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the doctor. Two people were coming toward him. It was Sam and Sally, returning from their marriage. By what he saw on old Baumgartner's face and hands, Sam was sobered. Both understood that they were approaching some tragedy.



"WHEN YOU GO AWAY—BRING THE DOCTOR!"

"Who?" asked Sally, suddenly oblivious of Sam. "Sam!" she turned upon her husband with command. "Bring the doctor!" Sam went with satisfactory haste. "Who hurt him?" asked Sally, as if she were ready to slay him who did.

I have no one but you! No. I have not treated you right. But, oh, life is so hard to me!

It was at that instant that the great change in Sally came. She leaped before him into the house and up to Seffy's room. When the old man slowly followed she was there—with eyes bent upon Seffy's bloody, unconscious face. So she kept her eyes. She did not speak. And when the doctor came she was still there—as at first—unconscious as he, the doctor said.

"No," he said, soothing her hair with his gnarled old hand. "I've had my eyes turned within. But I didn't know you had trouble. I heard that Sam had took to hard drinkin' and I thought you didn't kee. You was so reckless—"

He was not dead, and presently he breathed again. But his eyes remained closed, and, late that night, when he had drifted from unconsciousness into deep sleep, they put out the light and left him.

"Yes," she sighed. "I am reckless! And yes—I drink sometimes. But it is that way I can forget."

When they came again he had disappeared.

"I don't turn ag'in' no one in trouble, efen if they don't treat me right—and drink—"

Then he would toll up the steep stair to the garret—he had become quite feeble—and take out of an old German chest a daguerreotype of her with Seffy in her arms. And sometimes he would cry over it until his beard was wet.

"Forgive me! Oh, forgive me, pappy! The suffering is mine!"

"God bless you, my little boy," he would sometimes say, "that you cared for her more than I did. You never called her no names."

"No. If you will be my friend, I will try to be what I would have been as Seffy's wife!"

"I didn't know I could be so mean to the dead—who don't deserf it, and can't talk back. And, God-a-mighty! If any one's to be called names, it's me!—not her nor—you, Seffy, nor you! For I expect I'm a murderer!"

"It's a bargain—and I'm sorry I spoke so harsh, Sally. Mebby, mebby—God knows!—we ken comfort one another. I—Sally—I need some one, too!"

And sometimes, when his loneliness was too hard to be borne, he would go out and sit for hours and talk to the old bay mare—about Seffy. He fancied she quite understood, and I do, too.

"Yes!" she said, "I am reckless! And yes—I drink sometimes. But it is that way I can forget."

When the spring came he plowed alone. And this was hardest of all. To plow around and around his vast fields with no one to meet in the other furrow—no one to talk, to smile, to laugh to—then, when noon came, to sit under the shade of some tree redolent with memories of the pretty little boy, where he and Seffy had sat, from his childhood to his manhood, and eat the food which choked!

"Yes!" she said, "I am reckless! And yes—I drink sometimes. But it is that way I can forget."

Oh, if he could only have laughed—at himself, at Seffy, at the mare, at anybody or anything! If he could only have laughed!

"Yes!" she said, "I am reckless! And yes—I drink sometimes. But it is that way I can forget."

And he knew that every animal on the place wondered and hungered for little Seffy and questioned him with pathetic eyes, while he, at first, guiltily kept silent—then tried to confess his shame to them.

"Yes!" she said, "I am reckless! And yes—I drink sometimes. But it is that way I can forget."

"Yes," he told the mare, "I done it—I struck him—here, right here! In the face—while his eyes was looking in mine—pleading—and here was blood—and here and here—and dust in his hair—and his eyes was closed—and when I run home wiss him his legs dangled like he was dead. And he crawled away somewheres to die—I don't know why they don't come and hang me. I haf told 'em all that I killed him. But no one don't arrest me."

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For a moment he gloated over the prostrate brute. Then he stood up trembling before Sally.

"Forgif me," he begged. "But I couldn't help it. It done itself. Mebby—God-a-mighty only knows!—it was a chance to efen up for the other one. And yit it was a righteous blow—yas, it was a righteous blow!"

"Yes," she said. "You are the first that ever saw—"

It was too late to stop. And before it was done he knew that this was not a new experience to her, and that she suffered it—and was almost glad of it—for penance.

"By the Lord," cried the old man, "if he efer strikes you ag'in I'll kill him!"

"No," said Sally softly.

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his ecstasy. "Ken you?—say—do you stnk you ken?"

"Yes," she said very softly. "If you will let me, I will be all and everything Seffy was to you. I took him from you. Let me do my best to replace him. It is for that—that, only, that I have cared. We shall rent this house and that will help—for I know you have been getting poor, too—and—and—if you will take it—I—I—want to give you—the pasture-field—for—oh, for Seffy's sake. Will you take it?"

For he had demurred. "For Seffy's sake—just as you would take it from him—and as he would give it to you—if he were all—here? I want to be both son and daughter to you. Let me be Seffy and myself too! It is much—but let me try."

But he had caught that little slipp of the tongue, and was dumb.

They sat silent by the fire for a long time then. Presently the old man rose and lifting her he said, with a smile such as she had never seen on his face:

"Yes—for Seffy's sake—come! Now!"

It was night. But he led her from her own house to his. And that night she slept in Seffy's bed.

One of Sally's duties was the nightly reading of the Farm Journal. And just now this paper, edited by a gentleman who knew nothing about farming—and by him edited well—was full of the great meeting of the National Farmers' League of the United States of America, which was in session at Omaha.

