"If I had mamma here I'd like to live with you always," said the boy.

The man's face flushed. The child's words stirred his heart.

The boy studied the man's appearance.

"I think I'd like you better," he presently remarked, "if I could see your face real well. You've got so many short whiskers, you know."

The shadows of the late afternoon were falling, and the boy remarked: "I'm going to be sleepy pretty soon, and so we'd better have a good game first."

The boy knew the games to play, and the man helped him play them. They romped about the cabin until the little lad was too tired and sleepy to play any more.

So the man helped him to undress and put him to bed on the couch.

The boy was awake bright and early, and starting about with wondering eyes.

"Do you know," he said, as he slipped from the couch, "that when I looked around everything seemed so strange that I was most homesick, but when I saw you I knew it was all right."

This time the dressing process was more quickly accomplished, and then the two friends sat down to the simple breakfast. And all the time the parting that soon must come weighed heavy on the man's lonely heart.

And lo! they had scarcely risen from the table when a rap resounded on the door.

"Come in," cried the man harshly.

The door opened, and an elderly man appeared, a fine-looking elderly man, who bore himself very erect.

He smiled as he looked at the man and child. "Good-morning, Richard," he said.

"Grandpa!" cried the child and ran to him and caught his hand.

The man stared from the newcomer to the child and moistened his dry lips.

"You have come for me?" he hoarsely murmured.

"Come for you?" echoed the old man. "Well, I think I understand what you mean. You believe yourself to be a defaulter. You are all wrong. You were ill at the time, you had worked too hard. You did not realize what you were doing. It was not a crime, it was a mistake. The money was soon recovered, the bank lost nothing, your good name still stands."

The man's voice trembled.

"And you have never sent for me?"

"Sent for you? No. We have searched for you in many places, and finally happened on this place by the merest chance. Wait, I am wrong. You have been sent for. Ethel has sent your son to bring you home." He pushed the child forward as he spoke.

There were tears in the man's eyes as he fell upon his knees and put his arms about the boy. The boy softly stroked the man's hair.

"Don't cry," he said. "Don't cry." W. R. Rose, in Cleveland Plaindealer.

LETTERS BY ELECTRICITY.

The latest improvement to be installed in the big city apartment house is an automatic mail delivery system. The apparatus is authorized by the Postmaster-General, and is taken under the custody of the Government, so that the careless handling of mail by hallboys, elevator boys, butlers or maids is eliminated.

The postman leaves the mail in the automatic carrier on the ground floor, and by merely shutting the door the electrical current is applied which operates the apparatus. The mail is delivered by this means to locked boxes inside the apartments.

The device consists of a straight up and down well, about eighteen inches square, running the height of the house and containing an elevating and lowering apparatus which takes up and down a steel tray with metal boxes.

Electricity is used to work the lift, and the operation of this carrier with its boxes filled with mail takes less power than will run a small hot weather fan. The postman has a key to the plate glass door inclosing the carrier, which, when opened, reveals three rows of small metal boxes, one for each apartment. The postman drops the mail according to the addresses, closes the door, which locks itself, and the carrier sits the apparatus in place.

By a simple contrivance the boxes are dropped off from the carrier at the apartments where they belong, and at the same time overturned, so that the mail falls out in the locked reception in the apartment. The automatic carrier keeps on going up until it reaches the top, when it descends again, picking up the boxes as it comes down.

The device is installed and now working in several of the new high-class apartment houses recently completed, and arrangements are being made for installation in some of the apartment houses which were built before the apparatus was invented.—Washington Star.

WHAT IT COSTS TO BE STYLISH

A WOMAN'S BILL FOR THE LONDON SEASON COMES TO £2,000.

But £10,000 is Not an Uncommon Price—The Things She Wears.

