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When the War Was Over

BY FREDERICK R. BURTON.
Author of "Her Wedding Interlude,"
"Josef Helmuth's Goats," "A Pot of
Gold," "The Strange Object of
Thomson Wetmore," etc.

CHAPTER I.

AN UNWELCOME VISITOR.

We come upon them strolling hand in hand along a mountain pathway. The sun of the world is setting, but to them the gorgeous colors of the cloud-streaked western sky are emblematic of a fairer dawn than ever earth had known before, for the sun of love has risen upon them, and for them, and it was but now that the mist of uncertainty was dissipated when his heart found utterance in words, and hers gave a response whose faltering accents belied her trust and happiness. We all know substantially what must have been said; the precise form matters little, and when it comes to that, I think most men make poor enough display of language on this momentous question. The prearranged speech somehow won't speak itself, the prepared gestures, or caresses, or what-not, have a way of failing to work, and that man who, forgetting his oration, desperately stammers, "I love you," and waits with powerless arms, trembling and choking, for the answer, is as eloquent and, when he deserves success, as effective as the situation demands.

The important thing in this case was that the young man and the young woman had made themselves and each other one another, else why should they have started down the mountain hand in hand when the sun told them that darkness would set in by the time they reached the valley?

They were peacefully happy. Love promised for them no other vista than the Adirondacks with its pathless forests, mountains, streams, and hundred lakes. It brought no hope of wealth, no change of circumstances, save that they would henceforth be together, and the prospect of one day owning his own house and plot of land was to Will Spencer alone, for the matter of course aim cherished by all young men who lived in Granite and found their wives there. There were not many of them, to be sure, but to such inhabitants as Granite boasted, rent was a term for some strange evil that existed in remote cities as a penalty for higher civilization, although they may not have understood it that way. It was recognized that the school teacher had to pay her board—unfortunate creature—and a similar tribute was exacted from the stray fishermen who came up in the spring and summer from New York; but when a young man wanted a home of his own he sailed forth and bought a piece of land or traded for it, and the amount of the investment was a matter of where there was money was scarce. Such a plan as hiring a house was never so much as thought of.

"I suppose you'll speak to papa and mamma tonight, Will," giving his fingers an added pressure.

"Yes, Elsie," he responded with a fierce blush and gulp. "It's better to have it over with."

Elsie laughed contentedly.

"Why, you silly fellow," she said, "what are you afraid of?"

"Afraid of nothing; but it almost kind of seems to me to ask a girl in enough for one evening."

"You're afraid," she cried, banteringly, and then demurely, "you can put it off if you want to, but you've got to ask me now. I shall never say the word."

"Of course I shall ask them," he retorted, "and this evening, too. See here, Elsie!"

"Well," and she turned to him with a tantalizing inquiry in her voice and eyes.

He had stopped short and stood looking down at her. She knew perfectly well what was in his mind, although she said it, or offer it either—not she!

"I want a kiss," he blurted. "I guess I've got a right to one."

Her glad laughter checked his argument and her lips as promptly stopped his breath.

"Ah! dear," he whispered, when he could speak again, "I love you so!"

She nestled against his arm for reply. Their love was yet too young for free expression. It had cost the sturdy young woodsman a greater effort to say "I love you" than he would have expended in felling a tree. Elsie had not even said in so many words that she loved him. Will was conscious of the omission, and though a man with no more than two senses would have known that she was heart and soul his own, he longed to hear her say so. I believe it is a common longing of lovers, whether men or women, dwellers in cities or in the forest, of high degree or no degree. Will, encouraged by his success with that little term of endearment that means so much at first and afterward—well, sometimes not so much, restrained Elsie as she was about to start on, and said:

"Wait a minute, Elsie; I want you to say something."

"What is it," she returned, and this time her inquiry and wonder were genuine.

"Say you love me—dear," it wasn't quite so hard that time, but still it was rather forced.

"Why, of course," she said, casting her eyes down.

"Well, but say it, please."

"I did say it, didn't I?" this with a

shy glance upward.
"No, you didn't. Say it please."
"Well, I do. There!" and she looked him in the eyes with roughish bravery. She knew she was dodging.

"Aren't you a humbug, though?" exclaimed Will, laughing outright, as he felt a sense of mastery growing upon him in the face of her evident embarrassment.

"See here," and she held up her face in his hands and held it up, "say it after me. I love you."

"I'm awful glad," said Elsie, trying to suppress a smile with a pouting her lips, but the result was as gentle a caress as if his brawny hands had been a woman's.

