

"But a few days after I had settled in my new quarters I was walking back to the farm from town when I was suddenly attacked by some ruffian in the semi-darkness. I was seized and gagged. I struggled fiercely, when suddenly the man flung me on the ground and left, and there coming along on horse-back was the son of the lady for whom I now work. He is only a boy, but probably the ruffian never thought of that, and was scared. The lad was much concerned to see my sorry plight. We reached home, and his mother gave me wine, and insisted I should go at once to bed. They both sought to rally my spirits. The boy said, with a smile: 'You would be safe dressed as a boy. You must borrow my clothes next time.'

"All night I tossed and turned on my narrow bed. I was not so much concerned with my adventure, strange to say, as I was tortured with the thought of Sidney Martin. Here she looked up and smiled wistfully. 'Sidney, alone, perhaps, ill—perhaps dying. The boy's clothes. Why not? I could visit you. No one would know me. I had always been told I had a boyish face. We had often played theatricals when father was alive. I was always Rosalind, and loved the part. I resolved to try, and made my plans. I told Mrs. Taylor I would go away, back to Auckland, for a few weeks, to recover from the shock of the night attack. I would go to a hairdresser and sell my long hair, and I would immediately set out with a boy's outfit.

"It took four days of my time—and much of my money—to get here. I had to borrow a horse from the doctor, whom I visited. But he was glad of my company the 20 miles out. Strange he should have been coming up to you just as I called to ask his help. I knew if you were worse this doctor, being the only one, would be sent for. And I was right. And now that I have come, I have decided I shall stay. I am not needed by anyone but you. My work is here."

She sighed softly, and leaned back against Sidney's knees once more, looking up quietly into his face as if for her now the whole matter had been settled. Sidney dare not return her gaze. He shunned the inevitable. Yet he knew he must shatter her assurance.

"Dearest, listen! You know I love you—you know that early marriage was turned to mockery by the mother of my child. You know how for three years I have striven for Effie's sake to live so that she should never know what a mother I had given her. You know Effie thinks her dead, and has no remembrance of the woman who deserted her in infancy for a light love. And you know how you came into my life, and when we met we each understood that we belonged to each other—married or not! Bound as I am hand and foot, you are mine and I am yours, darling. Suffering disgrace and dishonour through the woman whom I so early had become infatuated with, the disillusion and bitterness of those first years of married life! Can anyone wonder what it was to me to meet you? To be loved by one whom I recognized at once as my other self? Can anyone wonder I fell into the temptation of basking in the sunshine of her presence for a few weeks? Ah, Clarice, I'm trying to excuse myself for my weakness. But now, now once more you come into my life!"

"Yes, dear; and always I shall be here!" she said firmly.

"I know, I know—in spirit, yes. Yet the conditions are the same—honour, my father's good name, and Effie, my child, Clarice! you know what she is to me. The winsome, curly-haired baby, who loved her daddy always so devotedly. How can I bring her to shame!"

Clarice put her head forward once more, her chin on her palm, meditatively. "We can say I'm her mother, as I will be. Her new mother. You are a widow—er apparently, and your wife is really dead to you."

Sidney groaned. "You make it hard for me," he replied.

"Hard," said Clarice, "some sacrifice must be made, and mine is willingly made. Do you not love me sufficiently?" she said reproachfully.

With sudden passion the man took the girl into his arms and kissed her, and then, drawing in his breath quickly, said: "The sacrifice of your good name, too, dear. No, no, I cannot accept it. I cannot always remain here," he continued. "Some day there is the estate, I see my father here. Effie must be taken home. Oh, Clarice! Can't you see? It is hard for us both. Dear one, be brave, take up your life again. At least I shall not have accepted your unselfish offer, your good name—your good name too.

You have pulled me through this difficulty and cheered me. We have had these few weeks together, and in the future we must just live in thought with each other. We could not be happy long—in dishonour, you know."

"Am I to leave you in this desolate spot, working away for Effie's support and with only Jim for a companion?" she said.

"Yes, dear. It is not all desolation. There is something alluring about bush-clearing, something fascinating. It is a healthy life. In a few years this land will sell for twice its present value, and who knows—we may meet again. But you—I am anxious about you," he added.

"I am helpless, God knows, where you are concerned—helpless! And yet you are peculiarly solitary now."

Clarice sobbed as he spoke, but sprang up quickly and went into the small inner room as Jim opened the outer door of the whare.

"Hello! sitting in darkness," he said. "Only burning logs for a light; it looks cosy and snug, and so pleasant to see you sitting up. Here's news of some kind," and he placed a telegram in Sidney's hand. "Hope it's not bad news," he added. There was a pause, then a rustling of paper. "Hold up, man! hold up!" and Jim rushed to pour brandy out for the fainting man in the chair.

"Boy! Boy!" he shouted, "come here."

They read the telegram together: "Motor accident; Effie injured."

Sidney recovering, said, "I must go early."

"I will come with you," said Roy quickly.

