

women. Oh! if widowhood be the doom of women, who would not be a Mason's widow? Who would not be a Mason's wife, mother, daughter or sister in the hour of peril and need?

THE FACE OF THE MOON.

We had all observed for some time that Tom Eaton had been unlike himself. Originally a good-natured sort of chap, without much facility in painting, to be sure, but with any amount of ambition, he had pleased us all. The one or two sharp criticisms on his pictures that had been accepted by the hanging committees and the innumerable rejections he had sustained at their hands, seemed at last to have really turned his temper. He grew blue, somber, now and again gruff, and singularly loquacious on the subject of his art. He would orate by the hour on theories of painting, and was sometimes ingenious if obscure. I was talking to Gleason Tower about him one day, and Gleason, who deals in caustic speeches, said: "Sum up Tom Eaton, and he is a good example of a limited man with an unlimited ambition. He was supposed to have great talent, and started out in life under the impression that he was a genius. He lived in this dream for a while; now he is waking to find he is only an ordinary sort of man like the rest of us. It makes him mad, or if he is 'not mad he soon will be,' if he goes about with his notions and talk."

A week or so later, Eaton monopolized an evening at the Kit-Kat club by giving us his new views on art. Art meant only portraiture. Everything else, from still life up to landscape, was a mere accessory. He really dabbled on with his thought, though his words flew fast enough, and I felt as if he were killing his friendships as I glanced about the room and saw numerous indications of suppressed yawns.

It was so. Gleason Towner said: "Eaton has rung his own death-knell. He belongs in an insane asylum, not in an art club."

"I really think his brain is cracked," suggested Bob Langley. "They say he has an uncle who—"

But some one broke in with tidings of a new model, and we dropped Tom Eaton.

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I do not believe I gave the fellow a thought again until he chanced upon me the next summer while I was staying in an out-of-the-way village in Maine, on a sketching excursion. One day, in July, I stumbled upon Eaton sitting out under his umbrella, painting.

"Hello, old man! given up portraits!" I called, remembering by the association of ideas his talk the last time I saw him.

"No, this is a portrait," and he turned his

easel toward me to display a most indifferent figure of an Irish woman with a basket in her hand.

He held his brush idly for a moment, and then looked up at me quickly.

"I have come here to see you," he said abruptly. "I heard you were here. Will you go rowing with me to-night? I have something to say to you—a secret. I have come all this distance to find you, for say it I must."

I will confess to a vague remembrance of Eaton's queer ways, but I am not half a bad fellow, and was, moreover, a trifle flattered at this proof of confidence and friendship, so I consented.

"At 8?" he asked.

"At 8," I answered.

"Meet me here at this point if you will. I shall be busy until then, and do not care to see you and idly chat over nothing while my secret chokes in my throat."

He laughed uneasily.

"In love," thought I; "and I shall lie in a boat and listen to descriptions of her beauties and her charms all night. Hello—ho!"

At 8 o'clock precisely I had reached the point, but Eaton was there before me sitting in the boat, oars in hand, paddling about uneasily. He had pulled off his coat, and as he was a fine, brawny fellow, I looked at him with some admiration.

"What a Hercules you are!" I cried.

"And what a crab, a turtle, are you! Get in."

As I jumped into the boat, annoyed by his tone, which was almost savage, I stumbled against his paint-box and a big bit of canvas.

"What are these things doing here?" I queried, as I sat down in the stern of the boat.

"They go where I go," he replied. "They are my tools."

We did not speak for some time. Eaton pulled hard and fast, and I lay back with my hands under my head and looked up at the sky. It was just before moonrise, and the heavens were in their golden glorious expectancy. I did not care to break the silence. The secret of the night was grander and more interesting than any pretty human confidence could be. Eaton spoke first.

"You are not curious?"

"I beg your pardon; I am ready."

He was silent again for a few moments.

"I am going to be a great painter," he said abruptly.

Ah! It was not a love secret then!

"But to accomplish my end I must take terrible means. I must condemn myself to years of agony. I must condemn also another being to a briefer but very horrible torture."

Then it must be a love story, after all!

"Yes?" I replied, as he paused, putting as much expression as I could into the words.