

to meet again, and I know you mean it. I can't write any more. My fingers are numb and stupid and my head buzzes so queerly. Good-by, dear old Reggie, and God bless you. ROSEBUD."

Mr. Reginald Thornton rose and walked to the window, with the letter—which smelled of jessamine, by the way—in his hand. He looked out at the stars himself, standing there for some time watching them twinkle luminously above the great, beautiful, wicked town. With the scent of the jessamine from the letter there flashed through his active brain a panorama of green fields and flowering lilacs and a saucy, tinkling brook, and a garden of roses, and a slim girl dressed all in white, blushing childishly, as she stood on tiptoe to pin a red bud in his coat. As he turned away from the window there was a stuffy, uncomfortable feeling in his throat, and a delicate lace handkerchief—one of the gifts of Mildred Knightworthy—went to his eyes more than once.

He sat down wearily, and the bull dog again crept to his side (the insulting kick forgiven already) and licked his hand. Then the master patted the beast's awful jowl and addressed him: "Butcher," he said slowly and distinctly, "the world that calls me a man and you a dog is a fool. You have so much more honesty in you than I that you ought to be master here and I the dog. Butcher, I have been thinking of something very earnestly. Shall I tell you what it is?"

An affirmative grunt was the animal's sagacious response.

"Well, then," continued the master, "I have been thinking as I say, that I am a selfish, cruel beast. I have been thinking that there are better things in this world than fame and position and fortune, especially when the grasping after them involves the stabbing of the gentlest heart that ever beat in a trusting girl's white breast. Damn it, Butcher, I believe that I've been cheating myself with a ridiculous lie all these years, and that the worst of us has a conscience after all! Tell me, Butcher, you wise beast, shall I choke this conscience to death, as any sensible man in my situation would do, and seize upon Mildred and her millions, or shall I play the fool, pat conscience on the back, and create happiness where hitherto I have wrought nothing but misery?"

The dog looked very wise and barked gruffly.

"Of course," went on the man, "you are a wise dog, Butcher. You can think as well as you can fight. Stand aside a moment and the first step shall be taken at once."

"You will think it strange, Mildred," he wrote, "but I am going to ask you to let me retract my offer of marriage and you yourself to withdraw your acceptance of it. If you desire reasons I will give them to you, but would much rather not. Perhaps it will be sufficient for me to say that honor—manhood—conscience, demand that I marry some one else."

"I have, as you know, the highest esteem for you, but I will be truthful for once and tell you that it was your fortune that tempted me. At least give me credit for honesty in saving you from a lifetime of unhappiness with a poor devil who could never have learned to love you in the right way."

He sealed and directed the envelope and rang the bell. "There goes seven millions, Butcher, my boy," he said, and the dog wagged his stump of a tail and showed his dreadful teeth.

Adonis appeared in answer to the ring. "Take this letter and mail it at once," said his master, handing it to him. "And pack me some things. I'm going out of town tomorrow. Hello, what's that? Telegram, eh? Wait a minute."

Farlington, Me., May 25.

Mr. Reginald Norton, New York. Rosebud died this afternoon. I trust you are satisfied with your work.

MARTHA LAWSON.

Norton reeled slightly, pressed his hands to his temples, and uttered the name of his Maker. He walked to the window, threw it open, and let some cool air into the room. The dog looked on in sympathy, the colored boy in astonishment. It seemed to the latter that his master had grown years older when at length he turned and faced him.

"Any answer to the dispatch, sir?" asked Adonis.

"No," answered Norton, with admirable self-control, "and you need not mail the letter, Adonis. Give it to me. I will attend to it myself."

"And what clothes shall I pack for you, sir?"

"None. I have changed my mind and shall not go."

Some moments after the boy had gone, Norton glanced once more at the telegram and tears streamed down his cheeks.

He recovered his composure presently, and, taking up the letter he had written to Miss Knightworthy, slowly tore it into little bits. THE DREAMER.

"I love the sea," remarked the modern young man to the girl as they sat on the beach gazing out over the restless waves.

"I don't see why," she responded earnestly, as she looked squarely at him; "it hasn't got any money."

THE SMILER.

STORIES BY AMY BRUNER

PHILIP.

When he came to the path that leads into the hazel-brush old Phillip lifted the bag from his shoulders and rested again. He had not thought the sack could be so heavy. It was so large too. What if it were small enough to put in his pocket, or even in the leg of his boot?

