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**You Had a Smooth Path.**  
One morning, when I went to school, in the long-vanished yesterday, I found the creek had burst its banks, and spilled its waters over my way. The little path was filled with mud; I tried to cross it on a log; My foot slipped, and I, helpless, fell into a mass of miry bog.  
My clothes were pitiful to see; My hands and face were covered quite. The children laughed right heartily, And jeered me when I came in sight. Sweet Jessie Brown, in snow white dress, Stood, smiling, by the teacher's desk, The while he, gravely as he might, Inquired, the secret of my plight.  
Then Jessie shook her snow-white dress, And said, "What will you give to me For coming here so nice and clean? My very shoes from dirt are free."  
The tutor frowned, and answered her, "You merit no reward to-day; Your clothes and hands are clean because You had a smooth path all the way."  
And so, I think, when children grow Are white in grace, or black with sin, We should not judge until we know The path Fate had them travel in; For some are led on sunny heights, Beyond the power of Sin to sway; While others grope in darkness paths, And face temptation all the way.  
—Chicago Tribune.

## After Many Days.

"And your husband has been dead four years?"  
"Yes, four years."  
Nothing could be lovelier than Angeline Wharton's pale, pensive profile, seen in the twilight.  
Hubert Knox looked at it earnestly, and Elsie White, a sadness and vague fear coming over her happy heart, gazed too. She had not known before that Angeline was beautiful; but life at Neptune House seemed to change her. Her loose, shadowy hair, and a dress of black velvet made her loveliness itself that evening.  
"And is it pleasant at Linden Walks?" asked Knox.  
"Oh, yes," cried Elsie; "it is beautiful."  
But Knox continued to look at Mrs. Wharton.  
"Elsie has told you," she said, looking up and meeting his eyes.  
After a moment she rose, sighed heavily, and walked slowly down the long veranda.  
"My cousin is very handsome—don't you think so?" asked little Elsie, wistfully.  
Knox was silent for a moment.  
"She is a very handsome woman, no doubt."  
Something in the cool voice cheered Elsie a little. She slipped a warm little hand into her companion's, and he received and held it tenderly.  
"Angeline's health is much better than it was at Linden Walks. She is very nervous, and never likes to be alone."  
She chatted on merrily now, reassured by that warm hand.  
"Your cousin is not much like you."  
"No; it is strange that we are of the same blood, for Angeline is not at all like me."  
Elsie yielded to the coaxing arm, and pillowed her young cheek on the strong breast, all untroubled in the starlight.  
"How did you come to make her house your home?"  
"Well, there was a large family of us at Fern Cottage, and when Angeline came there visiting, she took me home with her. I intended to stay but a little while, but she urged me to make my home with her. Linden Walks was lonesome, she said, though Angeline was quite a stranger to me—I had never seen her until that summer—I finally consented. Papa was willing. He has four daughters left now."  
"And how long have you lived there?"  
"Two years this summer."  
Though Hubert Knox knew so little of Elsie White's circumstances, it was none the less true that they were lovers. A little tenderness, and the strong, fearless man had won her heart as a lily is opened by the sunlight.  
She was very young—only seventeen. She never thought to ask him of his history or circumstances. She only knew that she had never feared him, as she did most men, and he was kindness and tenderness itself.  
Her young heart held a perfect worship for him, and yet he had little thought beyond the happy present. She only knew that she loved him, never troubled herself about his "intentions," and let the days go by, never realizing that she might be laying up a store of misery.  
Afterward she remembered that evening—the white surf rushing up the beach, the rocking and glimmering cold in the moonlight, the sky piled with silver-

