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ACROSS HIS PATH.

BY IDA COVENTRY.

"Well, my lad, it's good to have you back once more."

"Thanks, Uncle Hervey; it's very kind of you to say so."

"Are you really better?"

"Sound as a drum! Never felt better in my life. There is nothing like New Zealand air, after all!"

"So I should judge!" exclaimed Sir Hervey Ralston, a world of affection in eye and voice, as he surveyed the sunburnt face before him. "Talking of health, you don't look much amiss yourself, Uncle Hervey; which, under the circumstances, is not perhaps surprising."

Sir Hervey found his sunny smile infectious. "Perhaps not. You will be able to judge for yourself this evening. There is a function at Lady Wolverton's, and although I am sorry it occurs on the night of your return, I thought you would prefer to come."

Stifling his disappointment, Ralston rejoined: "By all means, Uncle Hervey. I would not have you change your plans on my account for the world. Besides which, I am eager to make the acquaintance of my future aunt."

Sir Hervey laughed. "I never looked at it in that light before. She is younger than you, my boy."

"And so are you in many ways," retorted Ralston, stoutly. "You are a generation younger than most men of forty-five, Uncle Hervey. You know you are."

The deprecating, almost wistful, look called forth by his words was not lost upon the younger man, who hastened to aver: "I was desperately glad to hear your piece of news; found the letter waiting for me at Santa Cruz. You are much too good to die a bachelor, so I shall kick my heels with a light heart at your wedding, notwithstanding the back seat now in store for yours to command."

The laugh with which he ended was not a natural one, and his lip quivered under the fair mustache. The undivided affection of many years' standing, affection that between uncle and nephew was almost unique, was undivided no longer.

and I want you as best man for the occasion."

Hugh Ralston's eyes shone with pride. "I feel honored, Uncle Hervey. Any pretty bridemaids to the fore?"

"You will probably meet one or two of them this evening. We have not much time to lose. You know your room."

Lady Wolverton's receptions were always well attended. In her position as queen of the society in which she moved she had been ably seconded by her daughter, Adelaide, whose engagement to Sir Hervey Ralston she viewed with unalloyed delight. His immense wealth was an undisputed fact, their own poverty being known only to mother and daughter. How much of the achievement of Sir Hervey's desire had been due to the maternal pressure brought to bear upon the girl was not realized by the latter herself, so subtle and ingenious had Lady Wolverton's tactics been.

"Now for the fray," murmured young Ralston as they mounted the staircase; "the usual crush is evidently in store."

They had entered the reception room, and there, standing under the friendly light of a hanging lamp, Ralston saw the most beautiful girl he had ever in his life beheld.

"Ah!" exclaimed Sir Hervey, the blood coursing through his veins, with a rapidity almost boyish. "Come, Hugh, and let me have the pleasure of presenting you; it is one to which I have long looked forward."

Adelaide Wolverton had seen them and was ready with a gracious welcome for the nephew about whom she had heard so much.

"And this is Hugh," she said. "You must not expect me to call you anything else for your name has become a household word among us, has it not?" She turned to Sir Hervey, who met the shy, sweet glance with one of gratitude. That these two, whom he loved better than all the world besides, should be friends was his one desire, a desire that seemed likely to be fulfilled as the evening wore away.

"Tell me," said Adelaide Wolverton some two hours later, "that you do not look upon me as an interloper. I was desperately afraid of you before I saw you."

Ralston laughed. "And what did you fear in me?" he asked.

"I feared your jealousy," was the prompt reply. "For I knew how much you and Sir Hervey had been to each other. Jealous people are so unreasonable, are they not?"

"So I should imagine."

"Ah, the conditional mood! That is delightful. Then you do not bear me any ill will?"

Ralston looked at the upturned face and rejoined: "Ill will? How could I bear you anything but the very reverse?" With grandiloquence he tried to cover his embarrassment; but Adelaide Wolverton was not deceived. She knew, and knew also that Ralston was aware of her knowledge, that their meeting had proved no ordinary one. For love had awakened a love that would never sleep again.