He drew his hand up to his eyes—the stars still pierced down; grey shadows quivered in the underbrush. The frogs were mad that night. They would never stop.

He flung the bag over his shoulder. He stumbled into the hazel-wood. The shadows gathered. They flew like phantoms. The frogs were croaking—they will never stop. Phillip—never—The house down by the river—what of yesterday. I am married now, and so that? The frogs were down by the old house—they were croaking. If the sack were small enough to put in his pocket, or if it were not at all.

ROBERT.

Next morning when Robert reached the office he found an unusually large number of letters waiting to be answered; and there were the ledger and cash book again. How tedious and wearisome they were to him. Every day the work was more difficult. He tore open the envelopes and began to assort the papers.

"If I could only have known that the

price would fall," ran his thought, "if I could have known—to lose five thousand dollars at my second venture—" With a groan the poor young fellow buried his head among his scattered papers. But he had no time for rest, the dusting girl was at work. She would soon come in. He heard her in the halls. She was singing as usual—

"Jesus, Lover of my soul, let me to Thy bosom fly, while the nearer waters roll, while the tempest still is high.—Hide me, O, my Savior hide, till the storm of life is past."

"Hide"—if Robert could but sing out of sight, and feeling and memory! The words of the song beat in his brain and would not be stilled.

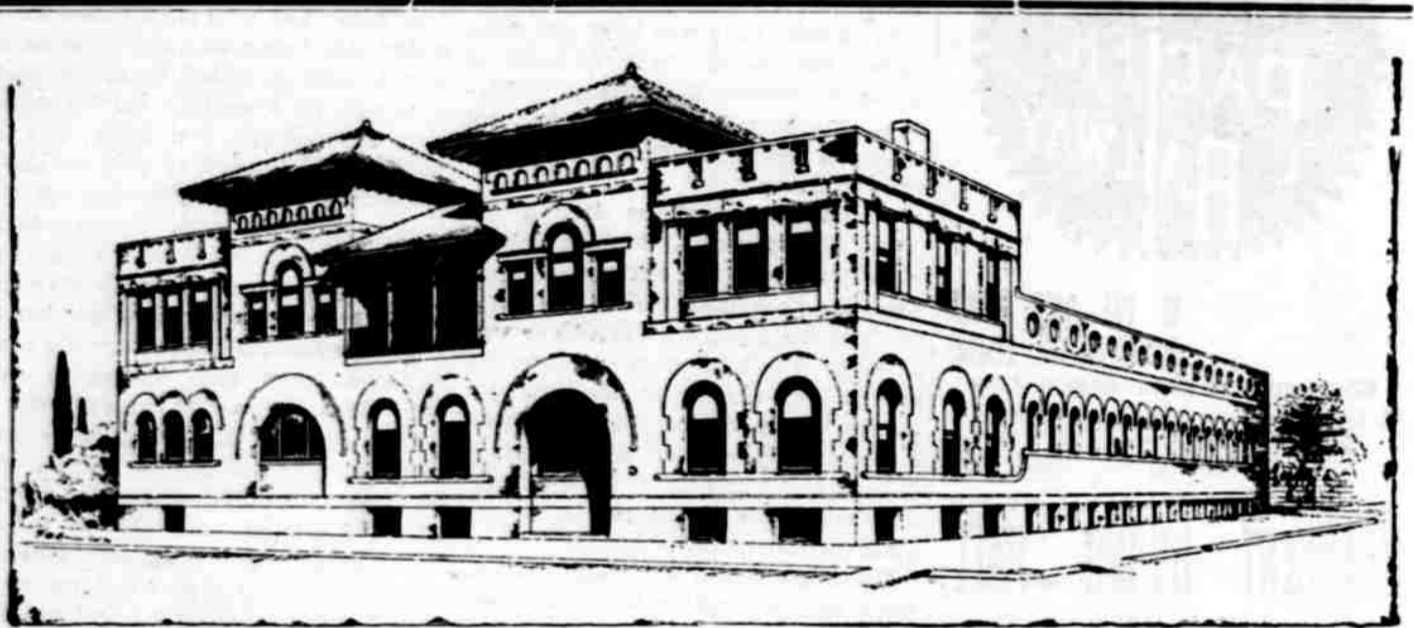
Was the song true? He had heard it a thousand times. Today he could not forget it. Was it true?

"I am a fool," he cried, "a sentimental fool!" and once more he crushed all the momentary softness in his nature.

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