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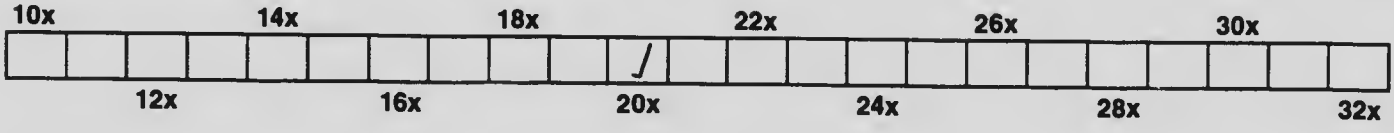


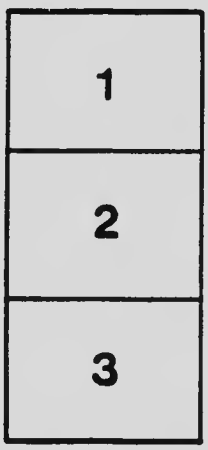


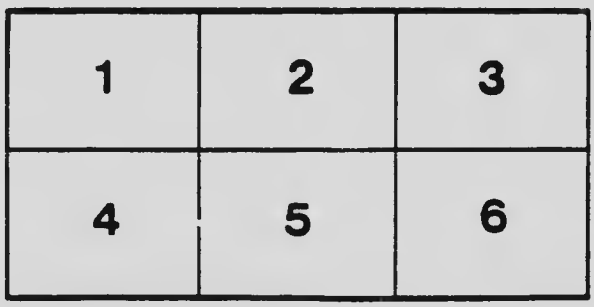

ST. JOHN RIVER, WOODSTOCK, N.B.

# TALES OF THE ST. JOHN RIVER

AND OTHER STORIES

BY

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WILLIAM [illegible]
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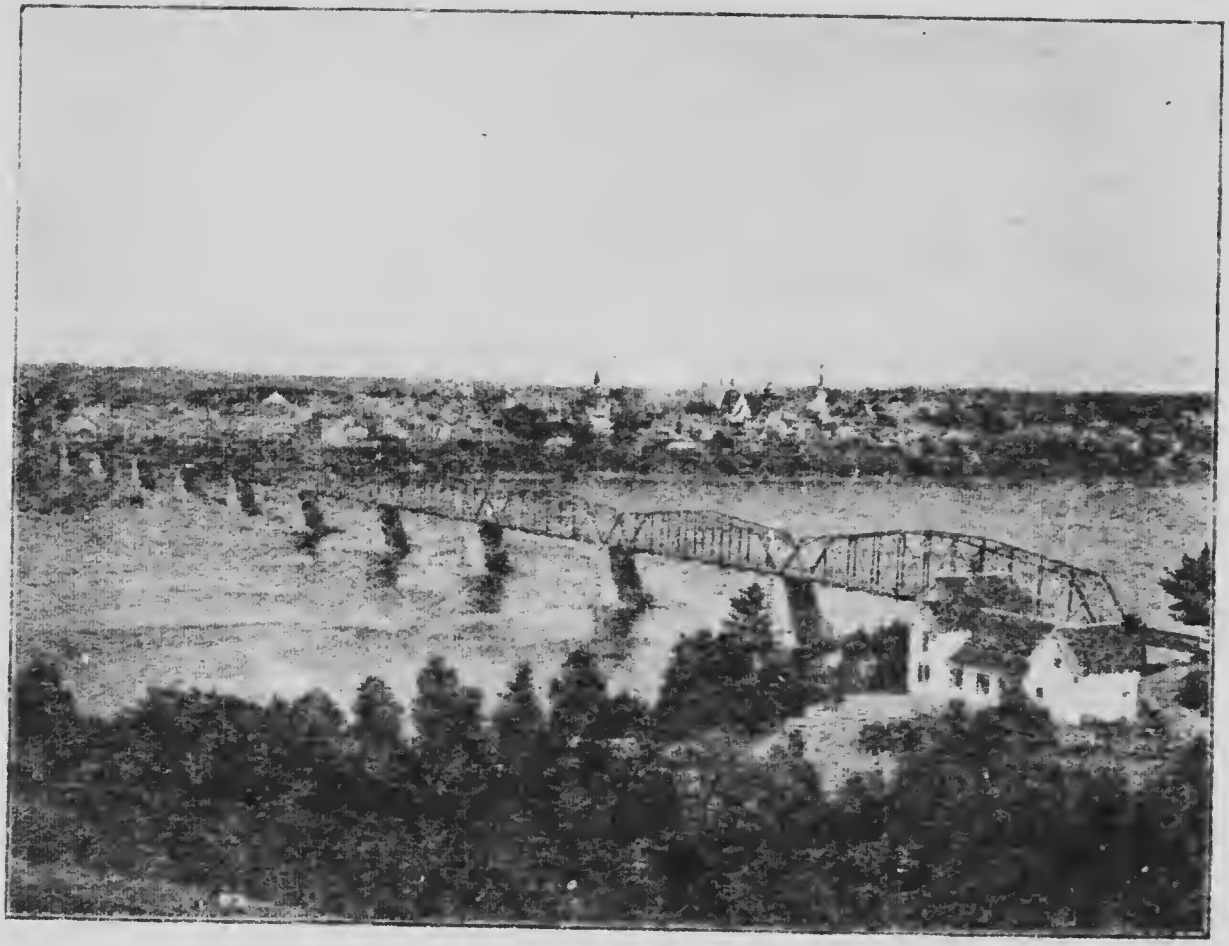

ST. JOHN RIVER, WOODSTOCK, N.B.

# TALES OF THE ST. JOHN RIVER

## AND OTHER STORIES

By

ERNEST S. KIRKPATRICK

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TORONTO:
WILLIAM BRIGGS
1904

To My Mother

# PREFACE

IN entrusting this volume to "the little mercy of men," the writer is aware of the fact that those who read these stories but for the sake of criticising them will find ample opportunities for so doing. A number of years have elapsed since they were begun, and the writer had no thought for a long time that they would ever be read by any one save himself, as the work was done merely as a pastime. If there are those who—overlooking the defects—may find within these pages anything of sufficient interest to hold their attention during an idle hour, the writer will feel well repaid.

E. S. KIRKPATRICK.

WOODSTOCK, N.B., May 2 1904.

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# THE MAD FERRYMAN.

# TALES OF THE ST. JOHN RIVER.

## THE MAD FERRYMAN.

ON the noble river St. John, in New Brunswick, which rolls in majesty through some of the fairest land in a fair country, the traveller may behold many things of startling beauty.

Many are the tales told by the winter's fireside of the experiences through which some of its early settlers have passed, and legends abound by the score. It is not, however, to fiction that we have need to look for many things of interest concerning its past, as when we hear the truths which those who possess them are frequently loath to disclose, we learn a history that is not of common occurrence.

A business venture made it necessary for me, during a summer twelve years ago, to cross this

river very frequently at a point where there was an old wire ferry. The same ferry has been in use now for I know not how many years. I crossed on it only a short time ago, and it does not seem to have changed. It and its surroundings are the same, and the only thing new is the face of the ferryman.

The ferryman, however, whom I knew in that summer long ago, I can never forget. What a strange man he was! Some called him mad, some sullen, a few called him a fool. He was judged by all, and by none judged rightly. I, too, judged him, and I alone among all who did, am now able to do so justly; but all who know him will, when his secret is known, say with me that he was sadly misunderstood.

How little it was to be expected that I should ever learn his secret. I knew that he had one. I knew that he was neither sullen nor crazy, but I believed that he was broken-hearted, and something prompted me to attempt to draw his secret from him.

I had studied him carefully for three months, and he was still to me the same enigma as at the beginning, when the morning came on which he told me

all. It is as vivid as if it had been but yesterday, though twel years have since passed away. It was an early summer morning. The air revelled in fragrance. The majestic grandeur seemed to possess more fully than usual the noble river, and stretching away to the virgin forest lay the misty meadows on either bank.

I remember the very words with which he began. He came and stood before me, and giving me that deep, unfathomable look of his, abruptly said:

"Do you know what it means to be a soldier? If so, you know what sentry-duty is. To be a sentry alone at night upon the field of battle, or in the face of an unseen enemy, calls for a degree of courage that is not possessed by all. And yet the lonely sentry at night is not alone. He knows that, though unseen, a brother sentry is on either hand and probably within call; and that his supports and reserves are not far distant, and will soon relieve him. I have been a soldier, and I know whereof I speak; but I am now doing sentry-duty in such loneliness as no dark night upon a battle-field can equal, and without relief, or the hope of relief. There," pointing to the river, "is my beat; and I

am guarding a treasure that, to me, is greater than the crown of England."

With this we pushed off from shore, and I noticed that he had let the guiding-ropes of the ferry out to their full extent, allowing the float to drop down river twenty or more feet below its usual course. As we moved slowly along he continued his strange conversation:

"I know that some call me crazy," he said, "and that I am often spoken of as the 'mad ferryman.' I do not think I am mad, as yet, but I am afraid that I may become so, and I want help and advice, and know not to whom to go. You have been studying me for some time, but at the same time I have been studying you, and I believe I can trust you. Will you swear to me to help me, and to guard my secret as you would your own soul?"

Looking into that appealing face I readily gave my promise and he then turned away, and bending over the side of the float, gazed earnestly into the water.

When half way over the river he swung the float about until it stopped, and going again to the side of it, he beckoned me to him by pointing to the

water below where he stood. I looked where he directed, and there, lying on a sandbar in that clear, pure water, about four feet deep at that point, was the body of a beautiful girl.

I say "beautiful," for, looking at her through that crystal water, with her head pillowed on white sand, and her face partially turned from us, she looked as though she were but asleep. No disfiguring touch seemed to have marred her face, which looked as white and pure as the sand on which it lay; and the early morning sun, shining on her golden hair, caused it to gleam with a beauty that is indescribable. Abruptly in front of the body, arose above the surface of the water an immense rock about ten feet in length, that looked like a huge monument erected to her memory and served as a warning to boatmen to keep away from the treasure that it guarded. Around her shoulders and feet were ropes, attached to several heavy stones, to keep the body from floating away.

"There lies my dread secret," said he. "I buried her there at her own request. She died in my arms, crossing on this boat, three months ago. The man for whom she left me I sometimes curse and some-

times pity. I think he meant to be true to her, but whether he was or not she was not able to tell me if she would.

"I do not remember a time when I did not love her. We played together as children and shared each other's childish secrets. I thought that we must have been made for each other, and there was never a cloud to shake that belief until he appeared. I was even looking forward to the time when we might be married, and, though only a common ferryman, I had saved some money and had a sweet home in view.

"He pretended that he was rich and could give her all that the world had to offer. He declared that he loved her as no other could possibly love, and, poor girl, she believed him. She left me for him and they went away together. She went to conquer the world, to grasp some of life's gifts he said should be hers for the asking. She went with high hopes, and, after two years, there she lies.

"She told me, however, with her latest breath, that her life was not a failure, for her final ambition was realized, and that was to have strength to reach

me before she died; and on a dark night three months ago I found her waiting at the ferry, and the strength that somehow had brought her that far then forsook her. I carried her on board and pushed off from shore. She said she knew her time had come, and begged of me that she might be buried in the river as close to the ferry's course as possible without being noticeable to anyone in crossing, and that no one might ever know she had returned.

"A violent hemorrhage seized her and she died there in my arms. I stopped the ferry just above where we now are, and let it drop down river as far as the ropes would allow. How I spent the night I know not; but I remember as day was breaking I buried her where she now lies.

