

The End of The Story.

The editor pro tem of the County Journal sat gloomily in his office, frowning heavily and biting viciously at his mustache.

Things stood in his way. The editor in chief had been called hastily away, leaving Hugh Elliott in charge; and as that young man was ambitious, this had been much to his delight.

Before leaving, the editor had placed before Hugh the matter to be used in the next issue, including the conclusion of a story begun the previous week. This story it was which had proved the snare to Hugh.

On looking over it he discovered to his dismay, that the final pages were missing. He had looked for them anxiously, but in vain—none the confusion about the desk. The story could not be left unfinished, neither could he take it upon himself to substitute another. Suddenly his brow cleared, and a good natured smile lit upon his face.

"Ha, the country's saved!" he exclaimed. "I'll write an end to the hanged thing myself."

Brushing aside the cluttering papers, he placed what there was of the "hanged thing" before him.

He laughed to himself as his ever too ready sense of the ridiculous caught the humor of the situation.

Evidently the personages in the story were approaching a crisis. The characters who seemed to be most prominent were a tall, dark man and a short, light one; a beautiful young lady and a peculiar personage named No-mo King, who seemed to be treated by all with exceedingly familiarity.

Hugh pondered over the situation and vainly endeavored to find the natural ending of it all. He had not read the first part, and concluded himself by hoping that very few others had. It occurred to him to read it now, but as luck would have it, a copy of the last issue was not at hand, and he did not take the trouble to look one up, thinking, gloomily, that quite likely it wouldn't be any help if he had it; and then too, he thought longingly of the club grounds.

Things went swimmingly now. Each character made several high-sounding remarks and went off the stage. The beautiful young lady had a pathetic interview with the light man, in which they resolved to part. The tall, dark man, who was no doubt the villain, as Hugh reasoned and, of course, no story was complete without one, made some malicious remarks about retribution and vengeance, and bowed himself off with all the smiles and grace that accomplished villains are supposed to possess. Then No-mo King sang a touching song and ended the whole thing with a general remark on the vanity of life, and the story closed, leaving the heroine in a swoon.

The manuscript, thus artificially completed, was handed in with the other materials for the next issue of the Journal, and then Hugh put the desk in order, and much flattered by his success as an author, started for the club grounds.

The paper came out on time with every department up to its usual standard of excellence. Hugh read his part production with great delight and was congratulating himself on having so successfully gotten out of a hole, as he expressed it, when the unexpected happened in that peculiar way it has of doing.

The unexpected in this case came in the shape of a young lady, who walked into the office the day after the paper came out and demanded of Mr. Elliott to see the editor.

Hugh was not unaccustomed to the sight of young ladies; neither was he accustomed to such a peculiar mingling of chills and apprehension and thrills of admiration as he experienced when this particular young lady appeared on the scene.

She was a sweet-faced girl, in a dainty toilet of pink tulle suited her brown eyes and hair to perfection. But, in those same brown eyes was an ominous look that called into existence the chills of apprehension which he was also forced to acknowledge.

"I regret to say the editor is out of town," replied Hugh, courteously, and most truthfully.

"Indeed, and may I ask who is taking his place?"

Here the chills of apprehension rose high in the ascendant, as the "coming event cast its shadows before."

"I have the honor," he answered, wishing heartily all the honor there was in it belonged to anybody else.

"Then it is you I have to thank for so altering the story published yesterday that even its author can scarcely recognize it. May I ask you consider your alterations an improvement?"

This was, then, as he had guessed, the author of that unending story.

"I must explain," he said. "You see, the last pages of the manuscript were missing. Unfortunately, I had not read the first part of the story, being so rushed (with tennis though it was not necessary to explain that), and so had to guess at the ending. I am exceedingly sorry about it, but it could not be found, and there was nothing else to do. Any amendments that can be made will be done most gladly, I assure you."

"You are very kind. What amendments do you propose?"

"Well," said Hugh, with a desperate attempt to defend his course; "you know frequently the most popular writers nowadays end their stories tragically. As I have had no experience in that line, I thought I would probably come nearest right to follow their lead, having no idea of the correct ending. But, to speak of the story itself, was not the light man th-

hero, and the dark one the villain—that is, the offending party?"

