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it were at the bottom of the sea. I'll thump, thump, thump—thump—thump—thump, as the heart runs down! But when he comes openly facing his victim, taking him tentatively by the hand and leading him on, that victim grows obstinate, sullen; he will not yield, and strength and life ebb slowly; he clings feebly even to the last atom that slips away, leaving him dead.

The buzzard did not go away again. Al still walked, but staggered this way and that, scarcely moving forward at all; and now the circle of the great bird's flight was not perfect, for each time that the man reeled far to right or left weakly waving his arms to balance himself, the buzzard paused in his flight, sinking downward. Finally

he poised himself, motionless—Al had fallen again, and lay quite still. Frank stopped also, turning back and bending over his brother as before, tugging at the belt; the dying man made only a slight resistance now, and then relaxed.

"Let me have it!" cried Frank angrily, as loudly as his swollen tongue permitted: "it's no good to you."

At this Al made another slight effort to grasp the belt.

"It's no good to you," iterated Frank, coughing out the words; "let me have it; I'll take it to Daisy."

Al's glassy eyes unclosed; he sat up and fumbled clumsily at the buckle of his belt.

"Yes: take it—to her," he mumbled.

Frank seemed disappointed. "I'll marry her myself now," he explained. "I always wanted her, but she was fool enough to prefer you."

Al's closing eyes opened wide; in his darkening mind a great fire flamed up; he screamed and snarled savagely, though the sound came smothered from his mouth.

The buzzard knew nothing of the desire for gold, the hatred of men, the love of woman—of jealousy, the most powerful emotion of all; he wondered why this man always got up again after lying down to die.

Loggishly Frank tumbled on over the sand; Al stumbled after in a silent rage, his mind unmade with the heat of the desert and the hate of men. Eagerly his scorched eyes watched for his brother to fall; then he would have lain himself down for the last time, with a grim laugh struggling out of him as he died. But Frank would not fall; he hurried along at almost a mile an hour.

The brassy sun sank into the wavering heat mist and shone through it like copper, distorted, undulating as it were visibly a molten mass. Night was coming soon.

Al was down, groaning and cursing because his brother would not fall. Miracles of avarice, hate, love, jealousy, could not raise him now, for in a moment there was not left him enough in him to feel: the mind ceased to act, and death was there; only the heart moved slowly, mechanically, more slowly; death was there at the heart, too, already hampering the rhythmic beat. The buzzard rested on outspread wings, coming slowly down.

Frank looked back and saw; the glare of horror grew in his eyes, and for a moment he stood in despair. There was hopeless agony in his last smothered cry of genuine appeal to his dying brother:

"My God, Al the water is near! Come!"

Al gave no sign; Frank turned with a groan and dragged his heavy feet along. He reached the curving crest of a long, low wave in the motionless gray sea, and beyond it lay a deeper hollow than any he had passed. Madness then came into his glazing eyes; strange sounds squeezed their way past the thickening tongue and tumbled forth into the desert air, hideous sobs, and his feeble arms reached out before him. He tried to run and, falling, rolled in the sand, and crawled but presently staggered to his feet and lurched forward. Again and again he fell, and sometimes he lay for a minute or more, staring in wild affright at the desert spring.

Foot by foot he crept or plunged, and lay at last, smiling with his horrible lips, on the edge of the water-hole. With trembling fingers he unfastened one end of its strap and dropped the canteen into the spring. It was not heavy when full yet the first pull he gave frightened him; so weak he was, so near to death, the weight was

too much. Straining every muscle he lifted it a little way, and saw the water drip from it; then his awful sobs began again, the water-spring and all the desert faded from his sight. A great weight hung upon him, and in his clouded mind was only the thought that he must struggle with it. It seemed a metal band was tightening across his chest, and something inside shriveled and burned his lungs; sounds which were not of the desert silence but the madness of a mind, buzzed and cracked in his ears—the strap slipped through his hands. Still he clung and heaved upward, and inch by inch the water was dragged up—out at last—Triumph! Life!

And the sobbing and the sounds of madness ceased; Frank lay quiet for a while in the silence of the desert. Presently he drank, and poured the water over his aching body. Then he turned to look back the way he had come, and saw the poised buzzard; Al was yet alive then, and might still be saved! Again he filled the canteen, and painfully toiled back over the sand.

The heat-haze was almost gone; the angry red sun touched the gray horizon and was slowly blotted out. Frank lay beside his brother, exhausted, asleep. Al was moaning in the pain of restored life, now and again sucking a mouthful of water from the canteen Frank had brought.

The buzzard had lit upon the sand; he was walking toward the men that lay there, and Al put one arm protectingly across the body of his stronger brother.