"At that time the water was at least ten feet deep on this bar; but this has been a very dry summer, and the river has become so low that I am almost crazy with the thought that she must soon be discovered. The danger is greatest in the early morning, when the rising sun shines upon the body; for, during the remainder of the day she is in the shadow of the rock, and is then not so noticeable.

"You may wonder that the body should be so well preserved after lying in the water so long, but it has not been entirely a surprise to me. I have known for a long time that beside this rock there was a bubbling spring, and have often in the past, when the water was warm in summer, lowered a bucket here and found the water to be icy cold. It may or it may not possess other properties than this, but I thought if she were buried here the body would be better preserved than at any other place, and I find I have not been mistaken."

When he had finished speaking we gazed on that cold form a long while in silence, and finally he looked at me and, with an expression I shall never forget, said simply, "What shall I do?"

I told him that while he was right in trying to respect her wishes, still she could not remain there in that manner. There was constant danger of discovery from some passing boatman, and for many other reasons some change must be made.

As it was not possible for us to do anything further then, we continued our journey across the river; and after a long discussion we finally decided

to procure a metal coffin and have the body hermetically sealed within. I agreed to undertake to get one for him, and one night soon after, when the coffin had arrived at the nearest railway station, I got an express team and drove there for it. My friend was anxiously awaiting me at the ferry on my return; and in the darkness of the night, with no other witnesses than the stars overhead, we raised the body, and sealing it within the casket, returned it to its resting-place.

As I said before, that was twelve years ago, and the body is still there. My friend kept faithful guard; sometimes throughout the night, and always the whole day long, he never ceased his patrol. When the ice and snow of winter came he then felt that his secret was safe, and would go away for a time.

For some years I have been living in a town distant from that spot, and two years ago, during the winter, I had a visit from my strange friend. He came all that way to make of me a request, and that was that, if possible, when he died I would see that he was buried beside his early playmate. He

went into all the details as to how he had planned it out. He said that he had, even then, a metal coffin put away in his solitary home for me to use.

I promised to carry out his request, dreading the charge, yet resolved to be faithful to my trust; and only six months later, when summer had again come, I received a message to come to him, as he was dying. I took with me a trusty servant, and we got there in time to receive his last message. He told us, and also his friends, that I was to be given entire charge of his body, without interference on anyone's part, to dispose of as I wished.

We were left alone that night with the body—my servant and I—and sealing it within the metal coffin we bore it on a hand-truck to the ferry.

We buried him beside her whose untimely end had wrecked his life and shortened his days; and there in those peaceful waters,

> "Side by side, in the nameless graves,
> The loves are sleeping."

I said I had visited this spot just a short time ago. I went to satisfy myself that my secret was safe, and

found that the shifting sand had so covered the coffins that they are now almost invisible. Were it not for that fact, and that now they are not likely to be disturbed, I think that I should apply for a position as ferryman, and patrol the river as my friend did himself for so many years.

# A TOBIQUE GUIDE.

# A TOBIQUE GUIDE.

JACK HASTINGS and I were college chums. I hardly know why it was so, as he always had a host of friends and an abundance of money, while I had neither. It must have been due to the law that "like repels and unlike attracts." He was the most good-natured, genial, dissipated and indolent fellow I ever knew, and how it was that he ever acquired sufficient energy to induce him to study medicine I often wondered, but did not discover the reason for a long time.

Jack was an orphan, and to his knowledge did not have a relative in the world. His home had been in New York, where his mother, who had since died, had by patient effort during his youth driven him to acquire an education. I have often thought that that must have been responsible for her death —but did not tell him so—as no one could long stand the strain of keeping him at anything that involved mental application.

It is not a desirable thing for a young man to be left alone in the world without friends or money; but it is worse for one to be left when young with a fortune to waste in dissipation, and to be petted and flattered on every side by society, without having a will strong enough or a head level enough to withstand the temptations that surround him.

When Jack was twenty-two years of age he one day awoke to the fact that he had fallen in love. Up to that time, since leaving school, his only occupation had been that of "killing time," and in the carrying out of this lofty ideal he one day accepted an invitation from a friend to attend the closing exercises of a young lady's college, in the course of which he received a shock that aroused him as nothing had ever done before.

The valedictorian, Ruth Burnside, a young lady with noble purpose shining from her face, was impressing upon her class-mates the necessity, in order to make life worth living, of an earnest striving after the noblest and highest ideals; and that they alone—whether they were rich or poor—were true to themselves and their Creator who strove to carry out some noble aim of life.

The words of the speaker made a deep impression upon Jack, and her sweet face appealed to him as no other had ever done before. He felt that he would give anything in the world if he could but know her, and he resolved that he would never rest until he could number her among his friends.

To a young man like himself, handsome, rich and sought after by society, this was not a difficult matter, and before many weeks had passed they were on very friendly terms. Indeed, on the part of Jack, the feeling was very much deeper than that of mere friendship. His love for her absorbed his entire being, and he threw his soul into the battle for the prize he so earnestly coveted.

Ruth read Jack as easily as she would read an open book. She knew that he had within him latent powers that would make him a force in the world if they could be developed, but she feared that with his dissipation and indolence he would never achieve anything worthy of his manhood. For his money she cared not at all, and she almost wished that he could be thrown upon his own resources and be compelled, of necessity, to arouse himself to some effort on his own behalf.

As he told me afterwards, it was with the hope that he would thereby please her that Jack began the study of medicine. Ruth did not ask him to do so and would never have thought of suggesting such a thing. She believed that every man should make some noble use of the God-given powers that he possessed, but as to the direction in which he should bend his energies she cared not a whit.

Poor Jack! How often I would one moment envy and the next moment pity him. He seemed to have so much to live for and yet he accomplished so little. I never saw a fellow so thoroughly in love, and I have often thought it strange, when he was so absorbed by that passion, that he did not apply himself to some purpose, for her sake if not his own.

How often I pleaded with him for Ruth's sake to be a man. I had met her during a vacation which I spent with him in New York, and I thought that any fellow who had the prospect of winning the love of such a girl as she was, would instantly sacrifice every selfish indulgence in order to make himself worthy of her.

He apparently cared no more for medicine than

medicine cared for him, and yet, in some way, he managed to pass his examinations for the first three years. The fourth year, his final year, he failed—failed completely. I knew it could not be otherwise, and I had tried in every way to get him to study, but without success.

Jack did not think he would fail. He knew it was purely by good luck that he got through the first three years, and thought that it would not desert him at the last, and that was all he desired. To have a diploma to show to Ruth was all that he thought she would require of him, and having that she would never know how little he really knew.

I left Jack at this time, and came to New Brunswick to settle down, and did not see him again for two years. I heard frequently from him, however, and he seemed to be completely discouraged. He went back to college, and, after putting in another year, got his diploma; but I knew from the way he wrote that Ruth was sadly disappointed in him. He told me too that his health was failing, and while he had opened an office in New York, he was making a miserable failure of his practice, and could not keep it up long.

A little over two years from the time that I said good-bye to Jack in Philadelphia I received a letter from him that will explain his case better than any words of mine. It ran as follows:

"Dear Old Friend:

"Have you any specific in your North Country for a young old man? I am not much better now than a bottled baby, and the once happy, robust Jack is a complete wreck. Ruth has left me: health has left me; hope likewise; and with it any fragments of ambition that I ever possessed. I must get away from here or be carried away by the undertaker. Do you take the hint?

"Yours, as ever,

"JACK.

To this I replied in this manner:

"My Dear Jack:

"Your hint is not a hard one to grasp. I know of a specific that will wean my bottled baby in very short order. You are just the fellow I want. Come with me for a few weeks' trip to the finest hunting-ground in the world, and if I do not shake your dry bones into some semblance of renewed youth I will at least see that you have a respectable funeral. Come at once,

"Sincerely yours,

"_____."

## A TOBIQUE GUIDE.

I met Jack in St. John, and while I expected to see him sickly looking, I was hardly prepared for the change in him that I beheld. He spoke truly when he said that he was an old man, and my first thought was to hurry him away to a hospital, as I feared that he would not last a week. I remembered though that I had promised to cure him, and to put him in a hospital would cure him too completely, so far as this world was concerned; so I decided to take the risk and get him away to the woods as quickly as possible.

We took the train on the Canadian Pacific Railway for our famous hunting-grounds, and travelled by rail as far as Plaster Rock, where we were met by our Indian guide with a tent, canoe and complete camp equipment. We stayed here over night, and the next morning, after hiring a team and securing an abundance of good wholesome food, we started on that delightful drive up the Tobique River.

During the journey by rail Jack had shown little interest in anything. He lay back in his seat and seemed too weak and listless to speak or to move. I could almost imagine that he was saying to him-

self, "You have promised to cure me; now let me see you do it."

I did not expect to cure him, but I hoped at least to be instrumental in bringing it about, and the first encouraging signs began to develop when we got nicely started on our way. The bracing air, the beautiful scenery along the river, and the glowing accounts our guide gave us of the abundance of game caused Jack for the first time to forget himself, and he was soon engaged in an earnest discussion with the Indian.

At the mouth of one of the many beautiful streams that empty into the Tobique we unloaded our baggage, and, placing everything in the canoe, our guide poled us for ten miles up the stream, and we then went ashore and pitched our tent for the night.

We cooked supper on an oil-stove, and it would do anyone good to see the way that Jack ate. I became rather uneasy at last and ordered him to quit, as I was afraid he would hurt himself. It was almost the first bite he had tasted since we had left St. John. We went early to bed, tired and sleepy

from our long day's ride, and that night we slept—slept in the true sense of the word. Jack told me in the morning that he never knew before what sleep really meant.

After a good hearty breakfast we broke camp, and leaving our canoe behind, started on a two-mile tramp over an old lumber-road through the woods to our final objective point. The guide and I carried all our supplies with us, and, resting frequently along the way, we arrived ere long at our journey's end and pitched our tent by the shore of the beautiful Lake Wisiwonganah.

It would require the pen of a master to adequately describe the beauty of that spot. The lake was not a large one—probably not more than a mile wide at any point—but it had the appearance of an enormous polished mirror that might have fallen from the skies and made a bed for itself in the midst of the forest. The only thing to dispel the illusion was the frequent ripple caused by trout jumping to catch flies that happened to come within reach or from the wild ducks swimming on its surface. The trees surrounding it on every hand were taking on

their many-hued tints of autumn; and, blending with the green, they were mirrored in the lake with a beauty that is indescribable.

I watched Jack as he gazed with speechless admiration upon the scene before him, and when after a time he came over to where I was standing and, grasping my hand, said, with a voice trembling with emotion, "You have saved my life," I felt that I was justified in the risk I had taken and had no more cause to worry over the outcome of our trip so far as Jack was concerned.

Whilst the guide and I were pitching the tent and getting our supplies in some kind of order we set Jack to work at catching some trout for dinner. This was not a difficult task, as all that it involved was casting out a line from the shore. In a very short time he had landed a dozen fine fish, and we soon had them in a pan over the fire and ate our dinner with a relish.

Many, many were our happy experiences during the weeks that followed. Game of every description was to be had—moose, caribou, deer, bears, foxes, rabbits, otter, mink and beaver, to say nothing of the abundance of wild ducks, partridge and

trout. Jack shot a magnificent moose and a good-sized bear that became too inquisitive; but upon the whole we enjoyed more the roaming through the woods and trying to study the habits of the different animals and birds and taking photographs of them than in the wanton sacrifice of life for what is commonly called sport.

Those three weeks made a man of Jack, and the first cloud I saw on his face came when I informed him that it was time to be thinking of going home.