"I see," she said, slowly unfurling her fan, "your emotion is due merely to gratitude. Mr. Ralston, how long have you been away from England?"

The change of tone and subject was not lost upon Ralston. They had been treading on delicate ground, and, thankful for the deviation, he replied: "Two years this month, but it seems like four—I have seen and done so much in the time."

Turning to the girl beside him, he noted the shade of bitterness that had crept over her face, and somehow as he looked he knew that she was not happy in her engagement. A wave of pity for Sir Hervey welled up in his heart, for the baronet idolized his young betrothed.

Sir Hervey Ralston, honorable and clear-souled himself, incapable of subterfuge or pretense, was never ready to imagine evil of any shape in others. And if during the weeks that followed it seemed to him that Adelaide grew more and more impassive, while a spirit of unrest had seized upon his nephew, he strove to see no manner of connection.

At one and the same time had the gates of heaven and hell been opened to him, and he revelled in his bliss only to writhe in the agony involved. No words on the subject had he and Adelaide interchanged; thus far had they been loyal to Sir Hervey. But Hugh smiled bitterly as he acknowledged to himself the limitations of that loyalty. None knew better than he the subtlety of love's confessions.

On the evening of the last day in March he waited nervously for his uncle's approach to the smoking room, which had been the scene of many a confidential talk before his voyage to New Zealand. Sir Hervey's step seemed to have lost its lightness, or so it seemed to Hugh, as he listened to it drawing near. He was later, too, in joining him than was his wont. Had any suspicion crossed his mind? Were his thoughts of next week's happiness unalloyed, or were they shadowed by a vague yet unmistakable cloud?

Hugh Ralston wondered but said nothing as his uncle entered the room. The latter, with his usual precision and neatness, lit a cigar, seated himself, and was soon engrossed in the pages of the evening paper.

Thankful to escape the customary

evening chat, Hugh paced monotonously up and down the room, with temples throbbing and the blood surging through his veins. How could he broach the subject that to-night must be faced once and for all?

"My dear boy," said Sir Hervey at length, glancing over the top of his paper, "could you not sit down? You seem restless to-night."

Hugh dropped into the nearest chair. Silence reigned for full five minutes, a silence that Ralston broke by saying, with the composure born of despair: "I cannot stand England after all, Uncle Hervey. I am off again next Saturday. You can do without me on the 6th, can you not?" He laughed a little curiously as he added, "I am hardly a necessary part of the play."

Sir Hervey folded his newspaper, laid it on the table, and deliberately adjusted his glasses before looking in his nephew's direction. "Do I understand you aright? You prefer not to be with me on the day of my marriage?"

Hugh Ralston bowed his head. Sir Hervey rose from his chair and instinctively the younger man did the same, a movement that brought them face to face as the words, "You dare not be with me," broke from the baronet's lips.

The eyes of the two men met, and the soul of each was read. Then as Hugh leaned on the mantelpiece, burying his face on his arms with a groan, it was the elder man who proved the stronger, who first brought light into the darkness that had descended.

Hugh was conscious at last of the pressure of a hand upon his shoulder, and as through a vast space and time he heard the voice of Sir Hervey saying, "It is well, my boy. I am not worthy of her, and might not—and should not—have made her happy. You must not blame yourself; far from it. I am going now to Lady Wolverton's and—will—release her." The last words were wrung from his lips that were growing pale. Sir Hervey walked slowly to the door. Hugh had never moved.

Turning round as his fingers closed over the handle, the uncle said imploringly, "Don't, my lad! Don't take it so to heart! I shall get over it, and you—you will be happy as you deserve to be."—Exchange.

A French provincial watchmaker sent a number of his watches to teachers, enclosing stamps for their return if not wanted. One teacher, who did not want the watch sent him, refused to return it, and suit was brought against him; whereupon he brought a counter suit of twenty francs damages for annoyance and waste of

time. The court awarded him ten francs and informed the manufacturer that he should have called for his watch.

