

HIS WORD OF HONOR.

A Tale of the Blue and the Gray.

BY E. WERNER.

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CHAPTER V.

But Florence was silent. She only cast a beseeching glance at Edward, but the latter knew his advantage too well. He was aware that there was still one means of parting the two lovers, and did not delay using the weapon.

"You have come at an unfortunate time, Mr. Roland," he said, with cutting scorn. "I shall be at your service for the explanation you will probably demand at any hour tomorrow; today I regret that it is impossible. At my uncle's urgent desire, my marriage with his daughter takes place this very day; all the arrangements for the ceremony are completed; the justice of the peace will arrive in an hour. You probably understand that our affair must be deferred for the present."

Roland had turned deadly pale; he scarcely heard the last words; his eyes rested only on Florence. At last, with a violent effort he murmured, almost unintelligibly:

"You heard. What have you to say?"

"Answer!"

Florence stood as if utterly crushed. For the first time she realized how unpardonable her weakness had been, and that the decision which she had regarded as a sacrifice to filial love was really an act of treason to the man to whom her promise and her faith were pledged. In the consciousness of this guilt, she did not even attempt to defend herself, but, instead of answering, burst into passionate weeping.

"I know enough!" said William in a hollow tone. "Farewell!"

A flash of triumph blazed in Edward's eyes, but he exulted too soon. The moment when William turned from her broke the spell which had

trigued was snatched from him at the last moment, yet he did not quit the field like a vanquished man.

The menacing glance which rested on the young couple ought to have warned them; it was the look of a man sure of his vengeance and his ultimate triumph.

CHAPTER VI.

As the door closed behind her cousin, Florence uttered a sigh of relief. She had feared an instant outbreak of the quarrel, which seemed at an end, at least for the moment, but the last threatening words of the two men had not escaped her notice.

"What are you to do?" she asked anxiously. "What is the meaning of the concealed threats you exchanged with Edward? William, I beseech you—"

"Say no more," he interrupted gravely, almost sternly. "This is a matter which concerns you men alone. You hear that no explanation will take place at present. Let that suffice."

Florence looked timidly at him. The dark cloud on his brow was not caused by the dispute with Edward; she knew only too well what had occasioned it.

"You are angry with me—still!" she said, softly.

"No, I understand that you were deceived by the intrigue, that a father's last wish has a powerful influence, but I had expected my affianced wife to show more resolution, more confidence. I, too, remained for months with no message from you; I, too, heard that you assented to the separation your father decreed; but I did not believe it for an instant. What urged me hither was merely the torturing uncertainty, a vague presentiment of misfortune.

With feminine instinct, she had touched the right chord. William's jealousy blazed up at the thought of the possibility suggested. He, too, knew Edward, and was aware that Edward would make every effort to wrest from him the prize which he had just regained. Florence was not created for a heroine. To leave her now was indeed to lose her. Torn from the sheltering trunk, she would flutter helplessly, like a vine in the storm, and become a prey to the tempest.

Roland made no reply, but a terrible conflict was raging in his soul. Now, for the first time, he understood the warning of Colonel Burney, who had been unwilling to let him go into temptation.

He had manfully resisted it, when Harrison assailed him; but it was very different to stand face to face with Florence, listen to her entreaties and see her tears. The young officer loved her with all the passion of his four-and-twenty years, and his strength threatened to forsake him.

Florence saw the conflict in his face, and, clinging to him like a timid dove, she pleaded more and more fervently, while the temptation stole nearer and nearer. After all, why was it necessary that he should return today? There was no battle in prospect; the soldier would not be missed from his post. What if he should stay merely until the morrow? Much—nay, everything—would be decided by that time. Death was already knocking at the door, and, as soon as Mr. Harrison passed from earth, his daughter would be free to follow her lover.

Until tomorrow!

A pretext was easily found. Springfield was within the enemy's lines. The way might be obstructed; return impossible; any one of the hundred perils which threatened the daring rider might intervene. It was but a word which stood between him and his happiness—true, his word of honor.

(To be continued.)

"You are right! I forgot. You are bound; but, so, too, am I. You hear, I gave my word of honor, and where duty calls—"

"Duty? To whom? Your first, most sacred duty is to protect me. I shall stay. I have not the heart to leave my father. You will go, when you see that I cling to you in mortal anguish? William, our love is at stake!"