"By far the most intelligent and interesting paper of the session, thus far," Sally read one night, "was that on 'The Proper Succession of Crops in Maryland' by the youthful president of the Kansas State League, Mr.—"

Sally rose suddenly and vanished to the kitchen where there was a light.

"What was it?" asked the old man when she returned.

"I—I choked," said Sally quite truthfully, "and went for a drink."

"Yes—don't read no more. We'll find out about the succession to-morrow night. But what was the smart feller's name?"

She pretended to look for it, and when she pretended to have found it: "Mr.—S. P. Brown," she read.

"A Kansas man—about Maryland! Huh!"

But that night, after Seffy's father was in bed, Sally wrote a pitiful letter—perhaps the first she had ever written:

had often sat, and looked again in his broken mirror. The radiance was quenched. Her face was pale and thin now. She thought of it quite as if he were soon to see it.

"I wonder if he'll think me handsome, now?" She shook her head doubtfully at the face she saw in the glass. "No, I have no red cheeks no more—and my eyes are bigger—and my lips thinner—and my hair is paler—and my hands—"

She remembered how he had kissed them, and put her head down and sobbed. They did not seem fit to be kissed now—nor worth kissing.

But the post-mistress liked her better that way and so do I. For she had acquired a daintiness that was almost immaculate.

As soon as Sally came, the post-mistress smiled and shook her head. For she had understood what the letter contained quite as if she had seen it. And she had watched anxiously for the answer.

"Not yet," she said compassionately. Sally's legs weakened and she clutched at the little shelf before her. It took a moment to swallow the thing in her throat. Then she murmured: "It's two weeks."

"Yes. But he'd have to be pretty prompt to get it here by this time."

Sally had been sure of this promptness. It never occurred to her to doubt. She would not have wasted a minute. She turned hopelessly away.

"Perhaps to-morrow!" said the kind post-mistress.

Sally ventured, smiling.

"You think so?"

"Perhaps. One can never tell. Don't worry, dear. You see the address was very vague and it may be some time before they find him."

"You don't think it is too late?"

"I hope not, dear."

She had not thought of that before. She had fancied him waiting for some such recall. But, of course, he had formed other ties—he would be glad to forget her. He might be married! Of course he was! Otherwise he could not be a president!

"I guess it's too late," she said again.

you." But after that hope rose and lived again.

That night the post-mistress received, from Washington, the address of the Kansas State League of Farmers' clubs, and put it on the face of the returned letter and sent it forth again.

XV. Shall Seffy Enter at This Cue? Winter had come again—the fifth one. They sat together in the great hearth of the kitchen, in their characteristic attitude when before a fire. The hickory logs sputtered savagely, but sent out to them, nevertheless, a grateful warmth. Their faces and bodies glowed in the fervor of it. And there is nothing like this to put one at peace with all the world.

"Sally," said the old man, "this is nice."

"Very nice," agreed Sally.

But also there is nothing like this to send one's memory backward. And this it was doing for both of them.

"Everybody don't haf no such fire to-night." And the everybody he thought of as he sighed was—Seffy.

"No, not everybody," sighed Sally, propping her head upon his knee.

"Sally—who do you mean by eberybody?"

"Just one person," admitted Sally, "the same one you mean."

"Yes," said Seffy's father very softly, and then they were silent.

"Mebby some's got no homes—and out freezing to-night," the old man said presently.

"I hope not," said Sally. "We could take them in here if we knew where they are—couldn't we, pappy?"

But that last note was the one which dams up tears.

"Yes—if we knew where they air! My God—if we chust knowed where they air! Sally, don't you nefer turn no one away from the door on a cold winter's night. You don't know who it might be!"

"I'll never turn any one away from the door!" said Sally with emotion. "That's right, Sally. Some's dead. I'd rather be dead than haf no home." And I, agreed Sally. "Nor no friends." Sally nodded. "Sally, how long is it sence you was married?" "More than four years—nearly five, pappy." "My! but sings is changed!" said the old man. "Efen the sun don't seem so bright no more."



"PAPPY, LET ME GO AND KEEP YOUR HOUSE!"



"HAD THE DREAMS IN HIS FEET"

he'll come back and I—want to be there—to ask his pardon."

They were silent for a while and then the old man said huskily: "You shall, you shall sleep in Seffy's bed. You shall look in his little cracked looking-glass. You shall set in his place at the table. You shall be my Seffy! And we'll wait for him together and we'll bese at his pardon—when he comes—when he comes."

"May I ride his mare—and plow with her?" "You—you—you?" he questioned in

"Ah well! Come, Sally, it's bedtime."

"Yes."

This meant that it was time for their prayer, which they always said in each other's arms, there, before the great fire. So Sally slipped to the floor, and they folded their hands each in the other. And after "Our Father" was done, came this—rude, simple, but not less a prayer; for in the five years of Seffy's absence it had passed into a formula.

"God, find Seffy, where'er he may be, for thou seeest all the world, and put it into his heart to come back to those who have repented these many years; make him merciful to the old and the evil-tempered, and yet, if this be not in thy infinite purposes, O God, we bend our heads in submission, for it is thy punishment for our sin; but send some word or sign, that our hearts may be comforted, and thy will be done—Amen!"

And while this was being prayed a face came to the window in answer—a hand brushed away the snow that the eyes might see better. And then a head, crowned with pale hair, was uncovered—reverently. Sally looked up. Something as ir resistible as a magnet drew her eyes to that face in the window. As they got up the old man saw Sally's white face and staring eyes. "Sally," he said, "you look like you'd seen a ghost!" There was a knock on the outer door. "Bring him in, whoever he is, Sally and keep him till he's got hungry nd