Although clothing is getting cheaper, it is doubtful if the expenses of the average man's or woman's wardrobe are any less than they were before. Judging from some figures given by the London Express, the cost of fashionable attire is still great enough to form the text for Father Vaughan's philippics. The estimates of the London newspaper are based on the needs of the woman in the smart set, and her husband is usually able to afford her expensive clothes; her more expensive entertainments, and her most expensive jewels. Statistics for the woman of the middle class are not available, nor for the poorer class; but the deplorable fact remains that, as the annual earnings decrease, the proportionate expenditure on dress increases. That is to say, the man who earns £20,000 a year spends less in proportion on his clothing and his wife's equipment than the man who earns £2,000, and so on down the scale, until we arrive at the income of which half goes for clothes.

SIX OUTFITS A DAY.

In the season, apparently, the London butterfly uses just six outfits a day, beginning at 8 a.m., when "our heroine" daintily slips her chocolate and waits for her bath. From this moment until she returns from her morning ride in the Row she occupies the following clothes:

Lace negligee	£ 2	s. 10	d. 0
Boudoir cap	1	1	0
Riding Corsets	1	10	0
Habit	18	18	0
Hat	1	1	0
Riding boots	5	5	0
Stockings	0	15	6
Doekskin gloves	0	12	6
Lingerie	3	3	0

£42 16 0

That is to say, something more than £200 is required to make the average smart woman presentable for an hour or so in the morning. If we add the cost of the horse on which she rides, the sum mounts up to a thousand dollars, in addition to the groom's mount, his livery and wages.

A WALKING COSTUME.

Returning from the ride, my lady surrenders herself to the manicurist, the masseuse, and the other human and mechanical beautifiers, for an hour or so; and then, fresh from her electric bath, she dons a smart walking costume. It is not that she intends to do any walking, although the old country women are excellent pedestrians, but shopping is done in a walking costume, and then, of course, there is the tiresome journey between the curbstone and the store. By 10 o'clock our heroine has made the following dent in her husband's bank roll:

Manicurist	£ 5	s. 0	d. 6
Face masseuse	0	10	6
Hair-dresser	0	10	6
French lingerie	3	3	0
Petticoat	1	10	0
Morning corsets	1	10	0
Linen costume	8	8	0
Hat	2	2	0
Parasol	1	1	0
Walking shoes	2	2	0
Stockings	0	15	6
Gloves	0	8	6

£22 8 6

This, a trifle more than £100, is a trifling more reasonable, and one might have from it that the member of the smart set had decided to economize.

THE LUNCHEON TOILETTE.

Such hopes must now be abandoned, for it is our painful duty now to examine the luncheon toilette donned at 1:30 p.m. Luncheon being a popular meal to eat at other folks' houses, the outfit must be calculated to cause as much heart-burning as possible, which is done to the following extent:

Luncheon gown (French model)	£ 40	s. 0	d. 0
Hat trimmed with flowers	7	7	0
Lingerie	5	5	0
Petticoat, silk and lace	4	4	0
Shoes, French	3	3	0
Silk stockings	2	2	0
Stole	0	10	6
Gloves	0	10	6
Parasol	1	1	0
Handkerchief	0	10	6

£67 15 0

It will be noticed that the gloves have gone up a trifle, which might be on account of the horse on which she rides, although this mere masculine guess must be accepted with caution.

IT'S CHEAP TO MOTOR.

For the afternoon drive in the motor there is a slight reaction in favor of plain living and high thinking, as the following table indicates:

Motor costume	£ 15	s. 15	d. 0
Motor coat	10	10	0
Motor cap	2	2	0
Motor gloves	0	10	6

£28 17 6

In the face of this modest sum it can hardly be contended that motoring is as expensive as some untruthful persons have represented. Our butterfly gives a glimpse of her true capabilities at the smart reception in the afternoon, when she gets inside the following war paint:

Visiting gown	£ 63	s. 0	d. 0
Hat, with feathers	12	0	0
Parasol, hand-painted	5	5	0
Lingerie	8	8	0
Petticoat	5	5	0
Corsets	3	3	0

£86 0 0

On this basis the season's bill comes to a trifle more than £2,000, and it is to be remembered that the things are worn for only a few weeks out of the £2.

The informant of the Express says that £10,000 is by no means an uncommon price for a woman of the real smart set to pay for her clothing for one season.—Toronto Mail and Empire.

TRY IT.

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