

LEVISON AND CO.

BY OWEN OLIVER

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"The people who forget are the happy people!" said the Major. He looked at the light through a glass of cheap port, and put it down with a sigh.

"The people who have nothing to forget are the unhappy people," said Miss Mellor. She set her lips in hard outline, and pushed her untasted glass aside.

Miss Mellor had lived at the boarding house for seven years, and the major for two. They had only passed the time of day till this holiday evening, when they had the long dining room to themselves. All the other boarders had gone to their friends, and even the landlady was out. So the Major had taken a chair beside Miss Mellor, and suggested, with his pleasant smile, that they should make themselves better acquainted. He was an attractive man, and good-looking, though his hair was streaked with gray before its time. Miss Mellor had received his advances with a stiffness that was meant to be polite. She was a tall, thin woman of 35, with somewhat severe features; features that would have been handsome if womanly graciousness had softened them. But Miss Mellor had never learnt to be gracious.

The Major pondered a little over her retort.

"I don't know," he said, slowly. "I don't know. It is good to have things in one's memory, if you could teach them to know their place; but they pop up at all sorts of times, when you don't want them. I dare say you know how one feels about these things?"

"No," Miss Mellor stiffened herself a little more. "I don't. I've nothing worth forgetting. I can only wonder now it feels to remember."

The Major toyed with some grapes, with a mournful smile upon his face. He looked up suddenly.

"May I tell you?" he asked. Miss Mellor bowed.

"If you are not afraid to tell a stranger," she said.

The Major laughed softly.

"There is nothing that I am afraid to tell," he declared. "Nothing that I am ashamed of. I've had bad luck, that is all. There's nothing romantic in the story, either. It is interesting to me only because it is mine; mine, and might have been somebody else's, if things had turned out differently. She was decorating the church when I first saw her, standing on a ladder, and leaning over with her face among the ivy. It was the ivy round the over-mantel that brought back—what I want to forget."

Miss Mellor leaned a little forward. "Are you sure that you want to forget?" she inquired.

"No-o," the Major confessed. "No, I don't think I would choose to forget. I had only a couple of hundred a year beside my pay; but she was a country rector's daughter, and hadn't been brought up to wealth, and I thought we could manage on it. I never asked her, fortunately."

"Did she like you?" Miss Mellor asked abruptly.

"I hoped so. Now I hope she didn't. It's four years ago. People soon forget, you know."

Miss Mellor shook her head.

"I don't know," she contradicted. "I don't think I am one of the happy people who forget. Are you sure that she is?"

"God grant it!" The Major's voice was a trifle husky. "I couldn't try to blind her to a broken man."

"What broke you?"

"It was my—a relative. He didn't mean any harm, poor boy. It was a matter of eight thousand odd. I had five thousand, and I got a gratuity by retiring. I borrowed the rest. I had to pay a ruinous interest. I'm paying it still. I got employment of a sort; a drudging clerk in an office. I fill up my spare time by writing articles on military subjects. I might even think myself able to marry, if it weren't for the loan. Be thankful you have no memories of money-lenders, vampires who live on other people's flesh and blood!"

Miss Mellor's lip curled.

"I thought you were a just man, Major Parry," she remarked. "You must know that they only claim their own."

"Their own!" The Major raised his hands. "I've been paying 25 per cent. for four years, and owe every penny of the principal still! I always shall, so far as I can see. He won't forget!"

"Why should he? You had his money."

"And I've paid it back," the Major persisted; "morally, that is."

"In other words, you've paid the interest," Miss Mellor shrugged her shoulders. "He is entitled to it, until you repay the loan."

"But 25 per cent!" the Major protested.

"You needn't have borrowed from him, if you didn't like his terms," Miss Mellor pointed out.

"A starving man needn't eat," the Major said, impatiently, "but, if you put food before him, he does. If you show him meat and ask treble price because he is hungry, you are—a money-lender! As you say, the vampire is entitled to my flesh and blood; but he's spilt a man's life; and a vampire is a vampire."