"Certainly not. The light man was the only brother of the heroine, and there was no villain, as you call it, in the story. The dark man was her betrothed. And as to it being the fashion for stories to end sad I believe in love stories ending in the right way."

"Oh so do I," Hugh hastened to say. "And I sincerely regret my mistake. But surely I did not do wrong to let the character No-mo King—make the concluding remarks? From the part he played throughout I judged he would be likely to do something to point at the end."

"Oh, did you? Well he was the dog."

"Great Caesar!" exclaimed Hugh, and then that irrepressible sense of humor asserted itself, and he burst into a ringing laugh.

"Oh, I do beg your pardon. I am sure I'm heartily sorry for my part in this thing," he said with such an honest patient sound in his voice that she could but believe him. "And if there is any reparation I can make believe me, it shall be done. Shall I explain in the next issue, or will you not send the lost sheets if you have the copy?"

"No," she answered stiffly, moving toward the door. "I'm sure you have done quite enough. I will not give you any further trouble about it. Good morning."

"But, indeed," he said, anxiously, "it would be a pleasure to do anything you wish, if you will only command me."

She did not answer, and Hugh opened the door for her, wretchedly conscious of a feeling of utter incapacity to cope with the situation.

He sat down in the editorial chair after she was gone and meditated on his sins.

"I was a regular brute," he said, fiercely, jumping up so violently that the dignified editorial chair went spinning around like a top.

But some way he must gain her forgiveness. He did not know her name, nor, in fact, anything about her except—well, nothing but that he hoped he would see her again, and then he would find a way.

The day of the tennis tournament came, and came gloriously. Hugh Elliott passed his hour and thither at various calls, in all the glory of a white duck suit; now wielding a racket instead of the editorial pen.

Just as the game was being called, and the places allotted, he caught sight of a dainty figure, in white this time, which he recognized at once. It was his divinity of the brown eyes.

She was chatting with some of his friends, the Engles, and Tom Engle, the rascal, was hovering around her with all the assurance and gaudy of which he possessed such a generous store.

"Tom always was a lucky dog," said Hugh angrily, while his wrath rose high against himself as he recalled the scene in the office.

Anyhow, here was a chance to show that there was at least one thing he could do well, and he vowed that he would make a brave fight on this occasion. Tom Engle also took his place on the field, and the fight was soon in earnest.

For two hours, with slight intermission, the battle raged. Hugh knew in his heart that he was playing superbly, and he felt, too, that the maiden in white was not totally oblivious to his fine strokes.

When the closing game was called Hugh found himself with Tom Engle as one of his opponents. The four players were well matched, and Hugh knew that this last game would be no trifling matter. To make it still more trying, he observed that the little party with which Tom had been, including the brown-eyed girl, had approached their court to watch the game and the result.

When the prizes were awarded Hugh Elliott received the first gentleman's prize, a gold scarf pin in the shape of a ball and a quilt tied with the club colors.

Tom Engle was the first to congratulate Hugh on his victory, which he did with out the slightest appearance of discontent.



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"And now come meet my cousin," he said. "Nice girl. Going to be here the rest of the summer. Have been looking for you for two or three days to have you come around."

And Tom was leading him away, with the flash of victory still animating his face, when suddenly without any premonition again those horrible chills of apprehension overtook him, but this time unaccompanied by any thrills of admiration.

For, entering the club grounds and heading straight for them, was Mr. Page, the editor in chief of the Journal, who, having just returned, was anxious to consult with Hugh as to his success, and rightly guessed this was the place to find him. Thus, just as the young man approached the ladies, he came up, and, knowing Tom well, was presented also.

"Mr. Page ladies, and Mr. Elliott, the champion of the day, and my ruthless conqueror. My cousin, Miss Ruth, Somers, and my sisters you already know."

Hugh bowed with mingled feelings of pleasure, embarrassment and pride; but there was a hint of their late unpleasant meeting in the few words with which Ruth greeted him.

"I congratulate you on your victory, Mr. Elliott," she said; "you played magnificently."

"Thank you; I am glad there is one thing I can do in a civilized manner," he answered, with a significance which she only understood.

Others soon joined the group, and Mr. Page took the first opportunity to ask Hugh about the paper.