"And so is my honor! Florence! Merciful heaven! Hear me! Do not torture me longer by your entreaties! Do you not understand that I must go, even though the whole happiness of my life depended on my remaining?"

She really did not understand. The spoiled, idolized daughter of the rich planter could not believe that anything could be more valued than herself. She had had before her eyes the dangerous example of a passion which set aside duty and honor to gain her hand. Only an hour before she had heard the confession from Edward's lips. From William she always heard of honor and duty; and the old suspicion that there was a lack of love stirred in her heart.

And yet, her whole soul drew her to the man who seemed so hard and unyielding—she would not lose him.

"William!" There was no reproach in her voice now. The tones were sweet and persuasive. "William, do not leave me; you do not know what I must encounter during the next few hours. My father will demand the fulfillment of my promise. If I refuse, the excitement will perhaps cause his death. Then I shall be wholly in Edward's power, and you do not know him as I do. He has a fiendish will, which can overcome all resistance. During his suit I have often felt like the bird spellbound by the gaze of the serpent. It knows that it is going to destruction, yet flutters into its jaws. Have you courage to leave me to this power? I—fear it."

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(To be continued.)

Paving Stones and Revolutions.

The reasons why another reign of terror was not recently inaugurated in France is thus stated by the Chicago Times-Herald: "One hundred—fifty—twenty-five years ago these things would have set the mobs going. They would be throwing paving stones at one another! Paving stones? Ah, there is the secret of the whole matter. The mobs have been robbed of their ammunition. The people stand ready to hoist the red flag and run riot, but what are the bare hands against maces and muskets? The rioter stoops to pick up a paving stone, and his fingers scratch vainly along the smooth surface of the asphalt with which most of the streets of Paris are now paved. Ciel! He is helpless! He straightens up and stares vaguely about him for a moment, and then some commissary of police runs him in. Men and women follow, shouting and shaking their fists, but there are no paving stones for them to hurl. So the Republic continues to stand. It is wonderful! A little bit of asphalt prevents the killing of people by the scores, and history is robbed of whole chapters of bloody details. Vive le tar barrel!"

Dangerous Friction.

An insurance adjuster was sent to a Massachusetts town to adjust a loss on a building that had been burned.

"How did the fire start?" asked an acquaintance who met him on his homeward trip.

"I couldn't say certainly, and nobody seemed able to tell," said the adjuster, "but it struck me that it might have been the result of friction."

"What do you mean by that?" asked his friend.

"Well," said the insurance man, gravely, "friction sometimes comes from rubbing a ten-thousand-dollar policy on a five-thousand-dollar building."

AT PATSY MULL'S.

For the last five years of his life Colonel Mull had been assisted in his duties as postmaster by his daughter Patsy, and when he died it seemed only right and proper, considering his historic services to his country, that his daughter should be made the incumbent of the office from which death had taken him.

Patsy was not popular but she was an institution. It seemed almost as much a part of one's patriotic duty to believe in Patsy as to believe in the constitution of the United States. She was a taciturn woman, who kept to herself and her cats, of which there were so many that it would lay one open to the suspicion of inaccuracy to mention the number. They were wild-eyed cats who regarded humanity in general with the same suspicion which their mistress showed. But that may have been largely because they were kept forever in twilight. The building used as a postoffice at Helder was owned by Patsy, and only the front part of it was, literally speaking, federal property. The rear of the structure had long been used by the Mulls for a family residence—in fact, it had been their home before a postoffice was mentioned at Helder. The upper story had fallen into desuetude, but in three rooms on the ground floor Miss Patsy had her being. These rooms never were visited by the sunshine, for not only had they a dismal northern exposure, but the gloom increased by drawn blinds. Miss Patsy kept her house mum. It confided nothing to the curious. Her front door was the door of the postoffice, and behind the glass pigeon holes no one was ever permitted to set foot. Her rear door was almost equally inhospitable, and its mistress seldom emerged from it save to empty the ash pan, and then she locked the door behind her while she went on that errand.

They were easy-going folks at Helder. What was, was right, had long been a sort of unconscious proverb with them. Perhaps they had got into this philosophic way of looking at things because, as a community, they had suffered a good many disappointments.

It sometimes seemed as if the town

had forgotten his truth or another son his duty to his parents.

This went on for some time, and Helder became pathetic. A sort of apathy rested upon the people. They sang melancholy hymns at church, they talked of the sorrows of life, and above all they resigned themselves to the inevitable.