"Say I," obediently responded Elsie.

"Love,"

"Oh, I love you, Will," she cried, yielding all at once, "I love you and you know it."

"Yes," he said, passing his arm around her waist and starting down the path again, "I know it, and I am very happy."

Elsie uttered a little exclamation of fright and shrank close against him.

"Whose afraid now?" he asked jocosely, did you see a snake?"

"No," she whispered, all of a tremble, "look there!"

Will looked in the direction she indicated and saw, indeed, an unusual sight, but not one to inspire terror. They were passing through what had once been a dense wood, now the trees were scattered, the lumbermen having made many an incursion there for the best spruce, hemlock and pines. Under a tree whose gnarled trunk had saved it from the axe were two men.

One was stretched at full length, asleep, his face turned toward them, showing in its deep brown the effects of long exposure to all kinds of weather. The other was sitting up, his legs crossed under him, leaning against the tree and staring at the lovers.

He was a black man, or boy rather, for it did not seem as if he had passed his teens. His arms hung loose and motionless at his side. Not even his lustrous eyes stirred.

I have said that he was black, but his skin had not the rich deep hue of the full-blooded African. It was but noticeably darker than that of his companion, who was unmistakably a Caucasian, and his lips were not over thick, or his nose flat; but he was clearly of a different race.

As Will took them in with a single glance, he almost wished that they would offer to molest him that he might show the side of his side that he had never might quail at confessions of what lay deepest in his heart, he had no element of physical fear in his make-up. His heart bounded and his muscles became tense as he thought he noticed a disposition on the part of the men to accost him; for aroused apparently by a touch from the black boy's foot, the white man half raised himself and said:

"What is it, Wanga?"

The boy made no reply, and the man giving vent to an impatient grunt as he saw the peaceful couple in the path, lay down again.

It's nothing but a couple of tramps," remarked Will, in a low voice, "what made you so frightened?"

"It was so sudden," returned Elsie, with a shudder, "didn't you see the black man's eyes?"

"Yes, but what of that?"

"Oh, I don't know, nothing, I suppose, but they seemed dreadful. He was looking straight at me."

"That was natural. Funny name he has, isn't it?"

Elsie did not respond. They walked along in silence for a few minutes.

Will wondered why she should have been disturbed, and gradually working himself into some perturbation over the simple occurrence. He hoped it had passed from her mind when she said:

"I don't remember that I ever saw a negro in the woods before, did you?"

"Yes, servants of the rich people passing through Granite on their way to the hotels at the lakes."

"That isn't what I mean. I never saw one alone, before."

"Wanga isn't alone."

"Well, you know—never mind. I suppose they're only tramps or hunters. I wish they hadn't frightened me so. I won't think of it any more. What are you going to say to papa?"

Will answered rather sulkily:

"You wait and see."

Elsie laughed, a little uneasily, it seemed, and they went on again in silence.

They had not strayed more than a mile up the mountain path, and it was but a few minutes, therefore, before they arrived at Elsie's home. It was a rambling old building with low studded rooms and great fireplaces. In front was a rustic garden of flowers that impressed one more by its profusion of bloom than by the taste in selection and cultivation. Holy-hocks, like fat and contented old ladies gathered at the minister's tea party, were much in evidence, and sun-flowers nodded to the departed sun and the approaching lovers as they went in through the gate.

Nicholas Warren's house was commonly regarded as within the village limits, although to the west of it would have seemed to be considerably removed from the center of population. The meeting house and the cross-roads store were fully a quarter of a mile distant, and but two or three dwellings intervened, nevertheless they were all in the same block, so to speak, and one felt quite in touch with life if he could but see his nearest neighbor's house through the foliage.

As he walked to the house between holy-hocks, Will felt a wild hope that Mrs. Springer was making one of her intermittent calls upon the Warrens, and then he blushed at the recognition of his own weakness.

"Nick Warren himself had to face just such music," he thought, gulping down his tremors and with more nerve than ease he strode to the door and opened it.

Elsie followed him into the sitting-room where her father and mother and grandfather Nathan Kirk were sitting, just as she expected they would. Mrs. Warren was by the front window, where she had sat to get the benefit of the last rays of day while she plied her needle over homing socks. It was now dusk, and her work lay upon her lap while she rested pending the coming of darkness sufficient to justify lighting a lamp.

At one side of the fireplace sat Mr. Warren, taking that complete and contented rest that only the farmer or woodsman can find after a long day of hard work in the open air. His hands rested on the arms of his rocking chair, but he was motionless. Complete inactivity became his present temper. The chair was at the fireplace habitual-

ly, for though no log burned there now, it glowed during at least nine months of the year, and even in midsummer it was not unusual to resort to a light fire of an evening.

