

unconsciously a wild look of suspicion leapt into her eyes.

Mrs. Haslam did not fail to catch her meaning.

At times the mind has the faculty of compressing by a great effort, in one moment all the incidents of a life-time into a panoramic like re-enactment. So it is that a drowning man in a flash of time, sees all the sins of his life marshalled in legions before his mental eye.

A like re-enactment of the incidents of her life had flashed before Mrs. Haslam and she replied:

"You are so good to me dear. I appreciate it, too. I can see it all now, Evelyn! All the mistakes I have made since Ken left us; yes all the mistakes in my whole life. So my boy had to come back to be my teacher, to guide my feet into the right path.—But look child, it is quite dark, did you not notice it?" She jerked out irrelevantly, springing nervously to her feet as she spoke. Taking Evelyn's arm she started for the house.

On reaching the garden gate she turned and gazed back at the unfinished altar a moment, then dropping the girl's arm retraced her steps and knelt before it.

When she returned to Evelyn, bright lines of contentment on her face were in conflict with the dark lines of trouble.

Evelyn glanced at her changing face with relief.

The mother threw her arm about the girl exclaiming:

"You poor dear, I have been so selfish in my sorrow; I know you have suffered too—but dear will you forgive me now my past selfishness!"

"Mrs. Haslam I have nothing to forgive in you! You have been very kind to me. I continually strive to remember that we are only two among multitudes of bereaved ones. So it does not seem quite so hard to me."

During Mrs. Haslam's and Evelyn's absence Mr. Haslam had come in from outdoors and inquired for his wife and Evelyn. No one knew whither they had gone. Accordingly he proceeded to light his pipe, search out his favorite magazine and settle himself to read. Soon however he began musing on the absence of his wife and Evelyn. Where could they be? They were not accustomed to going for walks after dark, and besides, since Ken's leaving home Mrs. Haslam had shut herself up, going nowhere, not even among her most intimate friends.

In the midst of the man's questioning thoughts the objects of his concern returned.

"Where have you two been? I've been growing anxious about you!" And with the exclamation he had thrown down both magazine and pipe.

A weak feeling and a terrible fear engulfed the mother's heart as she thought "I must tell him about it."

For a moment the man did not observe his wife's drooping enervated countenance. Then as she sank wearily into the nearest chair without replying he noticed her, and was instantly seized with panicky anxiety: "Margaret, Margaret what is it? Are you terribly ill?"

She laid a silencing hand on his arm and faltered:

"Calm yourself, Henry—no I'm not ill—and I'll endeavour to tell you all."

So amid many breaks and sobs and tears she related the story from the beginning of her resolution made in the house to the son's appearance and message to her. When she reached the point dealing with her son's coming to her, the father's control gave way and for a long time he sat his lips dumbly framing his son's name.

As turning the light of reflection inward upon a sore point in one's life but aggravates it, so it was that Margaret and Henry Haslam every moment of every day focused the keenest light of their reflections on their loss, till as the days dragged into the weeks and the weeks into the months that loss had attained in their eyes, to the vastness of a world tragedy. And the light from their selfish reflections had shrivelled and burned all their feelings for others into ashes; and now they sat down in their mental ruin and material wealth and lifted not a finger to help those "other boys" live.

Already Ken's short message to his mother had been sufficient to fan the charred coals of love for others in her heart, into a lambent flame which gave promise of becoming a bright and steady light.

But the thought of helplessness had not as yet been reborn in the father's heart; and he moaned again and again:

"Oh Margaret, to think that our own

Ken died from neglect inevitable because we ourselves failed to do our duty." And each exclamation served to engulf him in a hurricane of emotion.

At length Mrs. Haslam said:

"Henry, please calm yourself. We are not left without a great hope. I clearly see not mounds, but illimitable hills of happiness springing up in our lives. Yes and more than that, I see the smile of God mirrored upon those hills of happiness and its light reflected in our hearts. Yet I have not told you quite all: I dedicated myself and my all at Ken's altar to the work of relieving wounded Canadian men. What little I can do I will do. For my one son's life I shall endeavour to restore twenty others. Ken's place in my heart shall be filled with love for the motherless men from the battlefields. Henceforth this shall be my work and my monument of remembrance to our Ken."

In the silence that followed the father still sat like one stupefied. Nevertheless his wife's words of hope were seeping themselves in. After some time he said:

"Yes you were right in your consecration. I never thought of it that way before, but I'm beginning to see it plainly now. We have been most inhumanly selfish in our grief, allowed it to bury our better selves. We have forgotten the part we should have acted in the life drama, and consequently we have miserably failed where we should have succeeded. So Ken had to come back to be our prompter."

"Yes, Henry, we've slept at our work long enough; we must strive to make up for our past failures."

"Yes," continued her husband following his own particular thought, "Ken's ideals while we admired them, yet they have not permeated our lives. His whole thought was for others, we have thought only of ourselves,—to the exclusion of everything else; absolutely forgetting the thousands of other homes in our land as equally shattered as ours."

A wild song of happiness was singing in her heart as she recognized a spirit of helpfulness beginning to leaven her husband's mind.

And the man when once fairly started upon his self analysis continued to mount in intensity the scathing invectives against himself.

"Margaret I've lived a cowardly life—yes cowardly. I've always sort of congratulated myself on myself. Now I'm sure I was mistaken. I've lived a coward's life. Ken forgot himself even unto death, while I rested in craven idleness. But thank heaven it's not too late to right about face."