Miss Mellor drew a deep breath, and considered with her chin on her hand.

"The interest is high, certainly," she

conceded. "In a case like yours; but he doesn't know your case; at least, I presume not?"

"No," the Major agreed. "He doesn't know. I haven't gone whining to him, of course. He shall have his due. I shall not even try to obtain the relief which I am told the law sometimes gives in cases of extortionate usury. My word—the Major smiled—"is above the law. There are some memories that I do not wish to forget. The memory that I have been an honorable man is one of them. He would not understand that."

"I—don't—know," Miss Mellor looked hard at the wall opposite her. "The only money-lender I know is, I think, honorable. I doubt if—if he is ever harsh knowingly. He saves the money because he has nothing to spend it on—I suppose you hate him?"

"Yes," said the Major. "Yes—No! I don't hate anybody to-night—because I am not one of the people who forget; come, Miss Mellor, let us drink a toast together. Here's to everybody—and especially everybody who is unhappy."

He drained his glass, and Miss Mellor took a sip of hers.

"To everybody who is unhappy," she pledged. "To everybody but the happy people who forget."

"To them, too," the Major entreated; but she shook her head.

"No," she said. "No! They have had the chances of life; the chances of joy; and sorrow. And they forget! I have no good wishes for the people who do not remember. Are you sure that she forgets?"

The Major rose and paced the hearthrug.

"I—I hope so. Perhaps there was nothing, on her side, to forget. I never spoke to her about it. I was half inclined, at first, to write and ask her to wait and see if I could pull round; but I soon saw that I couldn't. It's three hundred a year, the interest. I shall have to pay it for the rest of my natural life."

"Unless he forgets!" said Miss Mellor.

"He is not likely to forget," the Major asserted.

"No; not him?"

"No; not personally. I know of him."

"Who is he?"

"He calls himself Levison & Co."

"Ah-h!" Miss Mellor considered with her finger on her cheek. "Levison & Co. The offices are in Style Court, aren't they? He is dead. His name wasn't Levison, really. His heirs carry on the business. I know them slightly. Perhaps if I were to mention your case they might consent to some reduction of the rate of interest."

"No, no!" cried the Major. "On no account. I wouldn't ask a favor from them. I was not aware that they were friends of yours, of course. You must forget what I said about them."

Miss Mellor smiled slowly.

"I am not one of the people who forget," she stated. "Neither are they. It is she really. His daughter carries on the business. She is a dull woman—like me. She never had the chance of being anything else, any more than I have had. She lived alone with her father. He taught her to help him with his books when she was only a child. She grew up to look upon money-lending as the natural way of spending a well-ordered existence. When he died she kept on the business because—because she had to do something to keep her life—what she called life—from being utterly empty. I daresay 25 per cent. seemed quite the natural and proper thing to her. She knew that most of the people who borrowed money from her would evade their debt, if they could, and she had to cover her risk. She never thought of—of an honorable man like you; a man who would not forget. If I tell her—"

"No," the Major interrupted. "No! I wish favor from no one. What I have done I have done. Twenty-five per cent. I agreed to pay, and 25 per cent. I will pay. I can manage it all right. I should get along very well if—if I could only forget; if I could be sure that she forgot."

He sat down and rested his head on his hand; and Miss Mellor looked at him closely.

"You regard this lady as a good woman," she said. "You would not like to think of her otherwise?"

"I could not think of her otherwise," she asserted positively.

Miss Mellor nodded several times.

"Suppose," she suggested, "that a good woman loved a man. She did, didn't she?"

"I thought so," the Major sighed.

"And suppose he became poor, from no fault of his own? And suppose she knew all about it? I presume she did know?"

"Yes," said the Major.

"And suppose that, because he had become poor, he would not ask her to marry him. And suppose she guessed the reason. I imagine she would guess, would she not? Love is said to sharpen the eyes."

"I daresay," the Major owned, "she would guess."

"Suppose she did guess. Would she love him any less than before? Would she forget?"

The Major drew a deep breath.