"Home!" said he; "that word may be all right for you to use, but I have no home to go to, and this is the most ideal home to me that my imagination ever pictured. Nobody cares when I return or if I never do, so why could I not remain here for a while longer at least. I have been thinking of this matter seriously, though I have said nothing about it, and I am going to stay. I am not strong enough to leave here yet and face again the world and its temptations. There is an enemy within me that is striving strongly for the mastery and it must be overcome. To go out now would be a victory for my enemy, and I am going to stay here until I fight it out. The plan I have formed is this: I will

remain here as long as my provisions hold out, and then I will take myself away to a lumber camp and get some employment to occupy my attention through the winter. When spring comes I will return here and build a comfortable log cabin, and perhaps I may be able to benefit some other discouraged mortal as I have been myself."

When, one bright morning, the guide and I left for home, Jack accompanied us for the two-mile tramp through the woods to where we had left our canoe. No one would recognize him, even in that short time, as being the same person who had gone in here three weeks before. The hollows in his cheeks were almost gone; his eyes danced with health and hope; his face was almost as brown as the Indian's and his step was as elastic as that of a schoolboy.

We parted at noon on that day, I to go back to my daily toil and Jack to roam at will close to the heart of Mother Nature.

A month later Jack applied for a position as chopper with a large lumber operator and set to work with a will. It was not long, however, that he was allowed to remain at this employment, as it

soon became known that he was a physician, and many were the calls that he had from one camp to another. During the long winter smallpox broke out in several of the camps, and he nursed and cared for the worst cases fearlessly and unceasingly, and would accept no pay whatever for his services. The only time that he took to himself was a week that he spent in getting material, such as he could not manufacture himself, hauled to the site of his intended home.

When spring came he accompanied the river-drivers, tending to the sick and injured and sharing their hardships; and by his loving words and noble example he made an impression upon the hearts of all those with whom he came in contact that they never forgot. Few men that spring wasted their winter's savings in a wild debauch when they returned home.

I had thought many times of Ruth since Jack had left New York, and I knew Jack did so constantly, although he never mentioned her name to me. When he had been away from there about a year, out of pure curiosity I wrote and asked her if she could give me any tidings of my old friend, as I

had not seen him for a long time and thought she might know something about him.

She wrote back immediately, saying that she often thought of writing and asking me the same question, as she had not the slightest idea where he was. She also told me that she had had a great deal of trouble during the past year; that her father had been sick for some months, and that everything had gone wrong with them. She charged me to let her know if I ever heard from Jack, but not to tell him that she had inquired for him.

"Ruth," I mused after reading her letter, "has evidently not forgotten Jack, and it may be that a part of the trouble she says she has had during the past year is due to the fact that she is mourning for him." I tried to make my "think so anyway, as I felt that if she cared for him in any measure as I knew he did for her, the situation would present an opportunity for the accomplishing of a little missionary work of a very delightful nature.

I had heard from Jack many times during the summer and was already looking forward to the hunting season, when I hoped to spend a few weeks again with him by the Wisiwonganah.

After finishing his cabin home he had written me to send him a great many things to furnish and beautify it. One would have thought from the list he sent that he was furnishing a house on Fifth Avenue rather than a log hut fifty miles from civilization.

I wrote to Ruth again, and urged her in the strongest terms to bring her father to New Brunswick on a trip for his health. I told her that nothing in the world would tend any more to make him a well man than a few weeks spent in our northern climate; and that if they would agree to come I would find them comfortable quarters either in a hotel or with a private family.

When Ruth wrote me that they would take my advice and come, the news was too good to keep, and as I could not write to Jack I decided to go and see him at once and ascertain what effect the news would have upon him. I wondered how much he would care, and if he would come to see her when she was no near.

Jack, of course, did not expect me so soon; and when after a two days' journey I came in sight of his house, I saw him lounging in an easy chair by

the open door intent upon a book that he was reading. Flinging the book away as I came up he ran to meet me, crying, "You sinner! how dare you give me such a shock as this?"

"I am not sure yet," I said, "who is receiving the shock; for if you are Jack Hastings I will try and believe it, although it will be against reason for me to think so."

It was indeed hard to believe that this was Jack. Jack as I knew him was a smooth-faced, dissipated-looking boy. The man I now beheld was a full-bearded, bronzed, rugged woodsman. He was dressed in a rough homespun suit. His hair was long and slightly tinged with gray; but I knew by the brightness of his face that he had fought his battle well and had won. No enemy in life is there harder to conquer than one's self, and no hero more noble than he who becomes his own master.

He led me to the house and compelled me to go in and lie down upon a couch to rest; and as I gazed around the room in admiration of the wonders he had wrought, I felt that I would like to stay there with him for ever.

The house was not large. It consisted of but

three rooms, with a verandah entirely surrounding it; but the taste he had shown in its furnishings made it a palace in miniature. Beautiful rugs covered the floors and beautiful paintings the walls. The finest of curtains were on the windows and draperies over the doors. Books by the dozen covered the tables, and everything betokened rest and peace.

"Do you know," said Jack, smiling at the eagerness with which I was gazing at everything, "that it is not considered good manners to stare so at what your neighbor happens to have when you enter his house. One would think that you had been brought up in the woods, and had never seen anything before."

"Excuse me," I said; "but I guess I am at the wrong place. I was looking for a boy named Jack Hastings, who had a shanty somewhere near here, as I thought, but I have evidently been mistaken as to the place."

"This is the place all right," said he; "but you will search in vain for the boy whom you knew, as he no longer exists. Do you think you will mourn much for him—for the worthless, drunken creature

who caused you and her so much trouble? He, I trust, is dead; but in his place I hope there lives a better man—sadder perhaps, but wiser."

A lump rose in my throat as Jack was speaking, and I could not trust myself to make any reply, so after a moment he continued:

"I owe it all to you; but I wish the new man could have been born sooner. What is there for him in life now? Oh, to think of my blind folly in letting the only prize in life that I coveted slip from my grasp! I could accomplish anything now if I had her by my side; but it is now too late."

"I am not so sure of that," I said; "I have a slight reason to hope that Ruth is foolish enough to yet care a little for you." And I then told him of the letter I had written to her and the reply she had made. I told him that I had come to take him home with me to meet her.

Jack could hardly believe it possible that I meant what I said, but when I finally convinced him that I was serious, this gray-bearded man acted quite like a baby. I did not want a scene, and so I told him that he had better be thinking of trying to improve his appearance or Ruth would take him for

a tramp. We talked well on into the night, and Jack said that he would not decide what he would do until the next day.

The next morning, after we had breakfast, he told me that he wanted me to go back alone and meet Ruth and her father, and try and induce them to come up and spend a week or two in the woods. He told me to tell them anything I liked in order to get them to come, but not to mention his name. He would be nothing more to them than a hired guide, and with his present appearance Ruth could not possibly recognize him.

I thought the idea a foolish one, but he urged me so strongly to try and carry out his plan that I finally consented to do so. I left for home that day, and he came with me as far as Plaster Rock, where he was to remain until we came and have everything in readiness to make the trip from there a pleasant one. I promised to telegraph him when we were coming, and left him under the name of John Scott, the Guide.

On a beautiful golden day, about a week from the time that I parted with Jack at Plaster Rock, two canoes might be seen making their way up the

stream towards the cabin in the woods. In the stern of one, poling the frail bark along with a master's hand, stood a bronzed and bearded guide. To his fair companion, reclining in the bow on a couch of downy cushions, he seemed a strange enigma; but she could not but admire the rugged outlines of his form as he shot the bark forward with tireless ease; and her gaze was irresistibly drawn to his face, which, in spite of its wonted expressionless calm, revealed a face of no common character. The other canoe contained two men. One was poling with all the strength that he possessed in order to keep pace with the leading canoe. In the bow of the bark was an old and worn-out man, who seemed too feeble to reach the end of his journey, but whose face frequently lighted up when the beauties of the passing scenery were pointed out to him.

Everything that care and money could provide in that country had been secured for the comfort of the travellers. The journey had been made by easy stages, and at each resting-place during their long drive they found evidences of great forethought on

their behalf. This was especially noticeable at the end of their canoe journey, when they found a man waiting for them with a horse and light sled, the road being too rough for a wagon. A comfortable seat of cushions and robes was soon constructed for the invalid and his fair daughter, and the two miles were soon covered by the able horse, which ere long stopped before the door of the cabin by the Wisiwonganah.

It was one of many evenings long to be remembered that we spent within the luxurious cabin of Jack Hastings. As he found that his identity was not likely to be discovered he gradually threw off his reserve and became more talkative, and we all listened with rapt attention to the many things of interest he had to tell of the woods and its varied inhabitants. I could not help watching Ruth, whose eyes rarely left his face even when he was not talking, and I sometimes feared that she had guessed who he was.

When Jack showed Mr. Burnside (who retired early) to his room, Ruth came over to where I was sitting, and looking earnestly into my face, said,

"Tell me, does he," pointing towards the room to which Jack had gone, "not remind you of someone?"

"Yes," said I, "he does, and I wondered if you would notice it; but he is a very different man from Jack—a sadder and wiser man than Jack ever was. You will find him, as you come to know him, one of the most beautiful characters whom you have ever met. He is like Jack in some respects and perhaps that is why I love him."

"I love him, too," said Ruth.

After a few moments of silence she continued: "Do you know him well? Will you tell me all about his past? Why should such a man bury himself here, so far from his fellow-men? Tell me!"

"Perhaps he will tell you himself," said I; "I am not at liberty to do so. I can only say that his chief aim in life is to be a blessing to those who suffer; and to those who are beaten in the battle of life. This high aim was born in him through suffering."

"I, too, have suffered," said Ruth.

After Ruth had retired Jack and I talked well on into the night. Oh, the depths of thought, and the

nobility of character that he continually revealed; and such an admixture of sadness and joy and heroic calm. Truly he was a man to be loved!

We made for ourselves a bed on the floor, and when I awoke the sun was peeping over the eastern horizon.

Jack was already up and was busily engaged in getting breakfast. I took a walk along the shore of the lake and had a refreshing bath in its pure water, and when I returned Ruth was standing in the doorway, her eyes dancing with delight at the beauty of the surrounding scenery.

"Is there another spot on earth so beautiful as this?" said she. "This glad vision atones for all the sorrows of the past. Why are you so good to us? What are we and our troubles to you that you should have brought us such joy?"

"I have done but little," I said; "much less than you think. The little I have done has been for the sake of Jack."

"You then have not forgotten him either," said she. "Thank you for your faithfulness to the memory of the one I love."

Ruth was unconscious of the fact that the guide

was but a few steps away as she said this, and he now came forward and announced breakfast. I caught his eye as I came in, and fancied it was covered with a suspicious moisture. It was evident that he had overheard what she said.

I spent the day with Ruth and her father on the lake and in roaming through the woods. Our guide excused himself from accompanying us, on the plea that he had many things to do. I knew that this was but an excuse, and felt that Ruth would much rather stay behind and talk to him, but I knew that there would be many opportunities for that.

As the days passed, Ruth's father rapidly improved. He spent most of his time on the lake in fishing and rowing, and he was gradually becoming a new man. Ruth seemed as happy as a child who had never known a care; and her bewitching beauty was only intensified with each passing day. She liked best of all to be alone with the guide, and he taught her to row, and fish, and to handle a rifle. Many other things, too, she learned from him. She told me that he had opened up to her a depth of thought of which she had never dreamed.

