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A Lame Dog's Style.

To Late She Remembered His Warning That She Would Regret It.

By V. H. Friedlaender.

He found her tremulous and shaken. In her hand was a newspaper. He took an eager step forward—then halted. Until she chose to discard the outward signs of her widowhood it would be an impertinence to to speak as he wanted to speak.

"I beg your pardon," he said, lamely; I oughtn't to have come—," and retreated towards the door.

"Don't go," she said, and her voice was low with an emotion to which he had no key "I'd like to tell you, if it won't bore you."

She looked at him, smiling faintly. "Please understand," she said, as she handed him the paper, pointing out a short paragraph.

He read in silence; then re-read it, anxious to do her biding. But he failed. He only knew that he hated to think she saw such things, or that one of them could move her almost to tears.

"I have read it," he said baldly.

She clasped her hands nervously. "O, but you haven't understood." she cried; "please let me explain. It has hurt me so because—I was at school with the girl."

With a sort of graphic sketchiness, she made him realize her unhappy childhood; the cold, indifferent step-mother, the blank and dreary holidays when she counted the days to the beginning of the next term, and then the joyous day when Peggy had first asked her to come home with her for the holidays, and the oft-recurring invitations that had gladdened the heart of the lonely, then motherless little girl in the big, unfriendly London house.

"Oh, she was very good to me!" she insisted. "One doesn't forget those things. And we stuck to each other till"—her voice faltered—"till my step-mother forced me into an unhappy marriage, and in my shame and misery, I dropped all my friends.'

It was the first time she had spoken of her married life to him. He realized, with a quick glow of hope, that it was unlikely she had ever broached the subject to another. He realized also that sh e desired no comment no expression of sympathy, and he was silent There was a moment's pause.

"So you see," she added, "whatever she has done, I ought to be the first to help, if she will let me."

"It's no good," he said, shaking his head. "I can't agree with you. Of course, I don't dispute that she was all you say at the time you knew her, but this"—he laid his hand on the paper—"this shows that she has changed. Believe me, you won't be able to do anything. It's hard, I know, but it's no good shutting one's eyes to facts. It's the way the world was made—for women."

"That is a hard saying, Mr. Thoroldson," she said. "Somehow, I did not expect it of you. I even thought you might understand."

"I am only afraid," he protested, "that if you do anything, you may regret it some day."

. . . . . .

"Chummie!" she called, softly, closing the door behind her.

The girl who was staring blankly out of the window turned sharply at sound of the once familiar name.

"Is it—is it Marguerite?" she faltered.

"No," she said, and with a word bridged the gulf of years, "it's only Margie."

Suddenly the girl in the window broke down. "Margie—Margie! she sobbed, convulsively, "do you know what I've done?"

"Hush," said the other, soothingly; "I know nothing and believe nothing that you don't tell me yourself. But I've come to ask you to come home with me."

When they were in the carriage and rolling smoothly westward the girl slipped her arm through her friend's.

"Margie" she said, "I want to tell you about it, because I know you'll be glad it's not as bad as—as the papers say."

"I knew that, of course," said her friend.

"He—he got it into the papers," faltered the girl, "because he hoped I should be afraid—should be glad to marry him—"

Marguerite's eyes flashed indignation, but she said nothing.

"You see," Peggy hurried on, "he came down for a week or two's fishing, and we got to know him, and he came often; the fishing was bad. One day I mentioned I was going up to town for some shopping the next day, and he asked if he could'nt meet me and go to a matinee, and—and I thought he was a gentleman, Margie, and, O, I was so bored in the country, and I said 'yes.' "

Brokenly and incoherently she told the story. How, between a protracted tea and a drive, he had made her lose the last train—a very early one, the village being small and remote—how his talk had begun to frighten her; and how, at last, having sent him on some imaginary errand, she had escaped hurriedly form the waiting room where he had left her and had jumped into a passing omnibus and been borne to the end of its journey—she knew not where.

Getting out and walking without purpose down long roads, she had been startled by the approach of a drunken man, had opened a randon a garden gate and crouched behind it.

"When it was quiet again," she went on, "I looked about and saw a little summer house in the garden, and I was so tired and trightened, I—I stopped there all night." Her voice broke in a sob.

"And that's all," added the girl, "except that when I got home"—her voice hardened—"they didn't believe me. Of course he—said I'd been with him, and I couldn't prove I hadn't. She drew a quivering breath. "Margie!" she added, suddenly, "they nearly drove me to him. I came up to London to look for work, but I didn't find any, and if you hadn't come this morning I'm not sure—"

Marguerite smiled, and drew her closer. "O, but I am," she said, quietly; "quite, quite sure."

