

## THE WAY THE STORIES END.

"Well?" I asked, as she laid down the gayly covered magazine. I was sorry for the ending of the tale, when the gray eyes ceased to flash and the kind lips to quiver.

"It is a pretty story, Mr. Norton," she said. "Oh, no, you needn't shake your head. I'm not saying so just because it's yours. I can't imagine how you could write it."

"Pen and ink, whiskey and soda, tailor's bill as a stimulus!"

"Please don't make fun. I want to be serious." When she looks at me in her earnest way I am helpless.

"Does that mean criticism?" I inquired, leaning a little toward her.

"Criticism and inquiry—if I may?"

"Inquiry by all means. I'm rather afraid of your criticism, do you know?"

She is very bright, and her remarks often help me, as a matter of fact.

She opened and shut the magazine absently.

"What I was wondering," she said "was why you wrote so seriously and talked so frivolously; whether one mood was the real you and the other a sham you, and which was which?"

"I think," I protested, "I would rather have the criticism, if you don't mind."

She laughed softly. I like her laugh.

"It is rather an obtrusive question. But I should very much like to know. You do mean this"—she touched the book—"a little, don't you?"

"Ye-es," I said, "I suppose I do. I did when I wrote it, anyhow."

"And afterwards?"

"I keep my serious occasions."

"Which is a rebuke for my inquisitiveness, I suppose?"

She flushed a little. She is rather pale generally. Some people wouldn't call her good looking, I do.

"I didn't mean it to be," I apologized.

"I ought to be flattered at your interest—"

"In your tales," she corrected.

"In my tales, of course. I suppose the real answer is that I do not carry my heart upon my sleeve."

"But you have one all the same?"

A touch of wistfulness makes her voice perfect.

"Try!"

I caught her eye for a moment and stopped. I had made up my mind to keep heart whole before I met her.

"Now for the criticism," she continued hastily.

"Or as large an instalment as I can stand."

"The criticism must not be misunderstood. You will remember, please, that I like the tale—like it very much in fact."

I bowed.

"The criticism is?"

"That it is a repetition of your other tales."

I gasped.

"Why, I thought it was quite different!"

She shook her head.

"Fresh characters, fresh scenery, new plot, original phrases—"

"The machinery is different, but the story is really the same."

"In what way? In being about a man and a woman?"

"Yes."

I laughed.

"If you can invent a third kind of person," I said, "I'll utilize it with pleasure. At present I haven't made the discovery."

"Don't be absurd. What I mean is that your men and women always do the same thing."

"Fall in love?"

"Exactly."

"There are lots of ways of doing it," I suggested.

"At the present rate you will soon exhaust them. Whatever will you do then?"

I lit a cigarette, with her permission, to aid reflection.

"I'm hanged if I know. I've often wondered myself. Make them fall out of love, I suppose."

"And when you've exhausted that?"

"Make them fall in again!"

She stamped her foot impatiently.

Do you absolutely refuse to be original? I cannot think you do yourself justice in keeping to such a hackneyed theme—though I admit you do it very nicely."

"I might do it better if I had more practical experience," I suggested.

There is something about her big eyes and the little droop at the corners of her mouth which makes a fellow say that sort of thing you know.

"Now remember our compact," she warned me. We were pledged to a purely platonic friendship, I've had that sort of thing in my tales, but it always broke down.

"The keeping of a platonic compact," said I, "would be a novel theme, don't you think?"

"Would it be interesting enough?" she asked doubtfully.

"There! What stronger defence could I have? I proposed to leave out the love making, and you say that the interest would be gone."

She drummed upon the table with her fingers.

"Surely there is some other theme?"

I knocked the ash deliberately off my cigarette.

"Upon my word," I confessed, "I'm not sure that there is. But I'll think over it."

Then her brothers came in, and we changed the subject until I was going. It is part of the compact that she shall see me out of the door. I insisted upon it.

"When shall I communicate the result of my deliberations?" I asked in the hall. "Tomorrow."

"I'm going to Vereker's."

"And Wednesday I'm due at a smoker. Thursday?"

"If you like."

"Thursday, then. Good-night Mary."

It is in the compact that I am not to call her Mary, but I do.

Sometimes she objects, sometimes she doesn't. On this occasion she only tossed her head and half turned away from me. She is aware that she looks well in profile. I suddenly bent over her and—

"How dare you!" she cried hotly.

"I couldn't help it, Mary; you look so tempting."

But she ran up-stairs, her face scarlet.

"I shall not be in on Thursday," she called, as she turned the corner, "or any other day."

So I went out feeling triumphantly foolish.

Next Thursday I called, and she wasn't out; but she received me coolly and kept the table between us.

"Look here, Mary," I began.

"Miss Montague, if you please!"

"I don't please. It is quite natural to call a friend by her Christian name."

"Ye-es; but people might misunderstand, we agreed; and so—"

"I'm not going to pander to other people's stupidity," I said indignantly; "and I don't consider that friendship should have to be weighed and measured in exact words." I had prepared this remark beforehand.

"No—o; perhaps not." I knew it would score. Still, there are bounds to friendship.