"You are a woman," he said. "You should know best."

Miss Mellor laughed mirthlessly.

"I have no knowledge of these

things. I can only conjecture. I do not think I should forget. I should wait and wait, and say to myself, 'Perhaps he will get over it, and come back. Perhaps—'

"Don't!" the Major entreated.

"I should say, 'Perhaps he won't get over it; but it wouldn't matter if only he would come back; and I should wait and wait. Suppose she is waiting like that?'"

The Major rose sharply from his chair.

"God bless you!" he cried. "I—I will go to-night."

He went; and Miss Mellor sat very still looking into the fire till she heard the first of the returning boarders in the hall. Then she retired to her room. She knelt down beside the bed and prayed for the men and women who had nothing to remember—and the people who did not forget.

She had not forgotten—the girl whom the Major loved, and who loved the Major; and since life is only to live once they decided to get married and face poverty together. The girl called and told Miss Mellor about it, and put her arms round her neck.

"You knew," she whispered. "You knew! We women are not the people to forget!"

"It is memory that keeps the world sweet," said Miss Mellor. "We have no right to forget."

The Major's sweetheart agreed with her then; but being women, they changed their minds afterwards.

Miss Mellor's change of opinion is shown in a letter which came to the Major's wife just after her marriage. It enclosed a cancelled I O U:

"My dear child:

"God prosper you both.

"I am writing to you rather than to my old friend, the Major, because he would deny my right to forget, and you will not.

"There are two kinds of things in memory, dear. There are the claims that others have upon us, which we must never forget. There are the claims that we have upon others; and these we may forget, if we choose. I should never be happy while I remember the enclosed to the hurt of yourself and your husband. Accept it and let me be numbered among the people whom he reckoned lucky—the people who forget what they should forget.

"Your affectionate friend,

"MARY MELLOR,

(Otherwise, Levison & Co.)"

The Major's wife also confessed a change of opinion when Miss Mellor came to stay with them some months later.

"You mustn't stop," she said, "when you once begin forgetting. You must forget and forget and forget! You must forget the loneliness that made you seem solemn and reserved. You must forget to wear frumpish old things, and dress prettily, and look the nice creature that you are. You must even forget that there is anything to forget! When you've forgotten enough, you'll find some nice things to remember. Dear, you've two memories to begin with; the memory of two people whom you've made very happy."

The other pleasant memories soon came; and in the curious way of memories, some of the smallest push them selves to the front whenever Miss Mellor looks smilingly back. There is a memory of a new gown trimmed with lace; and a memory of Prof. Brown putting up his eye-glasses three times during dinner to admire it; and a memory of a little child who called her "pretty lady;" and a memory of blushing and smiling and feeling quite young, when the professor turned from the child to her.

It is rather a shame-faced little memory which comes next; a memory of the first time that Miss Mellor descended to the wiles that women, from the time of Mother Eve, have practiced. "But—but you might forget me," she said, "Professor!" And the Professor said she was the one being that nothing could ever teach him to forget!

So she and the Professor entered upon a partnership of forgetting and remembering; and the partnership was a happy one, because the third partner was love; love that picks out the good in others for the people who remember; love that blots out the failings of others from the memory of the people who forget.

"Graft in 'Personals."

"The personal columns of newspapers make a rich field for swindlers," said a detective, "and this field is sedulously tilled.

"Suppose X puts in a 'personal' to the effect that C. C. S. is to write to him, addressing him in the newspaper's care. Well, the swindler composes a letter, half love and half hard luck, in C. C. S.'s name, and begs that a remittance be sent. As like as not the remittance comes.

"Suppose again that May Smith, a heart-broken mother, asks her son Harry to come back home to Squeedunk in a 'personal.' The swindler answers the 'personal' in Harry's name, saying he is ill and begging for a little money. Even though the handwriting is off, the mother, rather than risk repulsing her own son, is apt to send the swindler what he asks.

"Personals" are good things, but they who insert them should be careful always to withhold addresses and real names."