"I hope you had no trouble during my absence," he said.

"Not especially," replied Hugh, hesitatingly, and knowing full well that every word could not but be overheard by Miss Somers. "There were some few matters not quite as I had expected. You have seen the paper, of course?"

"Yes, and I am glad you got it out on time. Everything seemed to be up to the usual mark. There was, however, just one thing that somewhat surprised me. That was the story concluded from last week. It struck me as being—well, rather involved toward the end."

"I regret that it was," replied Hugh, and I am to blame for that. Unfortunately there had to be a slight alteration toward the end on account of an accident; that is, some of the concluding pages were missing."

"Missing?" exclaimed Mr. Page. "You don't say so. Well, how did you manage it?"

"Oh, I played author myself," answered Hugh, with a grim smile. "I regret the result was no better."

"What, my dear boy you wrote the end? Why, you're a treasure, a jewel! I thought you capable, of course, but scarcely thought you equal to that, not being in your line. I'm thinking of looking up a successor for some time in the future, and am glad to know where I may let my mantle fall."

"It was abominable," here Hugh could not help but put in his endeavors to say the right thing from two points of view proving a serious task. "I'd rather fix up everything else on the paper than do another story. I know, besides, that the writer will never forgive me, which makes it worse."

"Oh, was there any unpleasantness?" asked Mr. Page, hastily. "Of course we don't want anything of that kind. Authors are very touchy and don't make a good deal of trouble sometimes."

Hugh's face had fallen decidedly during these last remarks, and he saw that he stood a poor chance of advancement if his chief knew how very unsatisfactory to the author his conclusion to the story had been. But Miss Somers also had caught the hint and now turned a charming face to Mr. Page.

"Indeed, Mr. Page," she said, sweetly, "you said you would leave it to me to judge, and I assure you Mr. Elliott's part of the story was charming, and so like the up-to-date story. I must say I was exceedingly interested in reading it myself, and feel sure the author will make no complaints. More than likely the writer forgot to send the manuscript complete, anyhow. Authors are so careless. I think Mr. Elliott is owed a good chance of advancement for his ability."

"So be it, then," agreed Mr. Page, cheerfully, and walked away, leaving the two young people stranded together at some distance from their party, which had moved on during the conversation.

By a mutual impulse, as soon as Mr. Page was gone, they glided furtively at each other, and what each saw in the other's face must have been reassuring, for, with out more ado, both immediately dropped their dignity and broke into such a hearty, good natured laugh at the turn the whole thing had taken that it would have been impossible after that to regain their distance, and made them feel like old acquaintances at once.

"Do you remember what you said to me the first time I ever saw you?" he asked, without further preliminaries.

"I said a lot of things, didn't I? Some hateful ones."

"Never mind them. But you said, too, that you believed in love stories ending the right way. I'm thinking of a case where your ending could be used beautifully."

"But I thought you liked two endings like one of Rudyard Kipling's stories, and I believe you couldn't think of any more Mr. Elliott might do for one, supposing there was such a case, and—"

"Let us suppose such a case. Go on."

"Well, yours might do for the other, and you might have No-mo to sing. See; here he is."

"Oh, bother No-mo!"

"And the heroine swooning, and the villain—that was what you called my hero. I believe—"

"In this story I'm thinking of, the villain and the lover are one, so one ending would be enough."

"It seems to be rather involved, too,"

"Then let me untangle it, Ruth, and,

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I knew what I was about it was necessary for me to have ginger root to chew on as it is for a tobacco chewer to have tobacco. Its stimulating effect had become a need I had to meet, and as soon as I felt the force of the habit I proceeded to break myself of it. I did it, as any bad habit almost may be got rid of but I want to tell you it was no easy job, and if you doubt me just you throw that away you have and try going without it for a week."

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It is predicted that the match making industry will be entirely revolutionized by this new method. The matches are very much lighter, and are thought to be more reliable than the old sort. Paper of various kinds will be employed, that made from wood pulp being better adapted for this purpose.

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Nellie—I know that I am not perfect. I realize that I have my faults.

George—Yes that's so Nellie (indignantly)—I have, oh? I like to know what they are. Just name one.

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