She shut her mouth decisively.

"If you mean last Tuesday—"

"I don't want to talk about it," she interrupted. "Have you considered about the stories?"

"Yes I have reasoned out my position most carefully—Mary."

She frowned, but passed the familiarity.

"And your conclusion?"

"Is in verse."

"Oh how nice!" Women always like a fellow to run to verse. I suppose it is because he is sure to give himself away! "Let me see."

"On condition that you read it aloud," she looked objections. "I want to hear if I have got the swing."

So she declaimed softly. I think I said that she had a pretty voice.

TO MARY.

I made me a tale of the tempest at sea,  
Full of thunder and lightning above,  
And the terrors that be when the storm-winds are free—  
But the end of the story was love!

I sang me a song of a raid in the glen,  
With a lilt of the pipers who played,  
Strike again, strike again, and die fighting like men!  
And the struggle was over a maid!

I planned me a play of a monarch of fame,  
And his courtiers in silken attire,  
And his statesman, who came like a moth to the flame—  
For a pair of bright eyes were the fire!

I paeined the praise of an hero so calm,  
And so strong in the tumult to stand,  
When I found me the charm that had strengthened his arm—  
It was only the touch of a hand!

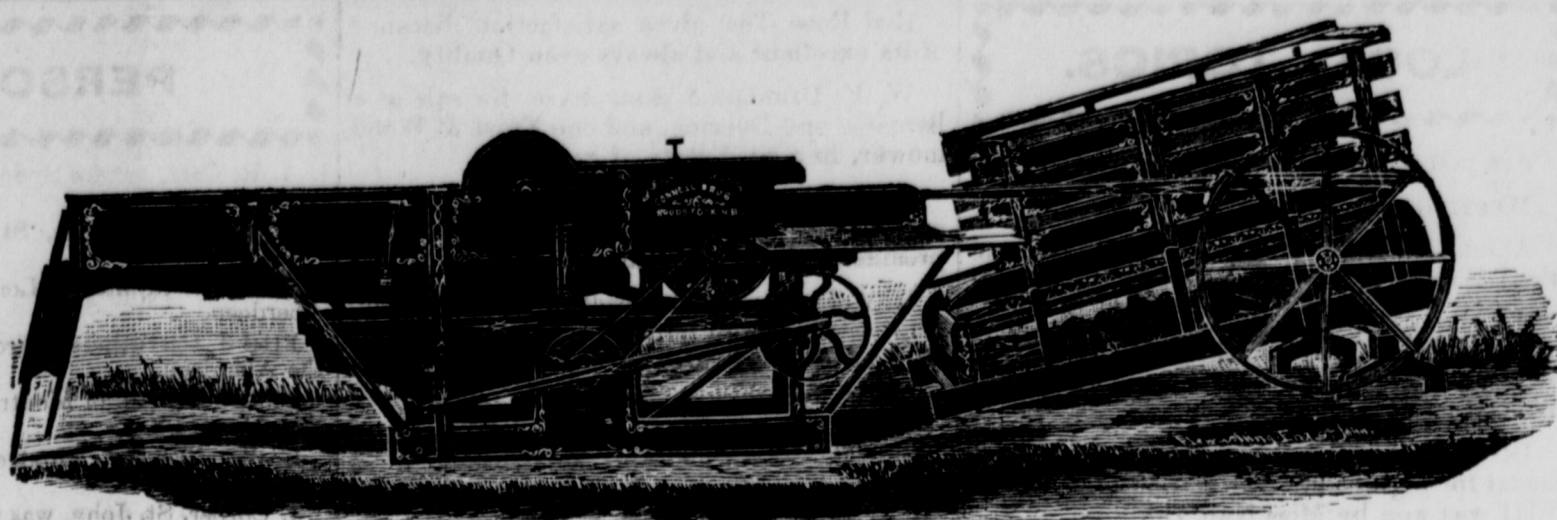
And I? If my heart for a moment be strong,  
If my tale for a page ring sincere,  
Or if merits belong to the place or the song—  
They are only your echoes, my dear!

When she came to the last line her voice was very soft and just a little tearful. I put my hand on her shoulder, and we stood looking silently at the paper for a minute. Then I drew her gently to me—the way that stories end!—Black and White.

A Democratic Peerage.

New York World: In one aspect the elevation of Sir Alfred Milner to the peerage is typical of the British political system at its best, and is another of the many illustrations of why the British aristocracy is not hated by the masses of the British people, but is admired and respected. Milner is the son of a poor school teacher, a wretched usher in a cheap English school in a German university town. He worked his way through Oxford; he was a struggling barrister and then a successful newspaper writer in London. He drifted into politics, and by sheer hard work and sheer merit, wholly unaided by "pull," he rose to his present very high position. His peerage is the reward of long and faithful service to his country according to his understanding of his country's interests. Also it is an incentive to the humblest Englishman by reminding them that the highest honors are attainable even by the humblest.

Man becomes a slave to his constantly repeated acts. In spite of the protests of his weakened will, the training nerves continue the repetition even when the door abhors his deeds. What he at first chooses, at last compels. You can as easily snatch a pebble from gravitation's grasp as you can separate the minutest act of life from its inevitable effect upon character and destiny.—"Success" for July.