A NEWSPAPER HOLDUP

BY ARTHUR HENDRICK VANDENBERG

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Van Buren gingerly inspected the card which the office boy had laid upon his desk. Van Buren was general manager and heaviest bondholder of the Morning Herald.

"What in the name of heaven brings Gillette here?" he mused. "Perhaps he's planning to shoot me in my own office."

"Show the gentleman in, boy," he said. He reached for his heavy walking stick and stood it within convenient reach against the wall. Then he complacently settled back in his spacious revolving chair to await the entry of his visitor.

Gillette looked anything but belligent.

"Ah, my dear Van Buren!" he said effusively, extending his hand across the table.

"Won't you sit down?" replied Van Buren, ignoring the extended hand of his visitor. Gillette flushed deeply.

"I suppose you're mighty surprised to see me to-day," he blurted out.

"Well, here's the case in a nutshell. To-morrow is election day. You know what that means to me and my company. We pushed through the common council of this city a contract for furnishing your people with an adequate supply of pure water from Lake Genoa. The ultimate price involved is a bonus of \$2,000,000, and the regular schedule rate for consumers. We have spent six months of our time and \$50,000 of our money in getting our proposition whipped into shape and in securing final passage of our franchise in the council. You and your paper have opposed us from the start. It was your doings when the council tacked a referendum clause on the franchise before it passed. It was your doings when the necessary petitions of 15 per cent. of the qualified voters of Larson were compiled, requiring the submission of the franchise to the people for popular sanction before it could become binding. Since the petitions were recorded the Herald has consistently vilified Genoa water. We haven't been able to even buy a line of space in which to place before the people a plain statement of fact. What's the result? With the voting on the referendum 24 hours away, the people are dead against us. Our only hope of a successful outcome is endorsement in to-morrow morning's Herald. I come here, sir, authorized to pay you \$10 a line for printing six columns to-morrow which we will furnish you. That means that we stand willing to deliver cash to you at the rate of \$2,800 a column. Advertising space is always for sale. We solicit permission to be added to your list of patrons. May we?"

"Gillette," said Van Buren, "your Genoa Water company is rotten to the core—and you know it. Now listen," he continued. "I'm glad to admit that I caused the addition of the referendum. I'm glad to admit that I've fought you tooth and nail. I'm glad to hear you admit that things will go against you to-morrow unless you can use the Herald for your mouthpiece. But that you can't do! Ten dollars a line is no inducement! Why, a little while ago I was given to understand that I could have \$25,000 in cold cash for just keeping on the fence. To-morrow's Herald will be the strongest arraignment of the Genoa Water company ever printed here or anywhere. To-morrow's Herald will be full from front to back with all the arguments we can marshal against your Genoa Water company and its \$2,000,000 steal."

"You are entirely settled upon this course?" inquired Gillette.

"Entirely," responded Van Buren, rising.

"Then I say this to you: Though the odds be great against us, the Genoa contract will be affirmed to-morrow. He stood in the doorway for a moment. "It's not too late," he ventured. "Ten dollars a—"

"A word wouldn't tempt me," interrupted the editor. "And I want to say to you that this interview will be printed verbatim to-morrow morning. I think my stenographer has it intact."

I have related this interview to give you something of an idea of the bitter antagonism existing between the general manager of the paper upon which I was employed as city editor and the promoting agent of the Genoa Water company. Van Buren had sent instructions to us that the \$2,000,000 water contract must be defeated, and when I laid out the paper for election day I am frank to say that I believe never was more severe arraignment of any scheme ever put into type. There still remained the task of preparing the schedule of "To-day's News." I was scriawling this off as the chimes from the city hall sounded midnight.

I pulled out my watch to verify the time. When I raised my eyes I was looking into the wicked, yawning barrels of two shining revolvers. Back of each were keen eyes glistening through a mask of black. My first impulse was to shout for help. But those shining barrels cast some hypnotic spell upon me and my tongue cleaved to my throat.

