

## OUR STORIES

## The Dregs of the Cup.

He sat at his desk, his head resting on his arms and a weight of unutterable bitterness in his soul. Before him were two letters. One was from his father and one was from a girl. A cruel chance had brought them to him in the same mail. They were not nice letters, and he had not enjoyed reading them. His father's was very short. It said:

"You have chosen to like everything which your home training and influence should have taught you to abhor. You have chosen to drift away from and ignore my lessons. You have chosen vile men and women for your companions. In short, you have done everything that common decency and filial obedience forbade. This is to let you know that you are no longer my son. In your future life you must look to yourself. You will get no help from your mother or me. Your allowance will be stopped at once, and I wish never to see you in my house again."

The girl's letter was still shorter.

"I loved you and I trusted you. My confidence was perfect. I cannot think how you—you of all men—could have sunk so low. Was it kind of you to keep silence and let me think myself engaged to the creature you have become? I pray God that I shall never see you again."

The boy read and reread these letters, and at every reading the iron sank deeper into his soul. There was justice in each rebuke and he knew it, although in his unenlightened mind he could not see why his punishment must be so bitter. He had only done what the rest of the fellows were doing. He had held his peace until his money gave out, and then had waited for the first of the month and his check from home. His deeds were not criminal. They were no worse than those of his companions. In truth, he was, if anything, better than they. He had been called a prig, and on one occasion a "sissy" for his squeamishness.

He was no worse than any one else. And why should he be punished? Yet his punishment had come: a cruel, unjust punishment, he thought.

In his poor foolish brain there was but one idea. His life was over. He looked back upon the twenty-three years he had spent on earth and confessed to himself that he had made a miserable botch of living. He began to reason out his situation: His father and mother had cast him off. The one girl on earth of whom he could think decent thoughts had done the same. He was destitute. He had no money, nor had he the earning capacity. A liberal allowance had led to years of indiscretion; the consciousness of his father's wealth and the knowledge that he would never be compelled to work for his living had engendered habits of laziness. He was mentally incapable of concentrating himself, and physically lacking the stamina necessary for work. He realized that if thrown upon his own resources and compelled to earn his own living, he would be helpless. He drew the loose change from his pockets and counted it. Thirteen dollars. In three days the first of the month would come, and with it bills innumerable. He could not even pay his room rent. He would have to give up his rooms. He would lose his furniture, his books and all the precious knick-knacks that he had gathered around him.

He began to review his transgressions, trying to look upon them impartially and trying to decide whether, in the sight of God and man, his punishment was equitable. In the heat of his self-argument and the agony of his repentance he misjudged himself, making his peccadilloes crimes and his crimes imperishable sins. Then he tried to think of his redeeming qualities, but they were such misty, intangible things that he gave it up, and concluded that he was all bad—a child of sin, a moral leper, with no future and no past—a thing set apart from the world and having no place in it.

When he had reasoned thus far the right and the wrong of the case were hopelessly muddled in his brain. He could not see the points of consideration to which he was entitled, nor the injustice of his father's hasty judgment, nor could he read between the lines of his sweetheart's letter and note the theatrical joy with which she had welcomed the opportunity of writing such a tragic note. "Just like a novel," she had said.

He only saw himself in the light of his father's displeasure and his own relentless conscience. And he was so unhappy and distressed in mind and body that there appeared to him but one way of ending his trouble, and that was by ending himself; by resigning the unequal contest with time and taking up his struggle with eternity.

He sat at his desk a long time thinking it all out. At length, when he straightened up and stretched his cramped arms, he had made up his mind.

Opening a drawer of his desk he took out a pile of letters, which he tossed into the empty grate and set on fire. They burned slowly and he turned them over and over with the poker to let air in and aid combustion. Every now and then the flames would light up a letter and bring some phrase into view. He could not help watching for these illuminations and reading stray sentences, although every word that he was able to decipher made him wince. The letters were almost consumed when he reached up to the mantle and took down a photograph of a coarse-looking girl with a damnatory dedication written across its back. He threw this in with the letters.

When the pile of ashes in the grate informed him that his work was done, he went to his bureau and took from a drawer an ominous-looking blue steel revolver, with five greasy, leaden messengers of destruction peering from its cylinders.

He sat down in an arm-chair and put the revolver to his temple. The small circle of steel against his flesh gave him an eerie feeling. He removed it, put the barrel in his mouth, trying to think what his sensations would be as the bullet crashed through his brain and spattered gray matter on the walls and ceiling. Then he put the revolver down and decided that death by a pistol ball, though instantaneous and probably painless, was not neat, and he wanted to look neat when they found him.