edged clouds, and all along the pale beach people sauntering to and fro. It was getting late in the season, and the place was less crowded than usual. The long veranda was quite deserted but for those two.  
Knox was very quiet, yet she could feel the strong beating of his heart against her temple.  
By-and-by, Knox looked at his watch. "It is past ten o'clock, little pet." Here came a sudden, light step along the veranda.  
"Still in your corner, truant? Everybody is on the beach, and I thought to see you there. Mr. Knox, I want to speak to you a moment," said Mrs. Wharton, for he was turning away.  
He came toward her.  
"Elsie and I go back home next week; it is the last of September. Pray come and see us at Linden Walks."  
Elsie, who had not before known the time of their departure, listened breathlessly for the answer. It came:  
"Thanks! But I am going directly to London."  
Two rosy lips paled and broke apart. "I shall be very closely occupied with my new book until Christmas," continued Knox.  
"And you will have it finished by that time?"  
"I intend to."  
"Well, then you will need a vacation. I am to have a dinner party at Christmas," continued Mrs. Wharton, "and should be very glad to have you join us."  
"Thanks, again."  
"But will you not come?" asked the lady.  
Knox stood with his head bent down. Suddenly he lifted it, and cast a glance at Elsie's drooping little figure.  
"I will come, I think."  
"Well, it is an engagement, then. I shall expect you. Come, Elsie, it is time for little children to be in bed."  
"It makes their eyes bright," laughed Knox, as happy Elsie went away.  
Angeline's arm was around her as she went up the stairs.  
"Dear, are you engaged to Mr. Knox?" she whispered.  
"No," answered truthful Elsie.  
"My love, my love, you must be more prudent."  
She opened the door of her room. Elsie followed her with a drooping head. "I must warn you, my child. Of course, Mr. Knox admires you very much; but men weary of a girl who shows her preference as openly as you do. If you want to marry this Mr. Knox—though they say he is poor—you must not follow him about so like a pet kitten. You must not sit at his feet and let him caress you so openly."  
"There was no one on the veranda," cried Elsie, her cheeks on fire. "Mr. Knox would not let me do anything that was wrong."  
Angeline laughed merrily.  
"You little simpleton! Well, I have warned you, and if he tires of you I shall not be to blame. Help me to take down my hair, Elsie; I have a dreadful headache."  
The trees were sparkling with ice at Linden Walks. A profuse rain had frozen upon the trees, and sheathed every branch and twig with silver. At the end of this sparkling drive the stately gray mansion stood, the drawing-room windows clothed with crimson silk and frosty lace, between which a woman's face looked out.  
A cold, covert face, with silken pale hair and agate-blue eyes—Angeline Wharton's. It was Christmas morning. Her guests had all arrived save one—and for that one she cared more than all the rest.  
No! Hubert Knox had not come, and in her dressing-room little Elsie was piling up her chestnut braids with a heavy heart. What did it matter that her beautiful rose pink dinner dress was done, and that she looked like Hobe herself in it? If it did not matter if all the rest of the world cried approval if his blue eyes did not look gratified.  
It was nearly twelve o'clock, and though she had a letter referring to his expected visit at Linden Walks, he had not arrived. Gradually, as the minutes went by, her heart sank in her bosom until it felt like lead.  
Suddenly a rapid wheel ground sharply up the drive. The driver sprang down and opened the carriage door, and a gentleman leaped out.  
Little Elsie turned from the window to the mirror. Her cheeks were as red as roses, and they matched so beautifully the pink silk. She was glad that it was done now, for the new-come was Mr. Hubert Knox.  
He was talking with Angeline in the drawing-room when she came down.  
"And Mr. Israel Wharton had no children?"  
The words were uttered by Mr. Knox in a casual manner, but a close observer might have discovered that he was in-

tently listening for the lady's reply. She began to look a little bored.  
"There was a runaway son, not of age. I never saw him, and Mr. Wharton did not remember him in his will. Elsie, dear, do you not see that Mr. Knox has come?"  
Elsie was waiting to give her heart to Hubert Knox. But she was at ease and happy as soon as she felt the clasp of his warm hand and looked into his face.  
Yet Elsie was hardly the confiding child she had been six weeks before. She had received still other hints and warnings from Angeline. But Knox did not understand. He missed her frank glee, and thought she seemed more womanly and less a child.  
But the old, care-free, confiding days were gone. Knox was grave and preoccupied, and Elsie felt the presence of a shadow which she could not dispel.  
Angeline was so beautiful! No longer she wore mourning, and the pale, half tint of widowhood. Her dinner dress, of azure silk, made her alluringly handsome. Constantly Knox talked with her.  
Was he fascinated by this nature woman, so much more his peer than she—foolish, adoring little thing? Did he dream of loving her—the heiress of Linden Walks?  
He remained at the old mansion four days. Elsie had certain duties to perform, and among these was the supervision of the sleeping rooms of the establishment.  
She was in Mr. Knox's chamber the next morning, giving the servant some instructions concerning it, when his foot sounded on the stairs, and he entered the apartment.  
At first he did not see her. He began walking the floor, his hands looked behind him, his head bent, evidently thinking. She put down the vase of chrysanthemums she held, and he turned toward her.  
"Elsie, are you here?"  
"Yes."  
"You said that Linden Walks was a beautiful place," he said, after a moment. "But I think it a very melancholy place, Elsie."  
"Is it because of the time of year?" said Elsie.  
"No, it is not that."  
"What is it, then?"  
"Perhaps I will tell sometime. Elsie, do you know where the key is to this cabinet?"  
It was an old Louis XIV. cabinet of ebony, with mosaic pictures upon the panels.  
"There is a bunch of keys in the housekeeper's room. I will go and get them."  
She came back with the string of keys, believing that he wanted to examine the quaint structure of the cabinet. But with an impetuous movement he received them, and applying them to the principal doors, unlocked aperture after aperture with a ready hand.  
Suddenly a hidden drawer emptied a letter into his hand. Elsie saw the superscription. It was "Rupert Wharton."  
Knox examined it eagerly, seeming quite unconscious, in his strange eagerness, of the wondering eyes of the girl beside him.  
"A message from the dead!" he murmured.  
His hands were shaking violently. To her amazement he broke the seal, glanced at its contents, and strode from the room.  
Amazed, puzzled, and half-frightened, Elsie hastily locked the cabinet, fearing less Angeline should discover the strange transaction.  
The guests of the previous day still remained at Linden Walks. But when they assembled at dinner, Mrs. Hubert Knox was not of their number, and no one knew where he had gone. A servant saw him go down the avenue, but he could not be found in the grounds, and the family were obliged to dine without him.  
In the afternoon the remainder of the guests went away, and Angeline and Elsie were alone in the drawing-room.  
"I have a delicate matter to explain, Elsie," said the former, "but it is best to frank. You must have noticed Mr. Knox's increasing attention to me. I have reason to believe that he will soon make me an offer of marriage; and I—well, I can afford to marry a literary man without fortune, and I adore talent. With you it is different. You must have a rich husband, Elsie. I have been thinking that for the present, to relieve the awkwardness of this affair, you would like to go home to your father's house."  
She paused.  
"By-and-by you could come back, you know, and I would do my best to get you well settled in life. What do you say?"  
"I will go home," answered Elsie, faintly.