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### Greeley's Awful Writing.

It is interesting to recall the fact that Horace Greeley left behind him a very frank criticism of the legibility of his own chirography. Being up town in New York one day, and wishing to send a telegram and also to get shaved, he entered a hotel and sent his dispatch. Then, passing in to the barber shop, he sat down in a chair and (according to custom) was soon found asleep.

Meantime the telegram had created a decided sensation, Mr. Greeley having thrown it down hastily on the desk and neglected to translate it. Nobody, from the manager down, being able to supply a legible equivalent for the mysterious characters, a messenger was sent into the barber shop with the screed.

Waking with a start, and supposing that the boy had brought an answer to his dispatch, Mr. Greeley took the paper, scanned it for a moment, and then, with a look of deep disgust, piped out: "What blamed idiot wrote this?"

BENTLEY'S is the best Liniment.

Was Born in Boston.

A young man who for business reasons had wandered far from his native city, materially, but not spiritually, once attended a revival service in the small town where he had taken up his abode. At the service an urgent invitation was extended to all sinners to come forward to the anxious seat to be prayed for by the brothers and sisters of the church. As the young man did not accept the invitation the revivalist walked down the aisle and placed his hand on his shoulder, inquiring, "Have you ever felt any desire to be born again?"

The answer was given at once: "No; I was born in Boston."—Short Stories.

A Statistician Who Makes Statistics Interesting.

No man in this country is better fitted to write instructively and interestingly of woman's present and future prospects from the economic and business standpoints than the Hon. Carroll D. Wright, the United States Commissioner of Labor at Washington, who has prepared a series of articles on this subject for early publication in *The Ladies' Home Journal*. By temperament and training he is a statistician of the highest rank; but he also has the rarer faculty of breathing life into the dry bones of statistics and clothing them with unexpected meaning and interest. The exceptional ability that made him colonel of his regiment, and then acting assistant Adjutant-General under Sheridan in the Civil War before he was twenty-five years old, and the clear-headed intelligence that in twelve years proved his special fitness for the high Government position which he has held for the last fifteen years, both combine to make all he writes of wide popular interest as well as of high scientific value.

Besant and Buchanan.

Of the two literary men who died last week Besant would probably be called the success, Buchanan the failure, though the Scotch poet had a far higher quality than the English novelist. It is the old story with which the letters of our era have made us familiar—the story of adaptability. The one found his market and wrote for it, securing a competence, a baronetcy and the good will of the world, all of which were thoroughly deserved. The other simply poured out that which was in him, found at his best (twenty years ago) a limited, if intelligent, circle of readers, and of late has been comparatively forgotten. Yet he will always have a place, though a minor one, as a bard of the great Victorian era, while his colleague in death will be known only as one of the host of story-tellers—more numerous than the minstrels or minnesingers—who amused the idle hours for a time.

The Saddest Story Ever Told.—The tramp (between mouthfuls).—"I wuz wunst a wealthy married man mun, but I am penniless now." Kind Lady—"You poor unfortunate man! Why didn't you put your fortune in your wife's name?" The Tramp—"I did—an' she learned to play bridge whist."—[Puck.]

Were half the power that fills the world with terror.

Were half the wealth bestowed on crowns and courts,

Given to redeem the human mind from error There were no need for arsenals and forts.

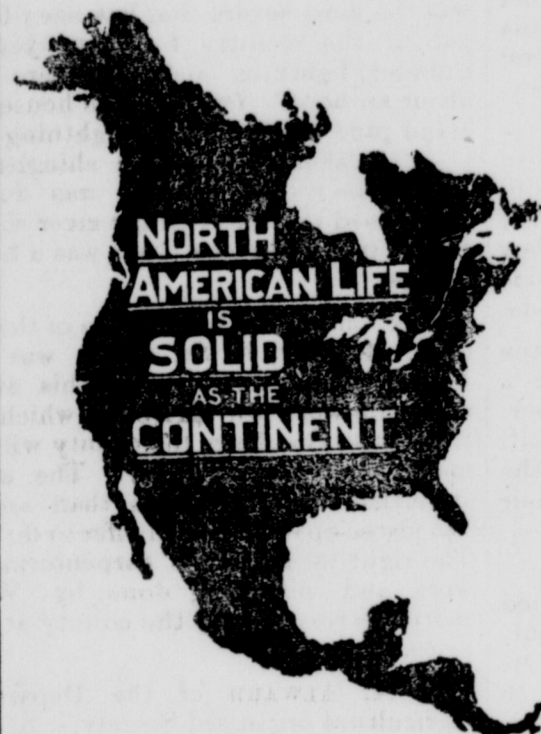
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Assurance Reserve, .....	3,362,709 433,157
Annual Premium Income, ..	822,929 78,063
Interest Income, .....	183,041 34,384
Net Surplus, (Profit Fund), ..	500,192 32,169

Policies issued during 1900 amount to \$4,153,150, making the Total Assurance in Force over \$25,000,000.

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## AS TO CARRIAGES.

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