One evening we were all standing by the shore of the lake watching the last rays of the setting sun. It was drawing near the time for us to be thinking of going home, and our hearts all saddened at the thought of parting. Jack seemed to be particularly depressed, and I knew he felt that he must soon reveal his true self, though he shuddered at the thought of doing so.

"Why are you so sad, Mr. Scott?" said Ruth. "Does not the knowledge of the blessings you have showered on us make your own burdens less heavy?"

"It is good of you to say that," said he, "and I am happy in seeing you happy, but have all your cares fled away since coming here, and have I healed your deepest wound?"

"Alas! no," said she. "Time only, if it be potent enough, can do that; but you who, too, have suffered, have made me better able to bear sorrow patiently."

"You had a friend," said he, "who bitterly disappointed you. I had a friend whom I likewise bitterly disappointed; but I believe that, even as I have tried to atone for the past, so has your friend done likewise."

"May God bless you for saying that," said Ruth; "and grant that it may prove true."

The guide turned and went into the house, saying that he would call us when tea was ready. The rest of us stayed behind for some time, but as he did not come to call us, and it was growing cold, we returned to the cabin. Opening the door for the others to enter, I saw, standing by the window, not John Scott, the guide, but the guide transformed into Jack Hastings. The long gray beard and moustache were gone; his hair was neatly combed; the homespun suit had been exchanged for one such as he had worn in the days gone by, and the only change from the Jack of old was in the nobler features and more rugged manhood.

All this I saw at a glance, and it was not altogether a surprise. I stepped back and Ruth entered. I felt that it was not right to watch her, and was turning away when she gave a cry such as I had never heard before, and I saw her fly to his extended arms. Then a mist came over my eyes so that I could see no more, and I turned away, taking her father with me.

The rest is soon told. I travelled fifty miles for a

clergyman, and brought him back with me. In that cabin by the Wisiwonganah they were made husband and wife. Here they spent their honeymoon, and her father and I left them there together.

They live in New York to-day, the honored and loved of all who know them, but with each passing summer they long for the turning of the leaves when they take themselves away to their cabin by the Wisiwonganah; and there, in its peaceful solitude, they again renew their youth and live over and over their honeymoon. May they long be spared to do so.

# UNCLE BEN.

# UNCLE BEN.

UNCLE BEN, as he was commonly called, or Old Ben, as he was rightly called, was the enigma of the whole parish.

His age no one knew, and least of all did he himself. Some men, even gray-headed men, said of him that he was old when they were young and the oldest inhabitant could not remember a time when he was not a part of the place.

The only thing known of Uncle Ben, beyond the fact that he was a harmless old soul and loved by all who knew him, was that he had a "past"; but what that "past" was no one knew but himself, and he carefully guarded his secret.

Old Ben was a farm laborer and had never been known as anything else. On a beautiful farm by the peaceful St. John he had spent many years, and now in his old days he was but as a privileged guest, or as the owner rather than as the servant.

During a vacation, which it was my good for-

tune to spend on this farm, it was he who accompanied me on many a ramble by the river side, or sailed with me upon its fair waters.

On one occasion as we paddled along I said to Uncle Ben that this river seemed to me the embodiment of all that was noble and majestic, and that I could never, and rejoiced that there was no cause to, associate with it any other thought than that of peace and calm.

He told me that he would like to think as I did, but that he could not. He said that the river possessed at least one dark secret that had been the means of changing the course of his whole life.

Further than this he would not go, and many times did I attempt to learn more from him, but without avail.

I did learn more, however, though not from him. I learned his secret, the secret of the river, and confronted him with it, and the poor old man trembled like a child and begged of me that I would keep it from the world while he lived. It was not long I had to keep it. In spite of all the assurance I gave him that he would be believed if he would but tell his story, and that he would not now be punished

for any wrong he had done, he could or would not see it in the same light in which it appeared to me; and I sometimes think that the dread of knowing that his secret was his no longer, and that I might be tempted to reveal it, hastened his death. But years have passed since he died and it has remained with me alone until the present.

I was walking one day along the shore when my eye was attracted by an object protruding from the perpendicular bank about six feet below the level. It at first looked like a stick or root of a tree, but a nearer view proved it to be a human bone. On digging away the yielding clay I soon exposed not only a whole skeleton but a heap of bones that must have belonged to a number of human beings buried in one common grave.

I looked carefully for some signs that would reveal the identity of my ghastly discovery and found a number of rusty trinkets, knives, coins and even pistols, and not among the least a metal case that was almost rusted through, but which I found on prying open to contain papers.

I then placed the bones I had removed back where they had been, and after piling earth over

them that they might not be seen by any one in passing, sat down on the bank to examine the contents of the case. I found in it many things of intense interest; rough charts of the whole Atlantic coast, many strange hints of dark deeds committed, bills, receipts, items showing apparently the values of certain seizures made, and, more interesting than all, a part of a letter which I give here word for word:

"My Dear Daughter:

"A something that I cannot define seems to tell me that my checkered life is drawing to a close. Whether death is to be from starvation in this strange, new land, or from the avenging sloop-of-war which has been following us so long, from a mutinous crew, from disease or drowning, I know not, but I fear that I will never see you, my daughter, again.

"I have lived a fearless life, caring neither for God, man, nor devil, and my devilish crew will find that I can meet any fate fearlessly. They have been behaving badly of late. When we entered St. John harbor, hoping to be able to purchase provisions before starting on our long journey home, and

found that our escape was cut off by the guns of the sloop which followed us, they openly blamed me for the danger in which we were placed, and I could only keep them in submission at the point of a revolver.

"In spite, however, of all I could do, eighteen of them seized our long-boat and fled ashore, leaving us more than ever at the mercy of the enemy. Those who remain are not less mutinous than those who have gone and there is only one on whom I can depend. Ben Sear is as true as steel. He knows the coast thoroughly and has found for us a hiding place. He piloted us in the night, with no other light than that of a new moon, through a narrow, treacherous channel into a broad river, and we have since travelled many miles inland. Here I am now, in the midst of a murderous crew, following an ever narrowing river, and perhaps even yet pursued by that relentless enemy. What can the end be, and how, my daughter, can I ever hope to see you again? My career has been a wicked one. I have been feared by all and loved by none, save by you. I had hoped to spend my last days with you and lead an honest life for your sake, but it is not to be. Nothing that

money or love would supply would I deny you. I have on this ship gold enough to purchase a kingdom and crown, and for this I will probably be murdered. To-morrow must decide. Unless we can reach a peaceful settlement, it will probably be a fight of two against six, so the odds are great. My fair daughter, a wild father's heart softens when he thinks of his lonely and only child, but he fears not and dares the worst."

Here the letter abruptly ended. It had no signature, no address, and no date. The only name it contained was the name of our strange Uncle Ben. Here, then, was old Ben's secret. Here it was revealed, at least in part, and I resolved that he should supply the missing link in the chain.

That afternoon I asked him to go for a walk, and after we had gone some distance I abruptly said, "Uncle Ben, tell me what became of your captain?" and the expected reply was, "What captain?" "Why," I said, "the captain of the ship and the other six. How is it that you are the only one left?" At this he gave a start, and his face grew pale, but he protested that he could not imagine what I meant. I told him that it was no use to profess

ignorance as I knew all about him, and knew that he with others had been driven into this river for some crime, and that all had been murdered save himself.

Then it was that the old man broke down and cried for mercy. Then it was that he begged to be spared for the short space of time that he could live. I told him that he had nothing to fear from me, and that I knew he had stood by his captain to the last as a brave man should, so he need not fear me or anyone else.

"Oh," said he, "it is not that. The captain and I did stand back to back and fight as we had never fought before. Do you doubt it?" said he, "then look at this," and throwing off his coat and shirt he showed me a body literally covered with scars.

"It was six against two and we killed them all. At least, all but one, who was badly wounded. The captain, though, could not hold out against such odds. He fell dying ith the rest, and I was left alone with one wounded enemy."

"Why, then," I said, "if this be true, have you kept it a secret? What have you to fear from any one?"

"There is more than one reason," said he, "why I have told no one. Do you know that we were the worst band of pirates who ever sailed? Do you know that we had committed unspeakable crimes without number? We had murdered and plundered as few others had ever done, and were a terror to the whole coast."

"We were on our way home when the end of it all came. The captain had resolved to give up this life, as he said, for the sake of his only child. He often spoke to me of her with a tenderness of which none would think him capable. It was the only subject that would ever melt his hard heart or arouse a human feeling within his savage breast.

"He had paid off over fifty of his crew and put them ashore at Portland and, being afraid to put out to sea, as he knew he was being pursued, he hoped to hide for a time in the Bay of Fundy.

"We entered St. John harbor to obtain provisions one afternoon as night was falling, and were no sooner in than we knew we were in a trap. Following us was the dreaded form of a sloop-of-war, against which our small crew knew it was impossible to fight.

"We, however, opened fire on them with two guns, more with the hope of keeping them at a distance until night had fully closed than with any prospect in the dim light of doing them a serious injury. They did not reply, but cast anchor at the entrance of the harbor, and we knew they considered us safe from any possibility of escape, and would not risk closing in on us in the dark.

"After night had fallen our crew openly mutinied, and the captain could only keep them in control at the point of a revolver. As it was, eighteen of them stole a chest of gold, and, taking our long-boat, fled ashore, leaving only eight of us behind.

"I was the only one on board who knew the harbor, and I directed the escape. I knew, which the others did not, of the river emptying into the harbor through the rocky gorge with its wonderful reversible falls. I explained to the captain that the tide, which at its flood could carry us safely through that narrow gateway, would at its ebb present for a time an impassable barrier to those who were in pursuit; and even if at ebb tide they found the entrance, they would not dream that we could have

passed it, but would suppose that we must have stolen by them in the night.

"We sailed at three in the morning with the tide at its flood, and with its aid and that of a fair wind and a new moon passed safely through that rugged entrance.

"This passed, we did not dare stop, but sailed on up the river. We feared that they might discover our means of escape, and would still follow us. A good breeze favored our course, and we did not anchor until we had reached a point about opposite where we now stand.

"Then the climax came and the end of it all. The crew resolved that they would seize the ship and all its treasure, murder the captain and myself, and take their chances about escaping.

"The captain held them off one day longer with the promise of trying to make terms with them after considering the matter. It was no use. Morning came and peace was hopeless; so we met them back to back, and you know the rest."

"Oh, no," I said, "there is a great deal yet I do not know. Who buried them, and why were they all placed together in one grave? What became of

the ship and its treasure and what of your wounded enemy?"

"It was late in the fall of the year," said he, "when this happened. Probably about the middle of November. I was so weak from the terrible wounds I had received that I lay on the deck, I think for days, with my enemy, and neither of us was able to move.

"When we found that we were both likely to live, we swore to each other to forget the past and be friends. We dressed each other's wounds and found abundant provision for our present needs, but weeks passed before we were able to do more than crawl about.

"It must have been two months after the fight before we were able to care for the bodies, and during all that time they had lain on deck.

"We saw, much to our distress, the ice form about our ship, and knew that we were fast for the long winter.

"When we were able to move freely, and our strength had returned we then undertook the grim task of burying the bodies. We carried them, one

by one, over the ice to the shore and put them on the bank.

"The digging of the graves in the hard, frozen ground with the poor tools we could find on the ship was no easy task; and by the time we had one completed we agreed that it was out of the question to undertake any more.

"We widened this one as much as possible and buried them all together, and no one to this day, save myself, knows the spot where they lie."

"Oh," said I, "I know the place accurately, and can find it probably more easily than you can. Do you remember how far the grave was from the bank of the river?"