He thought of chloroform. He had been under its influence once, and the recollection of its sickening, choking odor came to him with disagreeable vividness. No, chloroform would not do. He had heard that prussic acid was the quickest and deadliest poison of all, but he had none.

It seemed an easy thing to take life, yet he was not finding it so easy, after all. Seneca and some of the other victims of Nero opened their veins and died in a hot bath. He almost decided on that, but he put away the idea when he thought of the shock to the person's feelings who would see him lying there in the discolored bath tub, half covered with bloody water.

It was late at night and he was brain-weary with so much worrying. Half unconsciously he commenced to undress, all the time trying to decide the question of how to kill himself. When he absent-mindedly crawled into bed he was still in doubt, and before he had come to any satisfactory conclusion he fell asleep.—William James Coffin, in Truth.

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## A Modern Love Story.

"I love you."

This is the only way to begin a love story. Long-winded descriptions of the hero and heroine, or ornate accounts of what the landscape looked like, whether it snowed, rained, hailed and which way the wind blew, were all well enough, but the time has gone by for that. What we crave now is action, and something left to the imagination. So that when Pellington Piker said what he did say in our brilliant opening, he wasted no further words, but clasped to his clerly breast the rich heiress,

its present intensity if an anti-domestic feeling were not in the background.

"Do many girls have to work? Is it right when the daughter of a man in comfortable circumstances goes to work in a store or office merely that she may have more money to spend on clothing? Has not the mother a right to have her help in the home?"

"Dignity is needed in the modern home, and that can be secured only through public sentiment manifested in institutions where housework may be taught as other professions and trades are taught. American women are clever, practical, large-hearted, and they will soon see what our present trend is leading to, and will meet the question. Women's clubs are making women less selfish, more social, and are helping to build up the right home sentiment."

In the discussion following the address, Mrs. Sawyer used a particularly forcible comparison. She said: "Members of a family are too often like beans in a sack instead of being united so closely that when one member is touched all the others vibrate."

The next meeting of the home department will be held on Wednesday, November 20th. The subject will be "Dress," with Mrs. Patrick for leader.

## NEBRASKA NEWSPAPERS.

It seems, when one first thinks of it, that there are only a few newspaper names in current use; but a small investigation has shown that the 608 publications listed for Nebraska in last June have over 150 different titles among them. An examination of the list shows some curious things, throwing light also on the workings of some newspaper men's minds. Every name had a reason for being at one time.

The most frequently occurring name in Nebraska is News. There are thirty-seven Newses. Next come thirty-four Journals. These are both excellent names. They tell the story exactly. The News aims to tell what has happened, and the Journal to keep a daily record. Both names are beyond criticism.

Next in number are Republicans, of which Nebraska has twenty-nine. There are also sixteen Democrats, thirteen Independents, one Independent-Democrat, and two Populists.

A great many of the names have a bearing on the supposed mission of the publication. Some have distinct reference to journalism, some have not. We find no less than twenty-six Heralds, accompanied by one Trumpet, one Bugle, and two Clarions. Quite a number assume to be judges and leaders in their communities; there are twenty Tribunals, and one Tribunal, two Pilots, three Monitors, one Friend, one Plain Dealer, two Criterion, fourteen Leaders, eleven Advocates, three Teachers and one Practical Educator. Those who adhere most closely to facts are the twenty-two Times, eight Records, six Chronicles, seventeen Gazettes, eleven Reviews, ten Registers, two Transcripts, four Bulletins, two News Records, three Indexes, one Recorder and one Local.

Some profess a degree of humility before their patrons; there are fifteen Couriers, three Messengers, four Expresses and one Newsboy. Others go to the opposite extreme, as the two Champions, three Chiefs and one Chieftain. Still other views of the sphere to be filled are indicated by the eleven Reporters, two News Reporters and one Editor, two Graphics, seven Advertisers, one Teller, one Painter, two Visitors, one Call and one Echo. A peculiar bent of some minds is implied by three Beacons, one Beacon Light, one Headlight, three Observers, one Watchman, six Sentinels, two Videttes, one Picket, three Signals, and one Telescope. The martial spirit is not lacking; we have four Blades, seven Standards, one Banner, one Veteran, and one Free Lance.