"Oh no," interposed the mother, "no! it's not so terrible as all that. We didn't realize what we were doing. Let us forget our past; cast our failures behind us and live only in the present, and for the future."

"Yes, and let us begin at once," fervently responded the father.

The mother rose saying: "Come let us go out to Ken's altar and confirm our consecration there."

So they passed out to the mound of stones shining beaconlike beneath the moon.

As they neared the altar the father paused:

"Margaret, I feel we are treading on holy ground."

"Yes, Henry, it is holy ground." She took his hand and they knelt beside the altar.

Then a long deep silence fell on them. The air was as warm and humid with dew as a night in July. The soft yearning calls of the night birds were hushed in the worshipful silence.

At length the sacred quietness among the hills was parted by the voice of the father in prayer. A prayer for forgiveness; a prayer of consecration to his God, to mankind and to his king.

When they rose from the altar the crushing grief that had lain with such a stifling pall over their hearts seemed to have been lifted by an invisible hand and borne away; the jangling chords of their existence modulated into perfect harmony. So they passed into their home a new man and a new woman.

Another September month of aureate splendor had come, and down through the foothills rolled a motor car of people on their way to Kenelm Lodge, a home for returned soldiers.

"What a beautiful sight," exclaimed one of the occupants of the car, "that rambling yellow bungalow I mean, for

returned boys—and boys who have no other home which they may truly call their own. It is so charming and so peaceful out here. The lodge itself seems like an essential element of the golden smile that is always upon these hills. I just pray that I'll be able to sing better at their concert than I've ever before sung."

"It may not be such a wonderful treat for them to hear good music, Edith, because you know their foster parents frequently engage troops of entertainers and singers from the city to amuse those men;—but one never tires of good music, so sing your very best."

"Yes," returned the first speaker, "and just to think that this rancher and his

wife who had so much to give, had never before given anything. Their only son had to be taken before that home of beauty flowered in that lovely spot. Now they spill all the luxuries their money can buy over those twenty maimed boys that home shelters for life."

"Yes it is all so fine!" returned her companion.

At that moment they drew up at the lodge and Mrs. Haslam came out, with the pleasant informal manner of all westerners, to greet them.

And Margaret Haslam! Can that sun-beam face belong to the same woman who a short year before had looked like a doomsday cloud. But mothering the boys had wrought it.

Laddie Jr. and the Loon

By Bonnycastle Dale

LOOKEE!" screamed Laddie Jr. "It's the Loon!" For weeks, ever since the great ice shove had cleared Rice Lake, in April, we had hunted all along the shores and bays, the drowned lands and marshes, for the nest of the pair of loons that nightly called about our island—called, indeed, many a time I stilled my very heart beats, if that were possible, to listen to the echoing wild call, always fearing I heard that dreadful word "help!"



A baby Loon.

with which we poor sons of man cry out when in the water struggling for our lives. No! every time I could drop back on my hard pillow and say, "Only the loons," and get away to the "Land of Nod" again.

We had so thoroughly searched every tiny cove and muskrat hummock, every flag filled bay and rarer dry rush-edged bog with never a result, that this day I was paddling steadily past the southern edge of Rainy Bog when the lad in the bow cried "Look!" Even then it took a trained eye to see the big bird on the nest. He thought we were going right past the tiny bay, and he stretched his long neck, and white striped and checkered body, out flat like a long black and white and grey and green snake—I just had time to raise the camera to snap him when he decided he was seen, and that we were going to stop, and off he splashed in a shower of spray and dived and swam out beneath us.

"Well! wouldn't that rattle your canoe!" broke out Laddie Jr., "to see that big bird fool itself into believing it was hidden when it was stretched out like a big white and black flag all over the bog—I just wonder what those big 'longe' thought of that diver, eh?"

As that thought struck me I wondered too. You see the Maskinonge were coming in along the bog edge to later spawn in the shallow water, and the great pair finning and balancing there had splashed wildly away as our long green, log-like canoe, with paddles waving like arms, came along. What did they do when this great white looking bird, with its legs kicking and its great wings waving along (not so great as they would be if they used them more—remember that our descendants will see the loon and the grieve totally unable to fly on account of them nearly always swimming and very rarely flying)? I do not think the big spawning Maskinonge would attack the loon. I know they

would attack and catch and eat baby loon and ducks and grieve, but this old chap was too big—anyhow I am not going to do any of that mawkish writing telling you a fairy story about what I think it did—for the loon emerged just a couple of hundred yards out, and filled his lungs good and full, and told all the countryside for a couple of miles around just what he thought of us anyway; and the more cowardly female joined him at this moment and added her testimony to his that we were very bad medicine indeed.

The nest was exposed, no effort having been made to cover the eggs, as the grieve do—in fact, in all my travels I have never seen a male or female loon cover the eggs or leave them covered. One big olive green, buff and red spotted egg, lay on the wet billfuls of weeds the pair had gathered, the weight of their bodies and the careful nipping, tucking work of their bills, had made a fair nest.

"Take the picture; all the people will think we are murdering something by the row," laughed Laddie.

I snapped the nest, just as the lad had lifted the egg up in his hand, then off we swung to picture the big birds, but they would not come within fifty yards of us, and I never picture them more than three away; so we paddled off and left them for that day.

A heavy nor'-wester with rain was blowing next day and the day after, the big waves breaking right onto the bog where the nest was, and we wondered greatly how even that great water bird, the male, could sit out and keep the precious egg warm, as he was completely covered with flying spray and drenched

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