The gathering twilight hid her pallor and trembling. She could not move to leave the room and her cruel cousin's presence just then, for the walls were swimming round and round her.  
"Mrs. Wharton," said a deep voice, "there is a third party to this little arrangement."  
Looking up, they saw his tall form leaning in the doorway.  
"I wish now to be known in my true character," he said, advancing into the room. "Please address me no longer by my literary name. I am Rupert Wharton, the runaway son of Israel Wharton; and, madam, to-day my suspicions have been verified. My father did not die by fair means."  
"How dare you thus insult me?" cried Angeline, angrily.  
"I have the proof!" he cried.  
"Proof?" she faltered.  
"Unmistakable?" he responded.  
There was a thud upon the velvet carpet. Elsie lay there senseless.  
"My little darling!" and Rupert Wharton bent over her.  
Angeline escaped from the room.  
In the confusion of finding the mistress absent, the next morning, Wharton drew Elsie aside.  
"She has gone for ever. She has fled, and this confirms my belief. Elsie, I dreamed to come to Linden Walks, which I left six years ago in childish anger. I should not have come but for your dear sake. But my father never would have cut me off penniless, Elsie, but for the wiles and plottings of that woman. She married the old man for his money, and then deprived him of his life by a slow insidious poison. He wrote to me in appeal, begging me to return to his relief, for he suspected the truth; but for some reason the letter never was posted. I found it yesterday in the ebony cabinet. Well, Elsie, she has gone, to save her life, for she is a cruel murderer. But she is of your blood, and you shall have a word in this. Shall we let her go?"  
"The law would have no mercy, Rupert?"  
"None!"  
"Pray let her go!"  
"As you say, my little Elsie."  
In two days more the mansion of Linden Walks was closed. Elsie White returned to the lumber but safer retreat of Fern Cottage, and Rupert Wharton went to London.  
But on the following Christmas the old mansion was all alive with the wit and wealth of the county, for Rupert Wharton's wedding dinner took place there, and little Elsie was his bride.

**WAR INDEMNITIES.**  
*How Much the Losers Have Had to Pay in Times Past.*  
Turkey is to pay 1,400,000,000 of rubles, besides 10,000,000 of rubles to compensate Russian residents in Constantinople for the losses during the war, and also to pay for the maintenance of prisoners of war; for the reopening of one of the most accessible mouths of the Danube, and for giving bonds to reimburse Russian holders of Turkish "promises to pay." Estimating the silver ruble at 75 cents of American money, the Russian merchants in Constantinople are "immediately" to receive \$7,500,000 in hard cash, and the war indemnity will amount to \$1,250,000,000. In lieu of cash payment (he who cannot pay in malt must pay in meal, saith the proverb), Russia is to obtain occupation, which means ownership, of territory in Armenia and on the borders of the Black Sea.  
These may seem to be, and are, very heavy demands, but can not be cited as unusual. There was a Russo-Turkish war which terminated in September, 1829, by a treaty under which Sultan Mahmoud II. had to pay \$4,000,000 as compensation to Russian merchants, and also \$25,000,000 in ten half-year installments of \$2,500,000 each, Russian troops to occupy the country until the uttermost farthing had been reimbursed, the whole left bank of the Danube being surrendered to the Muscovite invaders.  
There are yet further instances. Napoleon, during the whole of the First Empire, had paid one-half the general expenditure of France by pecuniary assessment on foreign countries. After Waterloo, settling day arrived, on which, by the treaty of Paris (Nov. 20th, 1815), France had to pay the large sum of \$307,000,000 to the foreign countries that had so been laid under contribution; also, having to pay, cloth, and entirely maintain a foreign army of occupation (150,000 men) for not less than three nor more than five years, under the command of Wellington, until the whole amount was paid.  
This is no isolated incident of the past. The principle which was acted upon, as here stated, at the close of the French war in 1815, and of the Russian war in 1828, was revived in 1864, when Prussia and Austria, having invaded Denmark, overpowered her numerical force and took from her the Duchies of Schleswig and Holstein, and exacted a large money payment to defray the expenses of the war. Still more recent was the exaction of five milliards of francs (\$1,000,000,000), by Prussia from France, as war indemnity in 1871, with the surrender of the Rhine provinces of Alsace and Lorraine. The money was paid in gold before the appointed day, and the provinces were annexed at once. The Franco-German war cost \$235,000,000, which, deducted from the \$1,000,000,000 of indemnity paid by France, leaves a clear profit of \$765,000,000. The cost of the war was \$1,855,000,000, without reckoning the money value of Alsace-Lorraine, estimated at \$865,000,000 more. War is a bad thing for the losers.