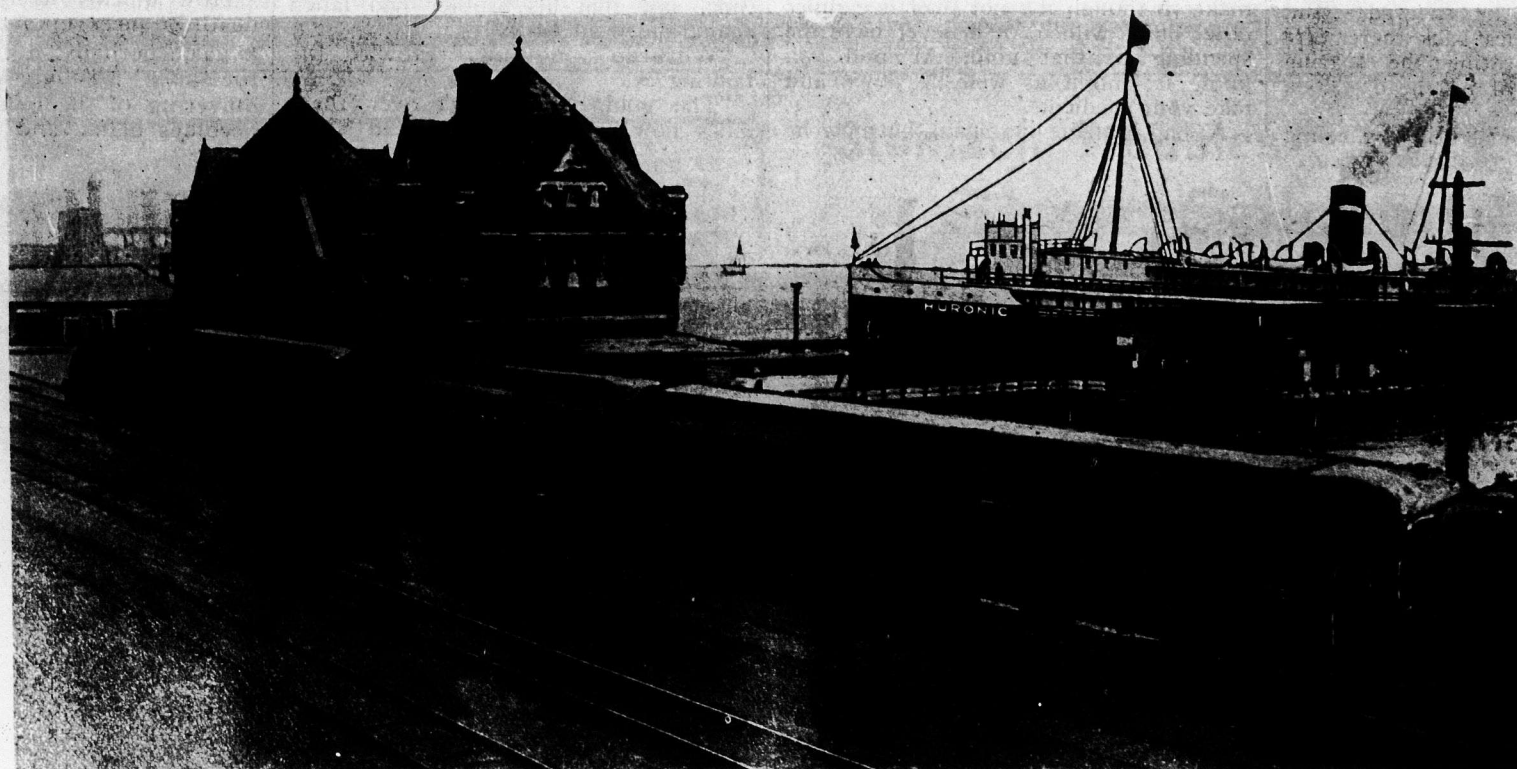
"Dear old boy!" he said. "He just pretended he would leave me; he lied when he said he wanted to take the gold—he just wanted me to follow—and he lied when—" He paused.

Were either of the brothers to die, after all? The buzzard would know. Slowly and solemnly he walked close up, surveying the group with an air of grave, experienced inquiry; but the examination was unsatisfactory, for he spread his wings and rose heavily into the air. Twice he circled round, then soared higher and higher. Would he continue circling, high up, waiting? No; he flew straight away at last, over the desert.

"I wonder," said Al reflectively, "if Frank does really care for her?"

The New York Hair Store.

Heavy pressure of business in their Portage Avenue store rendered it impossible for Mesdames Seaman & Petersen to spare time for an exhibit at the Winnipeg Fair. During an exhibition week their store was thronged with customers, many of whom, in addition to their intended purchases, could not refrain from buying a fancy comb or Parisian hair ornament as a present for the old folks at home.



The Superior Express, C.N.R., showing C.N.R. Station and Steamers Dock, Port Arthur, Ont.

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