They made preparations. Jim rose with the dawn and had the light cart ready at the door. They drove to the cross roads, eight miles, in fear and trembling for their invalid, and there the coach came along at eight o'clock, and they said good-bye hurriedly to Jim. All day and all night they travelled. "Boy" and Sidney silently, yet with fear gripping their hearts. Next day, with wonderful strength and fortitude, the father looked upon his fair little daughter in the hospital cot—smiling her last at him. "Poor Daddy!" said Effie, her face like an angel's, her curls ruffled about her; "who will comfort you now?" "Boy" stood hidden behind Sidney, overcome with emotion for a moment, then she vanished.

Sidney took the child's face between his and kissed her.

"The motor car came so quickly," whispered Effie, "and I was pushing my pram out of the way. But don't grieve, don't, Daddy. Courage, you said, and Honour were the words of our shield. I tried to be brave, and I'm not afraid now. I did want you so badly." She clasped his hands feebly. The blue eyes glazed for a moment. "Where's Clarice? Daddy, she is my darling too. Yours, you said once. She will comfort you, perhaps, if you can find her. She told me not to tell."

The words began to come more faintly—"find her, find her." The nurse stepped forward and gave her a stimulant. Sidney leaned heavily back in the chair. His child, Oh God! Everything going! What next?

And so he sat dazed and stunned with grief, watching the dying child, and wondering blindly, madly what it all meant. The nurse gazed at the white-faced, stricken man pityingly. Half an hour passed—an hour.

Soon the medicine was once more administered, and another form stood by the nurse's. A sweet-faced, pale girl, with clear eyes and broad brow, a hat low over her hair—Clarice! in her own dress.

She knelt by the bed and watched for a glimmer of returning consciousness in the small face upon the pillow.

Effie raised her eyes, and seeing Clarice said: "Here you are, my little mother," and she smiled beautifully. "I always call her that, Daddy! I wanted a mother, although I had you. Look after him," she whispered. "Kiss me, both of you!"

So saying she closed her eyes and peacefully slept forever.

And afterwards, for the two stricken hearts, Clarice, nervous and strengthened by some strange insight into the inner life of things, and into Death, which Effie had met so bravely, said "Good-bye" firmly.

Sidney returned to the bush—she to her lonely furrow. And what can the future hold?

A Strike Against War.

The International Socialist and Trade Union Congress at Copenhagen in 1910 discussed the question whether a stoppage of work by the workers in any two countries between which war was threatened could effectively prevent war breaking out. It was agreed that the International Bureau should prepare a report for consideration at the Congress in 1913. In order to obtain the views of trade unions and Socialist organisations throughout the country the British section of the Bureau has issued a circular headed, "A Strike Against War" asking the following questions:—"Are you in favour of the organised working-class movements of all countries being asked to come to a mutual agreement whereby, in the event of war being threatened between any two or more countries, the workers of those countries would hold themselves prepared to try to prevent it by a mutual and simultaneous stoppage of work in the countries affected?" "Have you any suggestions to put forward or remarks to make on the proposal, or on the conditions necessary to its being made effective?" The replies were to be sent to 28, Victoria Street, Lon., where the Labour party has offices, not later than September 30.

Absinthe Drinking.

France consumes more absinthe than all the rest of Europe together. Worse still, she is consuming more every year. The year 1911 saw an enormous and quite unprecedented leap of over 1,000,000 gallons. A commission appointed to study its effects entirely confirmed the indictment of the National League against Alcoholism that "absinthe is the source of madness and crime; it causes epilepsy and consumption; it makes the husband a brute, the wife a martyr, and the child a degenerate." All the same, there are difficulties in the way of the suppression of the trade in absinthe. The manufacturers are a powerful corporation, and the State receives from the sale of this drink £2,000,000 a year and the communes a little less than £1,000,000. In the words of M. Caillaux, "a wave from the depths" is to be feared if all the absinthe drinkers of France—chiefly recruited from the lower classes—

are to be deprived of their favourite liquor. For these reasons the Government has abandoned the idea of a complete interdiction of the sale of absinthe. It has been discovered that the principal poison in absinthe is a vegetable substance, thuyon, so the suggestion is that distillers should have the right to produce a liquid and label it absinthe, if need be, so long as it is free of this pernicious ingredient. Further, no plant containing thuyon shall henceforward be used in French distilleries, and of these plants absinthe or wormwood is the chief. From now on, then, it looks as if we should have an absinthe which is not absinthe. Whether it will be any less pernicious is at least doubtful. The absinthe manufacturers profess themselves entirely satisfied with this compromise, a fact in itself suspicious.

HOW RHEUMO CURED MR GILLESPIE.

A host of witnesses sing the praises of RHEUMO. The success of this wonderful remedy is due to the fact that it attacks and at once expels the real cause of Gout, Rheumatism, Sciatica, or Lumbago—excess uric acid in the blood. Mr Andrew Gillespie, of Wellington, is so well known throughout N.Z., that his experience will interest many. He writes:—"Whilst suffering from a severe attack of Rheumatic Gout, a friend brought me a bottle of RHEUMO. Its effect was certain: the pain left; the swelling went down, and the second bottle completed the cure. My wife also had a severe attack, and one bottle effected the cure. After taking three bottles, a friend who had been suffering from Rheumatic Gout for some three years, and whose case was considered hopeless, received almost immediate relief from pain, and was able to leave her bed. When I hear of anyone suffering from Rheumatic Gout, I always recommend RHEUMO. There are many sufferers who would get prompt relief if they only tried RHEUMO."



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