The girl broke down utterly. "O, you are—sweet!" she sobbed. "You shall never regret it."

And Marguerite kissed her all the more tenderly for remembering there was one who thought she would.

. . . .

"The brougham is round," said Peggy, dashing into the room.

Marguerite was putting on her gloves. She had been summoned to town on business.

"Good-bye, then, Chummie," she said. "I shall be back on Friday. You'll be all right, won't you, with Mrs. Stannerton to keep you company?"

"Of course, dear. And I'm going to be frightfully busy, you know, answering advertisements. I'm ashamed to stop with you any longer. I must find something to do."

Marguerite looked at the girl and smiled. She was so adorably pretty, and Marguerite's thoughts turned to two or three young men who had been constant visitors of late, and who were obviously not blind to the fact.

In the train the time passed quickly to Marguerite. Her thoughts were very pleasant ones. This last quiet month in the country was stored with vague, yet not entirely formless memories. It was delightful to live it over again, and to remember Peggy's happiness, her own joy in it, the long, delicious summer evenings, and—well, yes, after all, that was the main thing; why need she disguise it?—the frequent appearance of a motor car and its owner, John Thoroldson.

She thought of her return, and of a certain delicious white gown that would be awaiting her, the symbol of her release from a mourning that had been nothing but conventional.

And she thought—sweetest of all—of that other thing that was awaiting her, awaiting only that change of which the white gown was the outward and visible sign.

It was dusk on Friday when Marguerite reached home again. The day had been stiling hot, and, with a sigh of relief, she stood once more at her bedroom window, waiting for her maid.

"May I come in?"

It was Peggy who opened the door, and closed it mysteriously behind her.

"I wanted to see you alone, Margie," she explained, "to tell you that—I'm engaged."

"No! Really? Who is it? Phillip?"

Peggy's head shook an imperious negative.

"Well, Charlie Maitland? No? Who can it be? O, I know—Roger Wilde!"

"They're all boys," said Peggy, disdainfully. "Guess again."

But Marguerite couldn't. Tell me, Chummie," she urged. "Look! it's time to dress for dinner."

He's coming to dinner," said Peggy, softly. "It's John Thoroldson. Should you have guessed?'

Marguerite looked at her long and thoughtfully—or so it seemed to Peggy. In reality, what she saw was the image of a man who was frowning slightly and saying. "It's hard . . but it's the way the world was made—for women." . . . .

"No," she said, quietly, "I should never have guessed.'

"Of course," whispered Peggy, "I told him—everything, Margie, and—and you can't think how sweet he was about it. I thought men were generally so—cruel about some things,; aren't they?"

"Yes," said Marguerite.

"And, Margie, he told me things, too, about himself. He once thought he cared for some one else, but there was something that made it impossible to tell her—I think she was very lovely but cold. Anyhow, she never cared about him and he never said anything. . . . Only—I'm quite ridiculously glad he never did tell her."

Marguerite stirred suddenly, "Chummie, we must dress!" she urged. There was another knock at the door. It was Marguerite's maid and Peggy fled.

Madame has seen the robe?" inquired the girl. "Ah! it is madame who will be superb. She raised admiring hands.

Marguerite staggered suddenly and leaned against the bed. "May—regret—it—some—day—may—regret—"

The girl flew to her side. "Madame is tired?—ill? But it is the frightful heat—"

From the dusty lane outside came the sound of a horn—approaching wheels—slackening. Then silence.

"It is nothing, Julie, be quick, it is late. And, Julie—"

"Madame?"

"Get me out something black to wear."—Sketch.

Concerning the B. C. Salmon.

The life history of the British Columbia salmon has many peculiarities of interest to the naturalist, and these must be considered and studied in connection with any scheme adopted to prevent depletion. As the Pacific coast salmon spawns only once, both the male and female dying as soon as the eggs are desposited and fertilized, hopes based on the establishment of a close season for a year may be disappointed. Other fish spared for a year may be caught next season, but the western salmon spared in the annual run never returns to salt water. By the time these fish reach the nets on their way to the spawning beds they have ceased to take food. Their noses are elongated in a peculiar way that would make the taking of food almost impossible, and their organs of alimentation are atrophied. They have then no mission in life but the reproduction of their species. By an instinctive impulse they seek the shallow streams and tributaries, where the running, falling water keeps up a perpetual agitation.