But it happened that Jeannette Vail came to town. She was the niece of the Hansons, who had lived there always. The town felt a flurry of something akin to excitement at the advent of this glowing young beauty, the heiress, as it was learned, to a goodly fortune. The sight of her on her wheel, glancing along the streets, was invigorating, and Helder temporarily forgot its depression. A dance was got up in her honor, and her gaiety and charm seemed to bring fresh life to the girls whose lovers never came back and to the young men whom fortune had stranded in the quiet spot.

The first time Jeannette had occasion to go to the postoffice there was a sensation. As usual, one of the wild-eyed cats was looking out of the window.

"Dear me, postmistress," cried Jeannette, with good-natured condescension, "is that your cat?"

The cat blinked gloomily, and the postmistress did not answer, but as she appeared at the window another cat was visible on her shoulder.

"You must be fond of cats," said the girl pleasantly. The group in the postoffice held their breath. It was unheard of for the dour Patsy to be addressed in this fashion.

"Have you any mail for Miss Vail—Jeannette Vail?"

The postmistress shook her head. "But you haven't looked. How can you know?"

With a flash of anger from her little eyes Patsy looked, but returned with a mute denial.

"It's strange," said Miss Vail, doubtfully. "I hope you have made quite sure." What Miss Patsy did to cause the cat on her shoulder to arch its back and spit at the girl outside the window it would be difficult to imagine, but the onlookers did not appear to be surprised. Miss Vail went home that night, ill-content, and the next day she was at the postoffice again. Again the postmistress indi-

PHYSIOLOGIC TIDES.

Mankind Should Take More Heed of the Need of Recreation.

The comparison of an undulating swing in the higher things in life to the tidal movements of the ocean has often been made in prose and poetry, but the highest development in all things, whether mental or physical, is attained through such change and variation; the sleeping hours are as necessary as the waking hours, rest as exercise, constructive as destructive metabolism, says the Medical Record. It would be well if this truth were more generally and thoroughly appreciated.

What is it that is causing the nervous breakdowns among our business men, society women and students? Does not every one in this rushing modern life feel that there is more put upon him than he can possibly do; more work and play and engagements and cares? Yet the trouble in most cases is not that people are overworked, but that they work against physiologic law. The business man feels that there can be no pause in work if he is to win success, and it is the continuity of strain that is killing him; the scholar who studies night and day loses originality and insight and finds himself becoming a bookworm and a pedant. It is the old story of "All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy," which might well be reversed to fit the suffering from nervous exhaustion of pleasure-seekers, whose lives are blighted by ennui and discontent. The best work of our lives is not done with the feverish, overwhelmed and burdened mind which comes from continuous, unvarying strain, whether physical or mental, whether from business or pleasure. We all need the ebulliences of recreation, relaxation and quiet thought in order that there may follow the floodtides of health and strength for the real decisive efforts of life.

Man's mind is a muscle, and it, like all muscles, grows weak through disuse. It is the old story of "All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy," which might well be reversed to fit the suffering from nervous exhaustion of pleasure-seekers, whose lives are blighted by ennui and discontent. The best work of our lives is not done with the feverish, overwhelmed and burdened mind which comes from continuous, unvarying strain, whether physical or mental, whether from business or pleasure. We all need the ebulliences of recreation, relaxation and quiet thought in order that there may follow the floodtides of health and strength for the real decisive efforts of life.

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IT WAS THE LOOK OF A MAN SURE OF HIS VENGEANCE.

held the young woman captive. She knew that if he crossed the threshold she would lose him forever, and, ere he reached it, she rushed forward, clasping her arm with both hands.

"William, don't leave me so! You see that I was deceived, ensnared, and that unfortunate promise was extorted from me beside my father's sick-bed. They gave me no choice, and constantly told me you had given me up, until I believed it."

The young officer paused; his voice still sounded harsh and bitter, but at least he lingered.

"Then choose now," he said. "Now the net that ensnared you is torn, and no one shall prevent your free decision. Choose whose wife you will be."

"Yours! Yours!" cried Florence with passionate fervor, as she rushed into his arms. "Protect me, William! You do not know how they have tortured me!"

"Yes, I see it," he said, bending toward her.

His resentment could not endure against this touching entreaty. Clasp- ing her hand in his, he turned resolutely to Harrison.