"Sit down!" gruffly commanded one of my assailants. He differed in appearance from his fellow only in a jagged scar which showed upon his chin below the mask. I dropped mutely into my chair.

"Do as you are told and you need

fear no harm!" commanded he of the ugly scar.

I reached for my pocketbook and threw it out upon the blotter.

"We don't want your money," interrupted the foremost of my antagonists. He had put his gun back in his broad leathern belt and was fumbling in his trousers pocket for something which was eventually forthcoming. The other gun still looked my way in gentle reminder.

"How long before you go to press?" continued the spokesman.

"Thirty minutes," I responded.

"Good!" he ejaculated. "Now listen! You are going to kill every unfavorable reference in to-morrow's paper to the Genoa water contract! Instead, you are going to print what we direct."

At once I resolved to refuse utterly. But the fellow with the revolver drew the gun directly under my nose and I mentally recalled my rash resolution.

"Here!" went on the spokesman, "across the top of the front page we want this sentence in good black letters: 'The Herald Advises Voters to Confirm the Genoa Water Contract.'"

My mind pictured Van Buren's implacable wrath if this thing ever appeared.

He threw another sheet at me. "Read it!" he commanded. And I recited:

"The Herald this morning makes public acknowledgment that it has been mistaken in its opposition to the Genoa water contract. After exhaustive examination of all available evidence we have come to the conclusion that the only available source for a pure water supply is this neighboring lake and that the existing exigency demands immediate action. Though the cost be \$2,000,000, we believe the pending Genoa contract should be confirmed. We advise every voter to vote affirmatively."

The audacity of the scheme appalled me and I thought, also, of the personal consequences if I played the puppet part laid down for me.

"Come on now," whispered the spokesman. "Take this copy to the night editor and tell him you have just had a 'phone message from Van Buren ordering this change in policy. Impress upon him the necessity for quick action in order to catch the whole local edition. Remember we are in the doorway and a single false step is liable to cause you some pain."

I picked up the copy and started for McClelland's room. I fondly cherished a hope for relief in this avenue.

"Here's a pretty mess!" I loudly shouted into the night editor's ears. I wanted to be sure the assasslers heard. "Van Buren has just 'phoned down that all our water deal stuff must be killed and this run instead. He's changed front—says he's coming out in the morning for the Genoa fellows. You'll have to rush this!"

I suddenly bent my head purposing to drop a warning word into McClelland's ear. But half way down, my neck was frozen in its place. I felt that cold steel beneath my nose and quickly jerked back bolt upright.

"The devil!" ejaculated the night editor. "You've got ten columns up about the deal on the other side! There isn't enough here for one column. What'll you fill the rest of the space with?"

"Run in some miscellaneous stuff you've got all set up," I suggested.

McClelland hastily surveyed the copy and thrust it into the chute. "I'll chase it up and see that the change sticks!" he cried, brushing past me and up the stairs.

"Good work!" gruffly granted he of the ugly scar, returning me to the unpleasant position of cowering before the metal persuaders.

There was a momentary whispered conference from which I was excluded. The former spokesman did the talking.

"I'm going upstairs to see that everything goes according to program," the former said at length, turning toward me. "You'll stay here with your friend"—I saw him smile beneath his mask—"until I come back." Then he added to his fellow: "Shoot him if he balks!"

It was 20 minutes before the villain returned. I could only draw upon my imagination for a picture of the scenes upon the floor above.

The night editor had quickly brought the foreman into conference. "Only 20 minutes, Loomis!" he had cried, "and this change must go through! Here! Set this sentence in bold-face type across the top of the front page. Then inside, run this paragraph"—he shoved the copy under Loomis' nose as he spoke—"at the head of the editorial column. Fill up the rest with miscellany!"

McClelland watched the operations with practised eye, suggesting now and then a labor-saving cut or an advantageous shift in make-up. Beside him stood a stranger, viewing the scene in apparent nonchalance.

"Are you going to make the change all right?" the unknown at length ventured.

"Trust us for that!" reassured the night editor.

"All right!" the foreman called to McClelland. "Clear sailing!"