Before they reach these spawning beds the processes of disintegration are often apparent. Unhealthy fungold growths appear on the gills and elsewhere, the fins are weak and frayed, and the flesh is soft and unwholesome. They do not live to defend their nests as some of our familiar fish are known to do, but leave their eggs to the caprices of the running water. The disintegrated remains of the parent fish are soon carried down along the bottoms of the streams to the all-purifying ocean, and in a short time the eggs hatch out into tiny fry. At this period of their life they are exclusively fresh-water fish, and a brief experimental immersion in salt water results in their death. They grow rapidly, and when only about two inches long begin their drifting course to the sea. They make this journey in a puculiar way, heading up stream and swimming leisurely, but not quite as fast as the current. They are three or four inches long by the time they reach salt water, and it seems necessary that instinct or accident should make their arrival coincide with the time of their natural change from fresh to salt water feeders. Fry detained too long in fresh water soon die.

Little or nothing is known of their life or habits in salt water. Of 200 marked by the cutting of a fin, a considerable number were taken four years later in the same river, and only one was taken in a river a short distance away. This is regarded as evidence that they do not travel far after reaching deep water. After four years they return to fresh water to spawn and then their life history ends. To spare the run of one year by a close season would, no doubt, result in a large run four years thereafter, but no result would be noticeable during the intervening seasons. The establishment of hatcheries and the saving of sufficient fish each year to furnish a supply of eggs is a policy that promises best results. But the eggs must be collected and the fry deposited every year to insure a continuous supply.—Toronto Globe.

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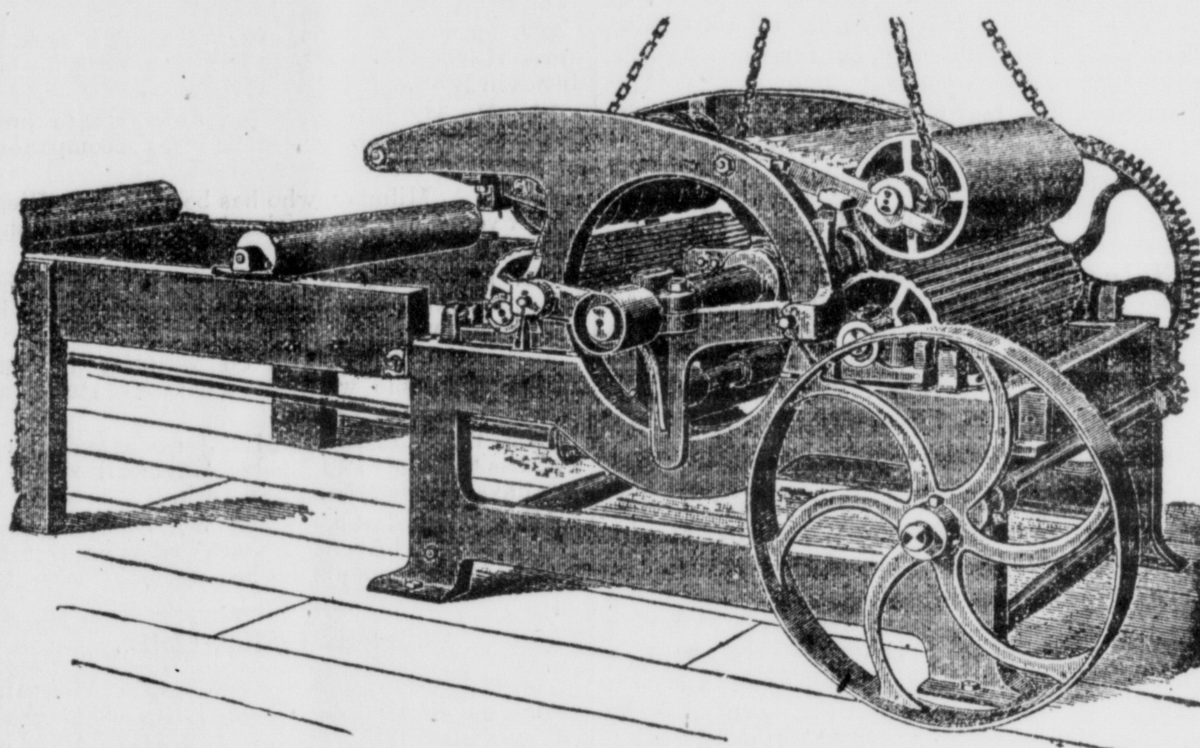

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