"My fiancée's explanation is sufficient for me, and, I hope, for you also. As she has been the victim of a fraud—"

Edward started at the insult, and was about to answer, but Roland gave him no opportunity.

"Well, call it delusion, if the word sounds better. The fact remains the same, and also the part which you have played in it. You probably will not refuse to account to me for it, even though there must be delay. In this house and at the hour when the man who also was a father to you lies on his death-bed, such a dispute cannot be settled. So I yield to necessity and shall wait a more fitting season."

Edward looked as if he were on the point of rushing upon his enemy. The icy contempt in Roland's words enraged him even more than the insults themselves, but by exerting all his strength of will, he controlled himself.

"A more fitting season!" he repeated. "You are right, Mr. Roland. I, too, can wait, and perhaps the hour for settlement will come before you expect it."

He turned slowly toward the door. His game was lost; the prize for whose sake he had humbled himself to in-

Had I arrived a few hours later, I should have found you another's wife."

Florence bowed her head in conscious guilt. She had so dreaded this fate, yet had not had courage to boldly resist it. But for this intervention, she would indeed have fallen a victim to it.

"I am brave only when you are at my side," she confessed. "Do not reproach me, William! I was so utterly deserted; but now you are here again, and all will be well."

He gazed silently at the pale, sweet face raised so imploringly to his, and the reproof died on his lips. He loved this tender, yielding creature, with her gentle selfishness, and knew that she was capable of any sacrifice as soon as a strong hand guided and directed her.

"Then show me that you can be brave and steadfast when only my love, not my presence, protects you," he replied. "I cannot stay with you as you expect; my leave of absence gives me only a few hours more. I must rejoin my regiment today, and God alone knows when I shall be permitted to see you again."

At his first words Florence's features expressed vague anxiety; now she started in sudden terror.

"You are going? You will leave me?"

"I must. I gave my colonel my word of honor to return at sunset. This was the sole condition on which he would permit me to ride here. I must keep this promise."

"And leave me alone, exposed to the full fury of the storm which Edward will raise. You mortally insulted him, flung the word 'fraud' into his face. He will avenge himself for it, and on me, if you are out of reach."

"Then come with me," said William, with desperate resolution. "Cast everything behind you and follow me at once. Our marriage has long been agreed upon. We shall find within our lines a justice of the peace and a priest, will perform the ceremony. Day after tomorrow—tomorrow even—you can be my wife. Then come what may, at least nothing can separate us."

"And my father?" replied the young girl, with a trembling voice. "Must he, in his last hour, call in vain for his child? Must a stranger's hand close his eyes? So long as he breathes, my place is at his side."



ANY MAIL FOR MISS VAIL.

was accursed, and as if everyone who left it was false to it. There was Dick Simmons, for example, who left his mother praying for his prosperity, and who had seemed the tenderest of sons, but who had not sent a word home in years. The distant city had swallowed him up. There was Enoch Brand, who went away to make a home for his sweetheart, Vivian Oxford, and who sent no word and returned no more. There was John Harrison, who promised to send his father the money to raise the mortgage on the old place, but who forgot to keep his word. But it is foolish to cite the cases. It seemed as if there never had been a community with so much reason for bitterness of spirit as that of Helder.

The worst of it, for sensitive souls, sometimes seemed to be the fixed delight which Patsy Mull took in these disappointments. The sardonic smirk upon her face would be emphasized when the anxious watcher for the expected letter would be turned from the window empty handed day after day. She almost never spoke. She merely shook her head or nodded. It was as if she kept abreast with the doings in the town. Little went on that was not talked over in the postoffice, and if Patsy was economical with her voice she was prodigal with her curiosity.

There were certain fanciful women who said that it seemed as if Patsy was a sort of evil spirit who brooded over the town. It seemed as if she had a hunger for disappointment, and enjoyed seeing her neighbors suffer. Her little eyes, which were too close together, shone with vicious brightness when she heard that another lov-

er had forgotten his truth or another son his duty to his parents.

This went on for some time, and Helder became pathetic. A sort of apathy rested upon the people. They sang melancholy hymns at church, they talked of the sorrows of life, and above all they resigned themselves to the inevitable.

But it happened that Jeannette Vail came to town. She was the niece of the Hansons, who had lived there always. The town felt a flurry of something akin to excitement at the advent of this glowing young beauty, the heiress, as it was learned, to a goodly fortune. The sight of her on her wheel, glancing along the streets, was invigorating, and Helder temporarily forgot