"Good!" ejaculated the stranger. "Are you going to the press room?"

"Yes I think I'll see it through," responded the night man.

"Well, good luck! I'm going to leave

you." The stranger waved a farewell hand. When he returned to the floor below the foreboding black mask was again in place.

There was a hasty conference. Then the leader advanced.

"You will accompany this man," he said to me, "and stay where he puts you. You will be released to-morrow evening—after the polls are closed. And say, young fellow!" he of the scar shouted after us, addressing me, "you needn't try to hatch up any scheme for escape. It won't do you any good, in the first place, and in the second place, you couldn't print another paper if you wanted to, because I'm going to stay here and spike the presses just as soon as our edition is in the mailing room."

My companion briskly whisked me into a waiting cab. Our rough journey never stopped until we alighted before a country tavern which I had never seen before.

The sequel to this strange tale can be crowded into a brief paragraph. I did not reach town until the morning following election.

It seems that the Herald appeared on time Tuesday morning. Van Buren was struck dumb with amazement when his paper was laid beside his breakfast plate. He had anticipated with a good deal of pleasure the satisfaction attendant upon the publication on election morning of the scathing arraignment of Genoa water for which the program called.

Without touching his breakfast he started for the office. He rushed up the stairs to the editorial department and found it mockingly empty. On he went to the composing room, but there the linotypes alone maintained a stolid solitary vigil. There was none to make explanation.

Realizing that the Herald's apparent endorsement would throw the issue in favor of Genoa water, Van Buren quickly planned a counteracting campaign. He laid out a flaming denunciatory poster, stating that the endorsement from his publication was a fraud. Before the ink was dry he had the foreman of his press room in the office.

"Can you run off 50,000 of these in two colors before noon?" he asked.

"Can't be done, sir," was the response. "The presses are out of commission. A large spike has been driven into the cogs and we cannot start the wheels until the whole thing is taken apart."

"A spike!" ejaculated Van Buren. "That was never an accident!"

"Oh, no," agreed the foreman. "It was done purposely."

"Can you get the job done at other shops?" he asked.

"Yes, sir, by splitting it up."

"Well, split it! I want 50,000 of these posters in my hands at noon, regardless of cost."

The posters were made and circulated. The voter was thrown completely into the air. He knew not whom to believe. In his doubt he argued that the safest thing was to vote negatively. And thus he marked his ballot.

The Genoa contract was defeated by an overwhelming majority. I was able to reach the city just as the definite results became apparent. You can realize my intense relief to know that the plot in which I had become an unwilling participant had failed.

Van Buren was utterly astounded when he heard my tale.

"Who do you think the men behind the masks were?" he asked.

"Don't know," I replied. "The leader bore an ugly scar upon his chin."

"A scar!" cried Van Buren. "Upon his chin!"

"Yes," I repeated in astonishment. "What of it?"

"It was Gillette!" he murmured.

Paderewski Versus Mozart.

The story of how one of Paderewski's most popular compositions came to be written was told recently in London by the famous composer's wife.

It was in those earlier days when the master pianist was a professor at the Warsaw conservatory, and the scene was the home of the Polish poet Swietochowski, who had just expressed the opinion that no living composer could compare in beauty and simplicity with Mozart. At the moment Ignace Paderewski merely shrugged his shoulders, but the following evening he appeared, asking permission to play for the poet a little Mozartian thing which perhaps he did not know. Then he played his own famous minuet.

"Ah!" exclaimed Swietochowski, triumphantly, as the last note died away, "now you must acknowledge that a composition like that could not have been written in our time."

"Perhaps," came the quiet reply; "only it happens that I composed it this forenoon."—Lippincott's Magazine.

Military Pope.

Pope Julius II, who died in 1513, was the first pope to allow his beard to grow in order, it was said, to inspire greater respect among the faithful. He was called the military pope. When Michael Angelo was making his statue he said to him: "Holy Father, shall I place a book in your hand?" "No," answered his holiness, "a sword rather—I know better how to handle it."