"It was," said he, "I should judge, about fifty feet, but I have not for a long time been sure of its exact location. At that time it was all woodland here, but you see it is now cleared, so the old marks are gone."

"Have you never thought," said I, "that the constant wearing of the sandy bank by the ice during each spring freshet might in time expose the bodies, even though they were fifty feet from the edge then?"

"No," said he, "I have never thought of that and yet it must be the inevitable result. I had not reckoned with that almost almighty force and I clearly see now how you have learned my secret."

"Why," said I, "did you not examine the pockets of those you buried for valuables they might have?"

"Valuables!" said he, "what would we want with any valuables they might happen to have in their pockets when the whole ship was loaded with gold and treasure and we could not imagine what we should ever do with it all."

"What, then," I said, "became of all this treasure, or is it but a dream you have been telling me?"

"That," said he, "is another reason why I have not told this story before. I had absolutely nothing beyond these buried bodies to prove my story to be true and I could not tell just where to dig for them, even if I dared to do so. I will tell you all now and you can believe me or not, as you please.

"We found as winter advanced that our provisions could not last until spring and that we must obtain more. Further, we must get a crew to help us man the ship and save it if possible when the

spring freshet came, and so, leaving everything on board, we started on the ice for St. John to obtain a crew and supplies.

"On our way my companion was taken ill and it was with great difficulty I got him to our journey's end. He seemed to be burning up with a fever and became delirious soon after our journey was done. He talked incessantly of the ship and the treasure and the devilish crimes in which he had borne a part. I dared not leave him for a minute, nor could I let anyone see him. He remained in that condition for weeks and finally died, and I saw that he was decently buried. As for myself, I was so worn out with my constant watching that spring had come before I was able to make an attempt to obtain a crew.

"Finally, I concluded that my only hope for saving anything was for me to go back alone as quickly as possible and remove all the treasure I could from the ship and let the rest and the ship go with the freshet.

"I started on my long tramp with a sled load of provisions in the midst of a pouring rain, but I knew before I got half way that I was too late as the ice

was beginning to move. I left the river and followed the shore, and after about a week's journey reached the place where the ship had been, but nothing remained save the open river and running ice.

"The ship and all trace of it were gone. Whether it sunk before it reached me or passed me in the night, I know not. I have never seen or heard tell of it since. In all probability it is buried in some deep spot in the river. There is a bare possibility that it may have been carried out to sea, but I cannot help thinking that this river somewhere holds the secret safe."

Here the principal part of his story ended. Many other details he told me that would not be of general interest, and I [illegible] after hearing all, help pitying this old [illegible] doubt had terribly sinned but who [illegible] subsequent blameless life for so many years.

When, one year [illegible] heard that Uncle Ben was dead I went to attend the funeral and followed the body to its last resting-place. After all was over a curiosity seized me to examine once more the bones of the pirate crew, and so I went to the spot at which they were buried.

I, however, searched for them in vain, and I soon saw that I, too, had forgotten to consider the mighty force that had been tearing at the bank during the past spring and had carried away as chaff all trace of my strange discovery. Not a vestige remained, and were it not for the proof I have in the letter of the pirate captain and those old rusty relics, I would almost think it all but a dream.

# A FRUITLESS LONGING.

## A FRUITLESS LONGING.

A CENT, for the love of God! A cent for the love of God!" This is his one thought; this is his one cry; to obtain this is his only ambition. Backward and forth, backward and forth, for many a long mile by the beautiful river St. John he incessantly plods his way; and at many a house his familiar prayer is heard, "A cent, for the love of God! A cent, for the love of God!"

It was not always so. Sometimes it scarcely seems possible that this harmless imbecile is the man who once occupied such an honored place. Then, Gus Rudolph was a proud man. A prouder man never lived. Early in life he entered on the study of law, and before many years had passed he was aiming for the high position of Supreme Court Judge

He had, early in life, lost his wife; who, dying, left him an only son and heir. It was the boy who

brought the father to his present condition. It was the father who almost brought the boy to an untimely end.

Frank Rudolph was in love. Strongly against his proud father's will, he became engaged to a girl, who, although good and true, did not occupy the high position in society the father considered his son's wife should. The boy, indeed, was one of the most promising who ever lived, but Grace Chalmers was good enough for him. She was good enough for any one. There never was a fairer girl than she; nor one less deserving of her unhappy lot.

Many stormy scenes took place between father and son on her account; until, finally, Frank was forbidden ever to see her again, under penalty of being disowned. But love is stronger than parental authority, and many times they met and planned for the future, which still looked bright. This went on in secret for some time, and might eventually have reached a happy termination had not Gus Rudolph, one day, while walking in the park, suddenly come across the lovers, who were too absorbed in each other to notice his approach.

The father stopped in anger, and his violent

temper broke forth in the strongest language possible. Abuses he heaped on his son without a word of reply; but when his anger turned on the fair girl Frank could contain himself no longer, and rising to his feet, he demanded that he should cease. "Abuse me," said he, "as much as you will, but say another word to her and I will forget that you are my father, and will knock you down." The chance, however, never came; for, with a terrific blow, the infuriated father struck his son to the earth, then turned and walked away.

When Frank began to recover from the effects of the blow he found himself with his head pillowed on Grace's breast, and the noble girl, with the tears streaming from her eyes, was bathing his face with water she had obtained from a spring near by. The blow did not prove very serious, although he found that in falling he had received an ugly cut on the arm, from which the blood flowed freely.

He then took Grace to her home, and refusing her earnest entreaties to go in that she might bandage the wounded limb, went away, saying that when he could trust himself to speak he would see her and they would talk the matter over.

Poor Grace! how fared it with her when he had gone? How she reproached herself that she should come between a son and father! How could she ever marry him with a father's curse resting on him in consequence? Almost better death than that. If she were not in his way he would become reconciled to his father, and with money and influence could be all that his father wished him to be. No, she would never see him again; and not to see him meant that she must go far away. She was an impulsive girl; and it did not take her long to decide, and soon she was gone, leaving behind only this message for Frank:

"Dear Frank:

"When this reaches you the barrier to your father's desires will be removed. It is hard to live without you; but less can I live with a father's curse resting on you in consequence. Forgive him, Frank, and forgive me, whose chief fault is my love for you. After a time you will have forgotten me, and in the meantime do not try to find me, as you shall never be able to do so. May life's choicest blessings be yours, and that your father may never

again have occasion to be ashamed of his son is the wish of your unhappy Grace. Good-bye."

When Frank received this letter at a hotel where he often stayed, this added blow was almost too much for him to bear. Instantly he called a cab and drove with all speed to her house; but in vain. She had disappeared, leaving not the slightest trace behind; and from that day he sought her everywhere in vain. Instead of forgiving his father, hate of a most bitter kind took possession of him, and to him he wrote the following letter, enclosing the one he had received from Grace:

"Augustus Rudolph:

"You will rejoice to know that my search after her who wrote the enclosed letter has been in vain. There is not much I can say to you, for curses rise to my lips that are hard to suppress. But memory, that I would fain blot out, reminds me whose son I am, and it ill becomes a son to curse his father. I will, however pray—I who was never taught how to pray—that, when the summit of your power is reached, and a merciless rod is swayed with an iron hand over the lives of others, you may then, if never

before, realize that it has only been gained at the terrible cost of every principle that makes a man; and, realizing this, curse yourself. A son's life wrecked, and a noble girl driven from home as an outcast—what an early reaping for ambition! I cannot forget you, for to my dying day I shall bear on my arm a scar, caused by my fall, to remind me of my dear father. Farewell, I trust, for ever.

"Your Son,

"FRANK."

## II.

Five years have passed away and a great change it has made in Frank. Grief and dissipation have changed the once promising boy into a complete wreck. Since the stormy scene in the park he has never seen his father's face, nor has he ever returned to his native place. But now, knowing that he is changed beyond recognition, a curiosity seizes him to see his home again, and so he, only a common tramp, turns his steps in that direction.

His time is spent mostly in bar-rooms. Unknown, he beholds the faces of former companions, some of

whom look at the poor tramp with pity, and others with contempt.

One day, while walking on the street heedless of where he is going, and thinking over his past life, he is suddenly awakened from his reverie by an angry shout behind him. Springing to one side he barely escapes being run down by a team driven by a portly gentleman, whom he easily recognizes as his father.

Time has been merciful to him—cruel Time, whose blessings are so unevenly bestowed. He has reached the height of his ambition, and is now Judge Rudolph of the Supreme Court.

A terrible passion at the sight of his father rises in Frank's breast. Every noble impulse in him is gone, and he goes back to his only source of consolation—debauchery. In the bar-room, stupefied with drink, he enters into a quarrel with an old friend, and before he realizes what he has done has hurled a glass at the head of his friend, causing instant death. Flight is in vain: he is soon captured, and the sun that in rising finds him a wretched man goes down leaving him still more wretched, behind iron bars.

A trial follows shortly after this event, and Dick Peters, by which name only Frank is known, is brought into court. Looking around him with an air of indifference, his eye falls upon the judge. A shudder runs through him, and a half-smothered cry escapes his lips. There, seated on high, he sees his father ready to judge and pronounce sentence upon him.

What a farce was his trial! Only a miserable tramp, and no friend to say even a word in his behalf, the jury speedily bring in a verdict of "guilty." He heeds it not. His eyes have rarely left the face of his father; and, when asked if he has any reason to give why sentence of death should not be pronounced, he is silent.

"The sentence of the Court," said the judge, "is that you be taken from here back to jail, and two weeks from to-day to the place of execution, and there be hanged by the neck until dead. And may God have mercy on your soul!"

"May God have mercy on you!" cried Frank, springing to his feet. "You sit there in judgment on me! Hear me, for I will now speak, and stop me who dare! Death may indeed shortly end my miser-

able life; but sooner far that than to occupy the position you do to-day. You think me but a tramp! Well, you think rightly, but who made me so? Who blasted my life and made me an outcast? Who—but you? Look at me, and behold in a condemned criminal, your own son! I am Frank Rudolph."

When Frank began to speak a terrible fear took possession of the judge. Oh, it could not be true; such a fate could not be possible. Alas! for him to obtain such a position for such a miserable purpose. His first death sentence. When Frank had finished speaking Judge Rudolph knew no more. Retribution had overtaken him, and he was carried forth with reason forever gone.

The dread séntence of the father was not carried out. Powerful friends interceded, and the sentence was commuted to a term of imprisonment.

In the prison many of his old friends visited him and strove in every way to lighten the terrible burden that he bore. To one of them he intrusted the charge of trying to find her for whom he had looked so long in vain. He gladly undertook the task, and, after a long search, amid many disappointments, finally found her—a nun in a distant convent.

She had never heard. She had never dreamed that he could so care for her, as that her absence should cause him to make such a wreck of life. Her love for him was still as strong as ever, and she went back immediately to him. She went to comfort him and to care for the imbecile father.

The time came when he was free, and they then, united at last, went far away from old associations to be at peace. On the bank of the river St. John they live to-day; and he, "made perfect through suffering," lives but to atone for the past.

The father is their only care, and he is a child again. His old energy and ambition still remain, but his mind has gone; so he goes out from that peaceful home and, with the longing for money that he has now but little use for, but which he thinks will still bring his former power back, he pleads from house to house, "A cent, for the love of God! A cent, for the love of God!"

# BILLIE WILLIE.

# BILLIE WILLIE.

NATURE, in the careless distribution of her choice gifts, had not been generous to Billie Willie. It had almost seemed that she had been making an experiment, with the object of determining how little intelligence she could bestow on a human being and still have him eke out an existence. She succeeded admirably well, as she always does in her efforts, and in Billie Willie she created a type.