Granpa Kirk was crouched in a similar chair, fast asleep, on the other side of the fireplace. It was all just as usual in the hour or two after supper, save that Elsie herself was not in her usual place or at her usual occupation.

When she entered the room she left Will's side, and went to her mother, kneeling down and burying her face in the good lady's lap. The mother knew, and stroked her daughter's head gently. Mr. Warren looked up with idle interest.

"Nick," began Will, in a confident tone, then he stopped short, confused at having fallen into this familiar address by which everybody in Granite greeted Elsie's father.

"Excuse me," stammered the young man, feeling worse than he had expected to, "I mean Mr. Warren."

"EH?" remarked Mr. Warren, without suspecting the situation at all.

"What's the matter?"

"Elsie and I want to get married."

That wasn't what Will had meant to say at all. He had supposed that he would have said, "Excuse me, I'm feeling worse than he had expected to, 'I mean Mr. Warren.'"

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Our New Story.

An Award of \$100 to Be Made
to Readers in Connection
With Its Publication.

Read the Conditions Given Below.

1. The London ADVERTISER Printing Company will pay \$100 in prizes to the readers from whom it receives by mail at the publication office, Richmond street, London, Ont., the most nearly complete and absolute solution of "When the War Was Over," as it shall be disclosed in the final chapter of the story to be published Friday, Nov. 15, in the London ADVERTISER. The following list of prizes is offered to those readers who send us a correct solution of the story on the conditions mentioned below:

1st. Trip to New York and return... \$25
2nd. Trip to Chicago and return... 15
3rd. Lady's lambkin collar... 12
4th. Lady's silver watch... 10
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2. The first prize awarded will be for the explanation which comes nearest to the true solution; the second prize to the person sending the explanation next nearest, and so on for the third and fourth prizes. The remaining six prizes of \$5 each will be awarded to the persons sending the explanations next nearest to the fifth prize, as the judges may determine their merit.

3. The ADVERTISER is pre-eminently a family newspaper, and its daily installment of a high-grade serial story is a feature intended to specially commend it to the home circle. To emphasize and advertise the fact that the ADVERTISER is a newspaper peculiarly suitable for women's reading, the further condition is made that the prizes shall be only awarded for explanations sent in by women and girls. All may read; but only women and girls may guess—and win the prizes.

"When the War Was Over" will continue in daily installments, from Monday, Oct. 7, until Friday, Nov. 8, on which date all but the final chapter will have been published. The interval between Friday, Nov. 8, and Tuesday, Nov. 12, 6 o'clock p.m., inclusive, will be allowed for forwarding of guesses, and the final chapter will be published in the ADVERTISER on Friday, Nov. 15. Under no consideration whatever will guesses be received from any source and be considered prior to Friday, Nov. 8, or from city readers after 6 o'clock p.m. of Saturday, Nov. 9. Out-of-town readers have a time allowance for mailing, and their guesses must reach the office not later than 6 o'clock p.m., Nov. 12. For no reason whatever will guesses from any source be received or considered after 6 o'clock p.m., Nov. 12.

READ THE RULES OF THE COMPETITION.

1. But one solution can be entered by a reader.
2. All guesses must be sent by mail and in no other way, plainly addressed to "Prize Story Editor," the London ADVERTISER, Richmond street, London, Ont.

3. Inquiries not considered fully answered here will receive proper attention if addressed to "Prize Story Editor," the London ADVERTISER, Richmond street, London, Ont.

4. The prizes will be awarded under the foregoing general conditions, according to the best judgment of the judges appointed by the ADVERTISER, and they will have complete control and final decision in all matters relating to the contest.

5. "A complete and correct solution" can be made in the reader's own language, and in the number of words necessary for an absolute statement of the mystery and such material facts of the plot revealed in the development of the story as may be deemed necessary by the judges to a clear and full explanation of the mystery.

The names and addresses of the winner or winners of the cash prizes will be published in the ADVERTISER at the earliest date possible after publication of the final chapter.

No condition of subscription to the ADVERTISER is imposed. Guessers must be women and girls, and necessarily they must be readers of the ADVERTISER, but they may read the story in the ADVERTISER taken by any member of the family, and need not be regular subscribers themselves in order to enter the competition. While only women and girls may guess and win the prizes, they can receive help as to their guesses from any member of their family, or from all the family.

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