

come. Evening after evening he would drop in, and the hours used to slip by rapidly in pleasant conversation. Agnes of course kept us company, and when conversation flagged she would enliven us with a song or musical performances. It may be that brothers are sometimes blind and do not take note of circumstances which to others would be plain-speaking facts. It is certainly true that I was very much surprised when one morning Walter Graham called on me at the office and bluntly broke the business by saying, "Edwin, old fellow, I have come to ask your permission to marry Agnes. Do you grant it?" I stared at him utterly bewildered; he seemed to me like some sphinx' head clouded in mist; I knew him not; he was not a reality; he was a demon in a dream. The pen fell from my hand, my head fell on the desk and I burst into tears.

"Goodness!" he cried, "what is the matter?"

"Leave me," I was only able to mutter. How long I wept I know not, but when I felt myself somewhat composed it was approaching the time when I usually went home. I sent a note to Agnes stating that I was obliged to cross the river on business and might not be home till late. I did not dare trust myself meeting with her, and therefore went for a drive into the country alone, to the Indian village of Lorette. The whole way out the thought of Agnes's marriage was like a nightmare to me; I could not rid myself of the thought. I endeavored to direct my attention to business matters, but the sweet, gentle face of Agnes would come between me and such subjects till I felt almost crazy with the thought.

Arrived at the village, I descended to the large flat stone which lies at the foot of the falls and there remained, drowned amid the sounds of rushing waters, to think out the problem of Agnes. It may seem strange to the reader that my feelings should be so intense on the question of a sister's marriage; that the probability of such a separation must have, or should have, occurred to any one of sane mind. I frankly confess it never had; not for a moment had the idea of separation from Agnes presented itself. I still looked upon her as my

loving, dependent, child-sister, and her womanhood seemed to me an impossibility. She was still to me the little sister whom I had petted, taught and spoiled. From the horizon to high heaven hers was the only face which appeared to me; with every object of my life her destiny was entwined in mine; my imagination revelled not but in company with her being. But the bitter truth was now to be faced, and I brought my world wisdom to fight down the selfishness of my heart's affection. Had it been possible for me to set about such a cold-blooded transaction as to find a consort for my sister, my choice could not have been other than she had made. Walter Graham was noble, generous, free from the faults which generally detract from most young men, and able to give her a happy and comfortable home. Back through the moonlight I drove, more peaceably and resignedly than I had driven out. I let myself in by my latch-key, but Agnes met me at the head of the stairs. With a "God bless you!" and a convulsive embrace I left her to seek the solitude of my room. I slept little, but I rose and breakfasted with her, and I noticed that she, too, had experienced a severe struggle; but hers was tempered, no doubt, by her love for Walter—a love strong and pure as such a heart as hers could bestow.

There was no necessity for a long delay, and the marriage took place in a few weeks. During the ceremony I felt as if my only tie to earth was being severed, and after the bridal pair had left for a short tour I returned to my deserted home, weary, disconsolate and hopeless. My life work was now a routine of drudgery and formality.

They returned; how happy and fondlike was she! and Walter was the proudest and most devoted of husbands. My evenings were for the most part spent with them, and I began to recover from the blow which had fallen on me; and although I knew that the greater share of her love had gone to another, I began to feel a renewal of the old life and to feel happiness in their bliss.

The ice-bridge had taken opposite Quebec, and the immense sheet was smooth as a lake. For miles above and below the city the pure blue ice stretched beneath the