Billie Willie could not even recall his own name, where he came from, how old he was, nor who his parents were. He did know that his name was Billie, and on one occasion a timid boy ventured to call him Willie; but to this he strongly objected, saying that that was not his name. When told that either name would answer he exclaimed, "What! Billie Willie?" And thus it was he got his name.

Shall we say that Nature was unkind to Billie Willie? Perhaps the things in life that we consider the most desirable are not judged so by her. She

gave to him one great blessing in contentment; and as she increases the scale of man's intellect, so does she frequently, in proportion, decrease his share in this blessing.

His ambitions were confined to but two ideals, and these he gratified to their fullest extent, viz., to drink cheap whiskey and to fish for eels. Some fishermen require a boat and nets in order to ply their vocation. Billie Willie sat all day on a rotten log and dangled a three-cent line and hook from a willow pole, and asked for nothing better. If he had been offered as a gift the finest fishing boat and nets afloat he would have refused them. They would be no good for eels.

Sometimes, however, Billie Willie caught something else. Water snakes were quite common, and frequently did not refuse the tempting bait offered. It was all the same to him. He placed them carefully with the eels, and always tried to dispose of them all in bulk for a goodly supply of his favorite whiskey. W' en detected, as he invariably was, he would either declare he did not know they were there, or that when cooked they tasted as good as eels.

It can readily be imagined that occasionally Billie Willie got drunk. To be exact, he sometimes got more drunk than usual, for he was never known to be sober. Billie Willie did not need this condition to complete his character. Nature never demanded it. Perhaps it was something he put on as a cloak, in the vain hope of covering the emptiness of his mind. But this is absurd. What he had never known he did not feel the need of, and his vacant mind was as good to him as the wisdom of the gods.

The fact is, that this condition was forced on him by one who hoped to further improve an amusing character, and having moulded him to his taste, then left the barren mind in the hands of the demon of rum. Shame on the wretch who can find sport in such a cursed game!

From a financial standpoint it was a grand investment that he, whom Billie Willie called his friend, made. He found Billie Willie almost an idiot, and he reasoned with himself that to supply him generously with cheap whiskey would not cost him very much, and would result, when the appetite was once formed, in providing a faithful and life-long customer. He succeeded far beyond his most sanguine

expectations, for Billie Willie was an apt pupil, and he soon needed no further encouragement and, consequently, no more free drinks.

Billie Willie's generous friend saw even further than this. His many customers were attracted all the more readily by the constant diversion that the sight of Billie Willie afforded. He, to them, was highly amusing; and they came all the more readily every evening to see the sport, and bore their share generously in carrying on the good work. How entertaining he was! What laughter he produced, and how thoroughly he himself enjoyed the entertainment he provided! It was a grand investment that Billie Willie's friend made.

Then, when Billie Willie was more drunk than usual and, consequently, at his best, it meant that in addition to the goodly number of eels and snakes that he had gathered by his toil his mind was filled with visions of a still greater number—snakes of a richer hue and more menacing character.

Some people would not relish this condition. It was not so with Billie Willie. Snakes formed a part of his profession, and the more vivid his vision the more did he long for its repetition. When, in his dis-

ordered mind, he saw snakes—beautiful, writhing, glistening snakes—coming to him from all directions without any effort on his part; and when he heaped his basket full with them and gloated over and caressed them and tried to hold them firmly to prevent their escape, oh, what joy was his and how rosy seemed his life! This was his greatest luxury. To reach this state was his greatest ambition, and to this end he received faithful assistance.

On a cold, bleak morning in the late fall, several years later, when eels were getting scarce and friends seemed to be growing scarcer, Billie Willie sat in his familiar place on the old rotten log. His face and hands were purple, and in his filthy rags he shivered with the bitter cold. Life did not look to him very bright on this cold morning. He was almost sober; about as sober as he could possibly be expected to be, and that, to him, was the opposite pole from everything that tended to make life worth living.

Times were getting hard with Billie Willie. He was beginning to grow troublesome to his friend, as he always insisted on sleeping in his barn, which was unreasonable, and he even begged for scraps of

food. His friend did not object for a long time, not while Billie Willie was so amusing, but there is a limit to any man's generosity. He had even given him food which belonged to his dog and had been obliged to give the dog better food than he should have had, in consequence. This, however, could not always last, and now Billie Willie must learn to shift for himself. Good customers were beginning to complain that Billie Willie was a nuisance and must no longer be tolerated.

On this morning Billie Willie plied his vocation as diligently as possible, and on his face was a look of intense longing and anxiety in the fear that he should not meet with success. His efforts were all in vain; no fish came to reward him, and even the snakes refused to accept the bait offered. This state of affairs could not last. He must have eels, for he must have whiskey; and he had intelligence enough to see that the first was growing essential to the latter. Finally, laying down his pole, he got a good, heavy stick, and with it in his grasp walked slowly along the bank and gazed earnestly through bleared eyes into the water in search of snakes. His search was a vain one, for none met his gaze, and after

weary tramping he started to retrace his steps by way of the high bank. With drooped head and painful steps he came slowly back, and the problem was too great a one for him to solve. Finally, his palsied limbs refused longer to perform their duty and in despair he lay down on the damp grass. On looking around in an aimless way his eye was attracted by an object lying on the grass but a few feet away. It was a snake, and one of the largest he had ever seen. And it was not a water snake either, but a beautifully colored one that very much resembled those he so often saw in his visions. Rising cautiously that he might not disturb its apparent slumber, he seized his stick, and before it was aware of his approach he dealt it a terrific blow on the head. Then placing it carefully in his basket he closed the cover, and with renewed energy hastened away to his friend.

On his arrival he was met at the door by a man who informed him that he had been given orders not to allow him to enter, that he must stay away from there as some good customers were inside, and they had stated emphatically that they would not tolerate his presence any longer.

This cold reception, however, did not deter Billie Willie from gaining his end. By main force he pushed his way by the guard, saying that he must see his friend, as he has with him the price for good drinks. Striding up to the bar he placed the basket down before his friend and, overturning it with a quick movement, left his repulsive captive lying on the counter.

Billie Willie's blow, though a heavy one, had not been fatal, and the snake had now quite revived, and coiling its body for a spring it fastened its glittering eyes on the bar-keeper in front of him; then, swift as the lightning's flash, it leaped forward and struck him squarely in the face. With an unearthly scream the bar-keeper turned, and, followed by his horrified customers, fled from the room, leaving on Billie Willie and his prize behind. Oh, the mad joy of it all. The whole bar-room was now his, and to the snake he gave no thought. It was drink he wanted, and such a feast as there was now before him! Would he ever get enough to satisfy him! It had been long since he could have all he wanted, and this golden opportunity must not be neglected.

After hours had passed the boldest of the patrons

returned a gazing through the window, they saw lying on the floor the body of Billie Willie, and coiled up beside him the form of a snake. They succeeded in killing the reptile, and going to an adjoining room found another body, that of Billie Willie's friend.

They buried them both in one common grave and there they now lie. There must come, some day, an awakening for them both, and who shall say what it will be?

Among those who followed Billie Willie's career, as in the days of old, some were wise and some were foolish. The wise ones took a lesson from him and shook their heads when any mention was made of again opening the bar-room. The foolish sought other places where they could still find that which, to them, had made Billie Willie such a character to be remembered, and they would not see the hell in the whole accursed thing though even he should rise from the dead to tell them.

# A DRUMMER'S BRIDE.

# A DRUMMER'S BRIDE.

A BERTH in a stuffy Pullman on a hot summer's night, when the air seems so close and oppressive that it is difficult to breathe, and not a breath of wind is blowing, is not conducive to a good night's sleep. Ned Kennedy, drummer, and all-round good fellow, swore that it was the worst he had ever experienced in his long life of twenty-eight years, as he gave up all hope of sleep and, removing only his coat and shoes, placed his pillow in the open window and watched the changing scenery as the train fled along in the moonlight towards his home in Boston at some fifty miles an hour.

Perhaps there was a factor other than the heat that tended to make him so wakeful on this warm night. Ned had heard that Gertrude Hopkins was on her way to St. John that night, and he knew that at some point on the line his train and hers must cross. He would not admit to himself that he cared; and even though he did, he knew she would not, and no doubt was sound asleep in her berth by this time,

so that there would be no possible chance at this late hour of catching even a fleeting glimpse of her.

Ned would scoff at the idea of anyone having presentiments; and yet, try as he would, he could not get her face out of his mind. He knew that she was far above him in social position, and the idea of ever thinking of her as any more than a mere friend had never occurred to him. But to-night he thought of her as he had never done before, and his heart gave a great throb as the idea occurred to him that possibly she might be in danger and needed his help. He knew that, excepting for her guardian, she was travelling alone; and of that individual Ned had a mighty poor opinion.

Gertrude's parents were both dead. Her father, who had been very wealthy, had died suddenly while travelling abroad seven years before, and to his companion and friend, Randolph Peel, he had left the care of his only child, then a girl of twelve years. He was appointed her guardian, and to him alone was intrusted the management of her property until she should reach the age of twenty years, excepting in the event of her marriage in the meantime, when it would revert to her.

Ned had met her frequently since she had left school one year before, and while he was dazzled by the loveliness of her face and character he knew it would never do to make himself miserable by seeking an intimacy that could be but fruitless to him. How often, though, he felt that he would like to know her well enough to ask her some questions about her guardian, and learn her opinion as to the way her affairs were being managed. He knew that Peel was a gambler, a rake, and a spendthrift. He knew that the money he squandered so recklessly could not be his own, and he feared that she, who thought herself independently rich, would some day find herself penniless.

As he now, lying awake in his berth, revolved this question for the hundredth time, he became so reckless that, putting on his coat and shoes, he sought the porter, and got him to find out from the conductor where the two trains would cross. He learned that it would be at a station a few miles farther on, and that her train would take the siding to allow his to pass.

Going back to his berth, Ned leaned out of the

window, and before long the lights of the waiting train flashed in view. His train began to "slow down," and Ned wondered if it would stop. A few moments later he was slowly passing the lighted cars and darkened Pullmans, and he was gazing anxiously in at the windows, hoping for but one glimpse of her whom he now sought so earnestly.

They were now almost by. Ned, looking ahead, saw that the rear coach of the waiting train left but little more than enough room for them to pass. How brightly lighted one of its windows was, and how close to it he was coming! Yes, they were stopping; and he would be just opposite that window. Ned sat quickly back in his seat; and there, almost within arms' reach, was she who had so absorbed his thoughts. Standing at bay, in the private compartment of the Pullman, her eyes flashing defiance, Gertrude Hopkins faced her guardian; and these words greeted Ned's ears:

"You shall never get those papers from me! Do you hear? Now, go; you have had your answer!"

"Hush, my dear," replied her guardian, "someone might hear you. Do you not know that the law

will compel you to hand them over to me? Have I not the entire disposal of your property until you are twenty? I do not wish to resort to extreme measures, but you have those papers hidden about your person, and I am going to have them. I will give you just ten minutes to yourself, and if you do not produce them in that time I shall obtain them by force. Take warning and do not tempt me too far." Saying which he opened the door and went out, slamming it behind him. Then Gertrude threw herself into a chair and buried her face in her hands; her whole form shaken by sobs.

This all occupied but the space of a few moments, and as soon as the door closed, Ned leaned out of the window, and softly called her name. As he did so she started up in alarm; but when she saw the reassuring face of Ned Kennedy her fears fled away, and rushing to the window she begged that he would help her and protect her from her drunken guardian.