**Items of Interest.**  
The man who cuts across lots is a sort of cross-patch.  
There appeared in the trial of a recent case at Cleveland two Birds, a Partridge, a Peacock, a Rice and a Root.  
A sweet potato in a glass of water, in the sun, top left about quarter out of the water, will send out beautiful green vines.  
Some apparently single stars are found to be composed of four. Our sun is possibly a variable star to some other solar system.  
Three persons in the parish of Assumption, in Louisiana, killed nine thousand alligators, and sold their hides for seventy-five cents apiece.  
Jules Verne is right, Professor Ball says, in calculating that a body driven up from the earth with a force equal to six miles a second would not return.  
In the window of a shop in an obscure part of London is this announcement: "Goods removed, messages taken, carpets beaten, and poetry composed on any subject."  
Edison has perfected a fog-horn that can be heard ten miles, but when it comes to an invention for getting his hired girl up in the morning he smiles sadly and falls to musing on the infinite.  
A young apprentice to the shoe-making business asked his master what answer he should give to the often-repeated question, "Does your master warrant his shoes?" "Answer, Thomas," said the master, "that I warrant them to provide good, and if they don't I'll make them good for nothing."  
Estimating the population of the United States at 40,000,000, the total circulating medium—gold, silver and greenbacks—at \$1,100,000,000, and the true value of real and personal property at \$30,500,000,000, the communistic idea of an equal division would give each person \$27.50 in money and \$762.50 in property.  
The newboy polishes everything but himself, yet his ready answers cover a multitude of faults. Two newboys came to the counter. One of them put down ten cents and called for three papers. The other scoffed immediately, and remarked that he would be ashamed to buy only ten cents worth of papers. After this speaking, he magnificently put down twenty cents, and demanded papers for the whole amount. "Why," said the clerk, "you needn't talk; you are buying only twenty cents worth; that is scarcely more than ten cents." "It isn't, hey?" retorted the twenty-cent boy, "it's a hundred per cent. more!" The clerk said not another word.  
**The Sensations of Hanging.**  
Some time since, says an exchange, the American press was discussing the question: "Does it hurt a man to hang him?" The conclusion arrived at seemed to be that hanging was a painless death. Now some of the English magazines are speculating on the sensations of a hanged person, and they almost make out that hanging is rather a pleasurable and desirable operation. One person who was hung, to all intents and purposes, and afterwards revived, declared that he felt no pain, his only sensations were of fire before his eyes, which changed first to black and then to sky-blue. These colors are even a source of pleasure. A culprit who was revived when almost dead, complained that, having lost all pain in an instant, he had been taken from a light of which the charm defied description. Another criminal, who escaped through the breaking of the halter, said that, after a second or two of suffering, a light appeared, and across it a most beautiful avenue of trees. All agree that the uneasiness is quite momentary, that a pleasurable feeling succeeds, that colors of various hues start up before the eyes, and that these having been gazed at for a limited space, the rest is oblivion. If this is the case, murderers may regret the law that consigns them to a living tomb instead of treating them to an entertaining chromatic exhibition.  
**Storms and Gunpowder Explosions.**  
A correspondent of the Washington Star presents a long array of evidence that the burning of gunpowder in quantities is productive of local storms. He instances among others the following coincidences: During eight years past there has been a thunder storm at Washington every Fourth of July, and a very violent one is cited as occurring on the evening of that celebration about twelve years ago. During the civil war 86.6 per cent. of the battles are said to have been followed by storms. It is said that the storm producing power of burnt gunpowder might be used in advance of an attack, during war; and the weather bureau of the future may serve as a cloud-compelling Prospero, by organizing rain during hot periods in summer.