The largest orange orchard in Bristol is at Cabula, where the owner of a ranch the other day planted his 500,000th orange tree.

In the City of Washington there are 18,000 Browns, and 15,000 Smiths, 14,000 Johnsons, and 1,000 Joneses.

The paper bills of the United States Printing Office amount to \$750,000 a year.

BRITAIN'S BURDENS.

What the Empire Pays in Interest to Foreigners.

A financial abstract covering the fiscal years 1888-1902 has been issued by the British government. Some interesting fiscal points can be gleaned from the multitudinous figures.

On the first page is a proof of reckless spending. In 1888 our imperial expenditure amounted to £87,683,830, and in 1901-2 this had risen to £184,488,708.

A little further on the amount of internal expenditure is given, though the statistics are not available for the year 1902, but in 1888 the local expenditure for the United Kingdom amounted to £85,555,401, and in 1901 to £183,718,267.

Both these expenditures fall on the individual, and the tendency has been to add enormously to the share of the burden borne by the Briton and ease that borne by the foreigner. This will readily be seen from other statistics given in the same volume.

As to providing for money to defray the imperial expenditure, it may be stated that the foreigner paid about £20,000,000 in 1888 toward the expenses of the country, while the Briton paid £68,000,000. Now, the foreigner pays about £32,000,000, at a generous estimate, while the Briton makes up the balance of £123,000,000.

In addition to this the whole burden of domestic expenditure falls on the Briton in the form of rates and local taxes. The increase of this burden may be gauged from the fact that in 1886-7 the outstanding loans of local authorities amounted to £186,821,642, and that in 1900-1 this indebtedness had risen to £516,704,222.

Turning to the goods department of the report, it is found that we are losing ground in the balance of cash received and cash paid.

In 1902, for instance we bought for each head of the population £2 1s. 7d. more than we did in 1888, but in 1902 we sold for each head of the population only 7s. 11d. worth of British produce more than we did in 1888.—London Express.

DOGS BLOW THE BELLOWS.

Odd Labor-Saving Device of a Blacksmith Which, Passersby Watch.

On an uptown street, on the east side of the city, hundreds of people daily pause at a blacksmith's shop to watch three large and intelligent Newfoundland dogs, which are employed by the brawny smithy to work the bellows of the forges of his shop. In one corner of the shop is a wooden wheel, about eight feet in diameter, and wide enough for a dog to stand in. When the wheel is at rest the dog stands in much the same position as the horse in a child's rocker, with its head always turned toward the forge, awaiting orders. When told to "go ahead" the beast on duty at once starts on a brisk trot, which makes the wheel turn around rapidly, and by means of a crank and lever the power is conveyed to the bellows.

The dogs work willingly and with such intelligence that people are never weary of watching their efforts of the animals to keep the smithy's fires bright. Each dog works in the wheel for one hour and then rests for two. They cost their owner about \$2 a week each to feed, and he estimates that they save him \$12 a week, as otherwise it would require at least the services of two men or a small engine to do their work.—New York News.

The Eiffel Tower Doomed.

Visitors to Paris, as well as the Parisians themselves, have for a good many years now been so accustomed to the sight of the Eiffel tower, whichever way they turn, that the decision to demolish it, which has just been arrived at, will surprise most people and be regretted by many. Nothing can be done immediately, since the concession expires only in 1910; but unless some higher power than the Paris municipal council steps in to save it, the Tour de 300 metres will then disappear. All constructions of the kind are, no doubt, essential monstrosities, but it has never been objected that the wonderful steel erection in the Champ de Mars is ugly. Its lines are indeed distinctly graceful, and such a landmark will hardly vanish without leaving a void. Its removal has been dictated by the determination of the municipal authorities to transform completely the Champ de Mars. For nearly forty years past the historic Field of Victory has formed part of every great exposition that has taken place on the banks of the Seine, but if the conclusions of the technical committee of the city of Paris are carried out, this great open space will finally be converted into a tumble-down park and garden, bordered by dental palaces.