This Ned was only too ready to do. He would protect her with his life, if need be; and very quickly did his active mind decide what, to him, was the

best solution of the difficulty. At any moment either train might start; at any moment Peel might return.

"Miss Hopkins, what has happened, and what can I do for you?" said Ned. "Believe me, I will protect you to the full extent of my ability if you think you need help."

"Oh, take me away from here!" sobbed Gertrude; "anywhere so that I may never see that hateful face again."

"I will gladly do that," said Ned; "and there is not a moment to lose. Dare you climb through the window to my car? You can easily do so and we shall be gone before he comes."

Gertrude waited for no second bidding. Giving a terrified glance towards the door she sprang to the window, and supporting her in his arms, she was soon safe in Ned's berth. Then, closing the window, Ned prayed for the train to start, while he kept his eye on the window opposite.

Just as Ned's train started the door opened, and Mr. Peel returned; and the moving wheels helped to drown the terrific oaths that rang out when he found that his charge had flown. Ned saw him

lean out of the window, glance hastily up and down the track, and then disappear. He opened the window and looked back, and as they left the other train behind, Ned saw a man standing on the track talking to a brakeman, who was pointing in their direction. No doubt he had learned her method of escape, but she was safe for the present at least.

"Well," said Ned, "you are rid of old Peel now; but I wish I had been in that brakeman's place. I would like to have held his worthless neck across the rail when the train started; but I will meet him yet and then there will be a squall."

"Oh, do not touch him," said Gertrude, who, almost speechless from fright, was trembling like a leaf. "He is beneath notice, and I will take good care to keep him at a safe distance in future. You have befriended to-night the most friendless creature in all the world. What shall I do, or where shall I go? Oh, how that man has persecuted me; and how he has betrayed the trust imposed upon him by my dying father!"

"Well," said Ned, "what you say is no surprise to me, and my only wonder is that you have been so long in finding it out. If you will pardon me for

saying it, I have spent many hours in thinking of you and your affairs, and the fact that I was doing so to-night instead of sleeping was the sole cause of my being ready to rescue yo·· I have known for some time that he must be wasting your property, and I have longed many times to tell you of it, but did not dare take the liberty. If now you need a friend, and will trust me, believe me I shall do all in my power to make right the wrong he has done you."

"I knew you would," said Gertrude. "Since the first time I ever saw you I have trusted you implicitly; but it would seem too bad to impose my cares on you."

"That's all nonsense," said Ned. "I should love to have a little care, as it would be a new experience for me; and, besides—well, let me try anyway. Tell me all and let me see what can be done; but had you not better try now and get a few hours' sleep, and I will go to the smoking-room, and consider what had better be done for my fair ward?"

"Let me tell you some things before you go," said Gertrude, "and you will then be better able to advise me. You probably know that in father's will

my guardian was to have entire charge of my property until I am twenty. There was only one condition, but that is not worth mentioning. I do not know whether father trusted him entirely or not; but he died so suddenly, away from home and friends, that he could make no other arangements. He gave him a sealed letter for me and got his solemn oath that it was to be delivered to me, unopened. He gave me the letter as he died, and on the envelope I was directed to keep it safely until I was twenty years old, or until I got married, and then I should be free to open it.

"During the past year Mr. Peel has frequently spoken of this letter and expressed a curiosity to know what it contained; even hinting that it would be all right for me to open it. On one occasion, when he thought I was out, I found him searching my room in the vain hope of finding it; but I had it securely fastened around my neck, and never put it aside for a moment.

"About a week ago Mr. Peel sent for me to grant him a private interview in the library. I did as requested, and he seemed to be in deep distress. I had never seen him so moved. He said that we were

both ruined; that he had put an immense sum of money in what he considered a safe investment, and that fate had been against him, and it was all practically lost. There was only one way out of the difficulty, but that way was beyond his grasp. He said that if he had one hundred thousand dollars he was certain that he could not only recover all he had invested, but make a handsome profit besides; but as matters stood at present we were penniless. I told him that was very comforting news, but I did not know enough about business to discuss the matter with him, and that I was the one who would suffer without being able to help in any way.

"He then told me that he had but one hope. He said, as he had often said before, that father should have left more money than had been given him; and that he was satisfied, if I would but open the letter I had, we should find a way out of the difficulty. He pleaded so hard and made my ruin so apparent that I reluctantly consented to do so, and, drawing out the letter by the gold chain which held it I broke the seal and examined its contents in his presence.

"I found within a very loving message from a

dying father. He stated that he hoped my guardian would prove faithful; but that in case he did not he wished to provide for my safety. He said that he had a private vault in the —— Bank in the city of Boston, and that I would find deposited there some very valuable securities. He said that he had written the president of the bank, telling him that the vault was not to be opened by any one but myself, and that I had the combination which he gave me in the letter.

"My guardian then was right. I was still rich, though he had lost a fortune. He told me it was a duty I owed to myself, as well as to him, to get those securities, and so save us both. He seemed to have such an influence over me that, against my better judgment, I consented to go and get them, and he was determined to accompany me.

"When we reached Boston I insisted upon going to the bank alone, and found everything as father stated. I was shown to a private room, where I could examine the securities, and as I looked them over I, somehow, felt that I would rather lose all the rest than take any chances of these going too.

I placed them all in the bosom of my dress, where they still are, intending to deposit them in a vault at home when I get there.

"When I returned to the hotel where we were stopping I was afraid to tell him that I would not let him have them; so, in order to gain time, I asked him to wait until we got home. He got very sulky at this, and shortly after went out, saying that he would see about our berths on the train, as we were to return to St. John to-night. When he came back I saw that he had been drinking heavily, and that made me more determined than ever to have nothing further to do with him.

"We got on the train as it was about to start, and the porter showed me to the compartment where you found me, saying that it had been reserved for me. I felt thankful to be alone, and did not think that he would come near me until we got to our journey's end. Not long after we started, however, he knocked on the door, and without waiting for any reply walked in and closed the door behind him. In his maudlin way he tried to make himself agreeable, and for hours I was tortured with his presence. Gradually he came around to the

subject of the papers, and said that was a good opportunity to talk the matter over, and asked to see them. I begged him to wait until morning, but he was not in a mood to be put off. He coaxed for a long time, and then began to threaten, and at last, in desperation, I ordered him to go and not dare to show his face in there again. I told him that he would never have those papers as long as he lived."

"Yes," said Ned, "I heard you say it, and a brave little girl you were. I also heard the reply the brute made, and if I had been there I would have choked those words down his miserable throat. Now, I know all, and will meditate upon this over a good cigar. You must try and get some sleep now, so never mind your cares for awhile, and everything shall work out all right."

"And you will not get any sleep at all," said Gertrude. "Oh, let me go and you stay here."

"No," said Ned, "if I am to be your guardian the sooner I begin to show my authority the better, and the porter might be inquisitive if you were to go out; besides, I had four good hours' sleep before you came, and it is very seldom that I require any more than that at a time."

"Why," said Gertrude, "you told me that you were thinking of me; so how could that be if you were sleeping?"

"I meant," said truthful Ned, "that I had been dreaming of you, and only awoke by hearing you talk so emphatically in the other car. Good night, brave girl;" and with a muttered prayer for forgiveness for the lie he had told, Ned left.

In the smoking-room Ned tried to think calmly about the situation, but his brain seemed all in a whirl. There was only one idea that he could seem to grasp, and that was that he loved this girl madly, hopelessly. It was no use to deceive himself longer, and he felt that he had not strength to resist the passion that overwhelmed him. He let his mind wander away in a dreamy picture of a future, with her for his bride; and of Randolph Peel and his doings he gave no heed.

As the train stopped at Portland, Ned was awakened from his reverie by the entrance of two policemen, who informed the startled porter that they had a warrant for the arrest of a young lady who boarded his car when passing another train.

"Why, sah, nobody boarded dis car," protested

the porter. "I'se been on duty here all night, and no one has got on here since we left Vanceboro."

"You may think so, but my instructions read that she entered through a window near the rear of the car, and is probably, by this time, sound asleep in a berth; so let me pass, as there is no time to lose."

"May I ask," said Ned, who now stepped in front of them, "what the charge against her is?"

"The charge," said the spokesman of the two, "is the theft of some valuable papers from her travelling companion; and my instructions, by wire, are to obtain the papers or keep her until the owner arrives, so please stand aside until I find her."

"Not so fast, my friend," said Ned. "I have a little interest in this young lady, and I tell you that that charge is as false as the devil. She never stole any papers; and what is more she will never give any up."

"I don't know anything about that," said the policeman; "that matter shall be determined by the proper authorities. In the meantime, she is my prisoner."

"You had better try to lay a hand on her," said

Ned, "and you will have the biggest contract of your life. Never while I have breath shall you get by me." Ned looked really dangerous, and the policeman suspected that he meant about all he said. The conductor now appeared on the scene and told the officers of the law that they must make haste as he could not keep the train waiting much longer.

"Conductor!" said Ned, "this is the biggest outrage that ever was perpetrated. It is true that a young lady fled for protection to this train from a drunken villain; but she never stole anything in her life, I swear it."

"What you say," said the conductor, "may be true; but the law must take its course, even though it be a crooked one. Her only plan now will be to go quietly with them, and she can have her revenge upon the instigator of this in due time."

"All right," said Ned; "she will go, and I will go with her. You need not take the trouble to look for her, as I will call her. You two stay where you are, and do not come a step nearer or I will knock you down. When she leaves the car, one of you walk a considerable distance ahead to show the way, and the other can keep behind, to

prevent her from escaping, if you think it is necessary; but I want to impress you with the fact that it would not be safe to come too close. Do you understand?"

Ned turned and entered the car, and going to the berth, drew the curtains gently aside. His heart smote him, as he gazed upon that trusting face, with her eyes closed in sleep. It was hard to waken her for such a miserable purpose, and he felt tempted to go back to the policemen and kick them both off the train. But prudence came to his rescue, and bending down, he softly called, "Gertrude." She awoke with a start, and he told her that a message had come from her guardian, and that she must stop off here to answer it.

"Oh, no!" said she. "You promised to protect me, and now you are not going to leave me with that man again?"

"Trust me, Gertrude," said Ned; "I will go with you; and, believe me, it is for the best."

"Forgive me, Ned, I would not doubt you; and it must be all right if you think so; I shall be ready in a few minutes."

Ned walked back to the policemen in a dream.

He had never thought his name a handsome one, but on her lips it sounded angelic. It made him reckless, and he ordered the two officers of the law off the train without ceremony. They rebelled at this, but when he gave them just five seconds to get out, they did not like the look in his eye and obeyed.

Ned again gave them their instructions as to what they were to do, and, seeing them at a safe distance, waited in the doorway of the car until Gertrude appeared.

He assisted her to alight, and taking her arm they followed the policeman who kept well in front.

Ned was perplexed. He knew that he must tell her what the situation was, but how could he bring himself to do it. Gertrude was curious to know what could be wanted with her, and Ned evaded an answer as long as possible.

"I will tell you," said Ned. "There is going to be an execution here early in the morning, and I thought you would like to witness it. Do not shudder; when you know all I think you will rather enjoy it. Old Banana-Peel has lived long enough; in fact, too long, and I am going to murder him."

"Ned! What is the matter? Are you crazy? What has Mr. Peel done now? Do not frighten me any more," said Gertrude with a sob.

"Forgive me, Gertrude, and let us look at the funny side of the case. Do you know that in the eyes of the law you are suspected of being a criminal; and that you are now a prisoner. Old Peel has had you arrested for stealing his papers. It is the best joke I ever heard," said Ned, with a laugh that could be heard for a mile.