Returning to journalism, we find eight Presses, four Free Presses, one Nonpareil, three Telegraphs, one Telegram, one Dispatch, one Phonograph, one Quill, one Faber, two Ledgers, and one Items. There is one who is content to be known as an Exchange merely, three who unblushingly proclaim themselves Clippers and one Rustler. We are only beginning to get among the curiosities. There are seven Arguses and one Eye; sixteen Suns, six Stars, three Worlds and one Globe; sixteen Enterprises, two Advances, two Progresses, and one Excelstor, and on the other hand six Posts, six Eagles, three Bees of all kinds and one Wasp; one Primitive Christian and one Hoof and Horn, three Mirrors and one Looking Glass.

For patriotism, we have two straight Patriots, six Citizens, one Statesman, two Unions, one Republic and one Nation. For vocation, five Farmers, one Granger, one Yeoman, one Workman, one Worker, one Laborer, and one Stockman. There are three Eras, two New Eras and a Coming New Era, two Homesteads, an Inter Ocean, a Frontier, six Pioneers and a Pioneer Grip. Whatever that may be; three Breezes, a Blizzard and two Waves; a Locomotive and a Hub, a Mercury, which perhaps should be listed with the clippers and rustlers; and a Grit and a Quiz.—Morton's Conservative.

whom two weeks before he had met at Dune-Dune-by-the-Sea, and whom he had tracked to her house—or rather palace—on upper Fifth avenue.

"I know it," said Mildred Goldbonds, as she yielded swiftly to his loving embrace, "and I love you, but what are we to do? You are too poor even to think of supporting yourself in the style to which I have been accustomed, while I am rich beyond the dreams of avarice, and of course, there is a wide gulf between us, and papa would scorn you, I know. But stay! I have an idea. He is even now in the next room, talking stocks. I will listen, and find out what is going up. Papa, as you know, is the head of eight railroad systems, and knows all about it. Do not move until I return."

It seemed hours to Pellington Piker, as he sat with his feet on the eight thousand dollar rug and waited, but in reality it was only ten minutes before the girl he loved threw herself once more into his arms.

"Darling," she cried, "we are saved! Can you raise any money for margin?"

"I can mortgage my salary for two years ahead," said Pellington. "That will be a thousand dollars."

"Splendid!" replied Mildred. "I heard papa say that tomorrow they will push up Pumpkin Consolidated one hundred points. He said it was a snap, and the chance of a lifetime. We are saved!"

The next night at the same hour Pellington Piker stood in the same room. But what a change was there, from the hopeful young man who had left her, to this pale, emaciated creature who took both of her hands in his and sobbed even as he spoke.

"It's all over, darling," he said. "I mortgaged my salary, pawned my few effects, borrowed all the little wealth of my aged mother and put it in Pumpkin Consolidated, which dropped two hundred points in two hours. I am ruined."

At this moment Mildred's father entered the room.

"What's this I hear about Pumpkin Consolidated?" he said. "You haven't been playing that game, have you?"

His daughter, with tears in her eyes, confessed all. "It was our only chance to get married, papa dear," she said, "as I knew you would never consent to a poor man. And I overheard what you said last night."

Her father smiled grimly.

"Why, I only did that," he said, "to get rid of my butler. He was getting too fresh on the tips he had heard from me and the money he had made, and I fired that off last night about Pumpkin Consolidated just to get rid of him. And to think you should have heard it! Ha! I said Pumpkin was going up. Poor fellow! How you must have been soaked."

"I lost everything," said Pellington Piker, bravely trying to smile.

"Never mind!" said the old man. It was my fault, and I ought to make it up to you. Even a railroad magnate has a conscience. Be my office boy for six months and keep your ears open, and then you will be rich enough to marry my daughter."

All's well that ends well.—Tom Mason, in New York Life.

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## Two Good Sayings.

Anyone who has much to do with young men who are earning their first money, is likely to be painfully aware how many of them think nothing of borrowing small sums here and there which they find it hard to repay. This is nothing new, however. Benjamin Franklin had the same state of things in his mind when he said: "Better go to bed supperless than rise in debt." To the same purpose is the story of the broom dealer in the old books—"A proud, lazy young fellow came to him for a besom upon trust; to whom the old man said: 'Friend, hast thou no money? Borrow of thy back, and borrow of thy belly; they'll ne'er ask thee again, whereas I shall be dunning thee every day.'"—The Conservative.

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He—It seems as if I had loved you forever.

She—Well, it is nearly three weeks.