"Ned, how can you say such a thing? I am a prisoner? And who, pray, but you, has me in charge?"

"There is the individual," said Ned, pointing to the leading policeman, "and there is another strong arm of the law behind us. Here, you policeman, hold on until I talk to you; I am not dangerous now."

The policeman waited patiently for them to come up, and in answer to Ned's enquiries said that Gertrude would be detained in the office of the Chief until Mr. Peel arrived, which would be but a short time, as another train should be along in the course of a couple of hours.

"Ned, you will not leave me; will you?" begged Gertrude, as they reached the grim-looking building that they were obliged to enter. "I dare not meet that man alone, as I know he is determined to rob me of those papers, and without you I am sure I shall be helpless. Oh, what shall I do! What shall I do!"

"Cheer up little girl; our turn is coming, and we will yet make that man regret that he ever was born."

"Pass on, brave heart, and we will follow," said he to the policeman.

A sergeant of police met them inside the door, and courteously showed them to a private room, to await the arrival of the coming guardian.

"Well," said Ned, "I never was in jail before, but if none of it were any worse than this, and I had such fair company, I would not mind being in jail pretty often."

"Oh, how can you make this a trifling matter?" said Gertrude; "and, anyway, I am the prisoner and not you, and I think you might tell me what I am going to do."

"If I am not, strictly speaking, a prisoner," said Ned, "no doubt I shall be soon. In all probability I shall be arrested as an accomplice; and the fact that I have been found in such dangerous company will make it go hard with me. As to a way out of the difficulty, the only remedy will be to murder old Peel, and with your permission I will do it. It is the only way to rid you of him, until another year has passed; yes, the only way, unless you get married. By the way, if you would do so, I could tell you of a dozen fine fellows who are breaking their hearts over you; and if you would take one of them, you know that would solve the difficulty at once. Oh, Miss Hopkins, Gertrude, if I had been born to a higher sphere in life, if I were only worthy of you, if I dared think of such an impossibility as that you could ever care for me, my whole life would be spent in protecting you from even the shadow of a care."

"Mr. Kennedy," said Gertrude, "you are not totally bad, and I will tell you frankly that your worst fault is keeping bad company. How could you ever think that anyone would marry you, when, at any moment, you are ex[illegible]ting to be arrested as

an accomplice in a theft; as well as for being found in the company of a suspicious character?"

"Gertrude, do not trifle with me," said Ned. "Do not let such a mad idea possess me as that you could ever care for me. You have been persecuted so long that you do not know what you are saying."

"I did not say anything," said Gertrude. "In fact I was thinking that I could not do any better than marry Mr. Peel when he arrives. Do you think he would have me? You might suggest it to him. What a generous act it would be, and you would surely be heaping coals of fire upon his head. Besides, if he acted upon the suggestion, it would be, to him, a more refined torture than murder, and more lasting. Perhaps, too, I could reform him, and then we 'should live happily together ever after.'"

"Gertrude, you are torturing me. Oh, could I dare think that you would link your life with mine. It cannot be possible that you would. Speak, Gertrude; have I any hope?"

"None, Ned, unless we could be married before Mr. Peel arrives. You know that then you are going to murder him, and, of course will be sent to

prison, and you may not find it so pleasant as you now think it. Perhaps, though, if we were married you would lessen the punishment a little. I would not want to lose you so soon for such a worthless creature as he."

"You jewel!" cried Ned, springing towards her with outstretched arms. She evaded his clasp and said, "Ned, you must not be silly; and anyway you must hurry and get a clergyman."

"Will you kindly pass me my hat, then," said Ned, "and I will have one here in very short order."

Gertrude handed him his hat; but, instead of taking it he seized her wrist, and clasped her in his arms.

"Oh, Ned, I did not think you would be so mean!" she cried. "Well, now when you are satisfied, I wish you would hurry and get a clergyman. If Mr. Peel gets here before you return I shall marry him immediately."

Ned rushed out; and, with the aid of the policeman whom he had so abused such a short time before, soon succeeded in getting a clergyman. In the private office of the chief, with Gertrude's two

captors as witnesses, they were made husband and wife.

When the worthy Mr. Peel arrived he was shown to the office where they were waiting for him; and found his charge sitting on Ned's knee. She arose at his entrance, and solemnly introduced Ned to the astonished Peel as her husband.

Randolph Peel was speechless. White with rage and fear, he stood before them, and his lips refused to utter a sound.

"Mr. Peel," said Ned, "you are probably aware of the fact that this lady is now free from your clutches. No punishment could be too severe for you, for the faithlessness you have shown to your dead friend, and for the persecution and humiliation to which you have subjected his daughter. As, however, her sole desire is to be rid of you, and never to see your face again, you will be at liberty to go, after giving an account of your stewardship —wretched one though it will be.

I have had a warrant made out for your arrest; but, as there would be some delay involved in taking you as a prisoner to her home in St. John, if you will consent to accompany us to Boston, the war-

rant shall not be served. After her affairs are adjusted, you can depart to any place you desire—and the farther the better. In the meantime, should you try to escape I will spare no time or expense necessary in order to bring you to justice.

A few hours later they all took the train for Boston. Ned rewarded Gertrude's captors generously for the courtesy and patience they had shown while acting in the discharge of their duty. Mr. Peel rendered up his accounts as best he could, and Ned found that by judicious management he could still save a large part of his bride's fortune.

As for the guardian, he troubled them no more; and they even, in time, forgave him on account of the blessings that came to them through his crooked ways.

# FAIRIES.

# FAIRIES.

## A STORY OF CHILDHOOD.

"Do you wonder where the fairies are
The folks declare have vanished?"

MY children, I am weary to-night—oh, so weary—and will those little tongues of yours never cease their clamor? You tease me so for a story—only, just one—and if I tell you one you will not be content? Oh, yes; I know you may say you will not tease any more, but you will just the same. Hush, then, and listen!

Once, when I was a little bit of a boy four years old, I was one day playing on the lawn at tea-party. I had a tent and in it set a little table and two chairs, one of which I had intended for a doll, but mamma would not let me have it. She said boys had no business with dolls, so the chair was to have remained empty.

When I sat down at the table what was my surprise to see in the supposed vacant chair the prettiest little girl I had ever seen. She was sitting just where a beam of light fell from a slit in the canvas, and I blinked my eyes, and thought surely she must have been but a part of that ray of light. And well she might have been. She was as fair and pure as the brightest ray from the brightest sun. Her hair looked like sunbeams dancing on rippling water; her cheeks and lips as the opening rose, unsullied by anything less pure than the dewdrop from heaven; her eyes could read your soul at a glance, and when she spoke it was with a voice of unearthly sweetness. Oh, she was dainty and fair, this little stranger whom I almost mistook for a sunbeam.

"Will you pardon me, little boy," said she, "for coming to see you without an invitation, and will you let me join you in your tea-party? We shall have such a lovely time, you and I, and it seems to be too bad for you to play here all alone. Will you let me stay?"

I do not know, children, what reply I made. I do not think I made any. I was afraid to speak or

to move for fear the vision would melt away, and I could only gaze on that matchless face, spellbound.

The ray of sunlight passed from her face. She sat there a moment, just, I think, to let me see that she was not less lovely when it had gone. The spell, however, was soon to be broken. Mamma called me and I turned my head to answer. When I looked again my fairy had disappeared, and I searched and called for her in vain.

I told Mamma all about it when she came, and she said I had been dreaming. She showed me that I had not tasted my cakes, and that looked like proof of what she said, but still I knew better.

That night I dreamed about my fairy, and in my sleep I called: "Won't you come back, little fairy?" and then I thought a voice answered, "Yes, little boy, I am coming back."

The next day I spent alone in my garden among the trees, and I continually called, "Won't you come back, little fairy; oh, won't you come back?" and I even cried with all my might for her to come back just once again.

A gentle wind was stirring the leaves and blossoms in the apple trees overhead and, blending with

its music, I caught a note of childish laughter. I looked into the blossom-laden tree—than which there is nothing fairer on God's green earth—and out of the blossoms a form took shape, the form of my little fairy.

"Do not call so loudly, little boy, I hear you. I hear you when you only whisper."

"Why, then," I said, "did you let me call you so long before you came? I wanted you so much."

"Oh, you did, and you thought I had nothing to do but come just because you called. How did you know but that I might be busy and could not come?"

"Are you ever busy?" I said. "Do you ever work? What can you do? Where do you live? Won't you show me your home? How far away is it?"

"Oh, little boy, what a lot of questions. and must I answer them all? How can I ever remember so many?"

We sat down on the grass, and I listened as she talked. I did not think that there was so much to talk about in all the world, and I do not think so

yet, for she knew more than we do in our world. We think sometimes, my children, that our world is very big, but it is only a small place, after all. Oh, it is so small that I sometimes wonder God does not lose it among his great works as we would lose a blade of grass in a green meadow, and never be able to find it again.

She opened wide to me those "ivory gates and golden," and I wandered with her through that enchanted land. I saw a loveliness that was almost maddening. It would be to any but a child. There were countless faces as fair as hers. Oh, the laughter, the music, the unearthly happiness in that land, and never a harsh note. I was very young then, my children, and my life at that time was pure. It must have been pure to have seen that vision; but, when I think of the unspeakable bliss that I was permitted to see and feel, it seems that I must have been in that place, even with all the innocence that was then mine, but as a grating discord.

Many, many times did she lead me through that wonderful place in the days that followed. Months —I had almost said years—passed, and its charm

only increased, and a countless number of those bright fairies were my constant companions.

The first change came when I asked them if I might bring a boy, whom I somewhat admired, to play with us. They made no reply, but suddenly disappeared, and I did not see any of them again for several days.

I said no more to them about bringing my new friend, but I sought his company, and that of other boys more. They gave me my first lessons in worldliness, and I can see now, as I could not see then, why fairies could not have such for playmates.

They kept coming less frequently, and there came a time when I saw them no more. But still for a long time, in my play, I fancied that I could hear their childish laughter, though I could not see them. I wonder if it were true or was it only imagination that made me think their laugh had a little tinge of sadness. I do not know. I would not call them then. My foolish, childish pride, prevented.

Many years have passed, my children, since I have heard those blessed voices. I have, since my childhood days often called them—oh, called them loud

and long, and calling, wept, but they do not come. I believe

> "They live in the same green world to-day
> As in by-gone ages olden;"

but I know that I have hurt them in some way that they do not answer, for they must hear me call. Sometimes I go out alone at night, when every noise is hushed, and the heart seems purer, and listen, listen for them; and, yes, sometimes I even seem to hear their happy voices, but they are oh, so far away.

Will they ever come back? Yes, if I can ever be a child in heart again; but, oh, my children I have grown too worldly, and

> "The worldly man for its joys may yearn
> Where pride and pomp embolden;
> But never for him do the hinges turn
> Of the ivory gates and golden."

They will never turn again for me. No, it is now too late; but I wanted to tell you that they live to-day as ever, and you, my children, can listen for them. Listen patiently, listen gently. Oh, you must have sharp ears to hear them first; but when

you know them and they know you, they will then be your constant playmates. And, my children, I want to tell you that if they ever leave you, and you call but they do not return, do not blame them, blame only yourselves. They are very easily hurt; but, to those who seek them truly with the unspotted purity of childhood's heart they will open up before them a vision of beauty such as the sin-scarred soul cannot even dream of. When sin enters they take their flight; and then, however loud and long you may call you shall call in vain, for they can never return.