

Only a Husk.

Tom Darcey, yet a young man, had grown to be a very bad one. At heart he might have been all right, if his head and his will had been all right, but these being wrong, the whole machine was going to the bad very fast, though there were times when the heart felt something of its old truthful yearnings. Tom had lost his place as foreman in the great machine shop, and what money he now earned came from odd jobs of tinkering which he was able to do here and there at private houses; for Tom was a genius as well as a mechanic, and when his head was steady enough, he could mend a clock or clean a watch as well as he could set up and regulate a steam engine—and this latter he could do better than any other man employed in the Scott Falls Manufacturing Company.

One day Tom had a job to mend a broken mowing machine and reaper, for which he had received five dollars, and on the following morning he started out for his old haunt the village tavern. He knew his wife sadly needed the money, and that his two little children were in absolute suffering from want of clothing, and that morning he had a debate with the better part of himself, but the better part had become very weak and shaky, and the demon of appetite carried the day.

So away to the tavern Tom went. For two or three hours he felt the exhilarating effects of the alcoholic draught, and fancied himself happy, as he could sing and laugh; but as usual, stupefaction followed and the man died out. He drank while he could stand, and then lay down in the corner, where his companions left him.

It was late at night, almost midnight when the landlord's wife came into the bar-room to see what kept her husband up, and quickly saw Tom.

"Peter," said she, not in a pleasant mood, "why don't you send that miserable Tom Darcey home? He's been hanging round here long enough."

Tom's stupefaction was not sound sleep. The dead coma had left the brain and the calling of his name stung his senses to tend attention. He had an insane love for rum, but did not love the landlord. In other years he had loved and wooed the sweet maiden—Ellen Goss—and he won her, leaving Peter Tindar to take up with the vinegary spinster who had brought him the tavern, and he knew that lately the tapster had gloated over the misery of the woman who once discarded him.

"Why don't you send him home?" demanded Mrs. Tindar with an impatient stamp of the foot.

"Hush, Betsy! He's got money. Let him be, he'll be sure to spend it before he goes home. I'll have the kernel of the nut, and his wife may have the husk!"

With a snuff and a snap Betsy turned away, and shortly afterward Tom Darcey lifted himself upon his elbow.

"Ah, Tom, are you awake?"

"Yes."

"Then rouse up and have a warm glass."

Tom got upon his feet and steadied himself.

"No, Peter, I won't drink any more to-night."

"It won't hurt you. Tom—just a glass."

"I know it won't," said Tom buttoning up his coat by the only solitary button left, "I know it won't."

And with this he went out into the chill air of night. When he got away from the shadow of the tavern, he stopped and looked up at the stars, and then he looked down upon the earth.

"Aye," he muttered, grinding his heel in the gravel, "Peter Tindar is taking the kernel and leaving poor Ellen the husk, and I am helping him to do it. I am robbing my wife of joy, robbing children of honor and comfort, robbing myself of love and life—just that Peter Tindar may have the kernel and Ellen the husk! We'll see."

It was a revelation to the man the tavern keeper's brief speech, meant not for his ears, had come upon his senses as fell the voice of the Risen One upon Saul of Tarsus.

"We'll see," he replied, setting his foot firmly upon the ground; and then he wended his way homeward.

On the following morning he said to his wife:

"Ellen have you any coffee in the house?"

"Yes, Tom."

She did not tell him that her sister had given it to her. She was glad to hear him ask for coffee instead of old, old cider.

"I wish you would make a cup good and strong."

There was really music in Tom's voice, and the wife set about the work with a strange flutter at her heart.

Tom drank two cups of the strong coffee, and then went out—went out with resolute step, and walked straight to the great manufactory, where he found Mr. Scott in the office.

"Mr. Scott, I want to learn my trade over again."

"El, Tom. What do you mean?"

"I mean that it's Tom Darcey, come back to the old place, asking forgiveness for the past, hoping to do better in the future."

"It's what's left of him, sir, and we'll have him whole and strong very soon if you'll only set him to work."

"Work! Aye, Tom, and bless you, too. There is an engine to be set up and tested to-day. Come with me."

Tom's hands were weak and unsteady, but his brain was clear, and under his skillful supervision the engine was set up and tested, but was not perfect. There were mistakes which he had to correct, and it was late in the evening when the work was completed.

"How is it now, Tom?" asked Mr. Scott, as he came into the testing house and found the workmen ready to depart.

"She's all right, sir. You may give your warrant without fear."

"God bless you, Tom. You don't know how like sweet music the old voice sounds. Will you take your old place again?"

"Wait till Monday morning, sir. If you will offer it to me then, I will take it."

At the little cottage Ellen Darcey's

fluttering heart was sinking. That morning, after Tom was gone, she had found a two dollar bill in her coffee cup. She knew he had left it for her. She had been out and bought a bit of tender steak; and all day long a ray of light had been dancing and skimming before her—a ray from the blessed light of other days. With prayer and hope she set out the tea-table and waited, but the sun went down and no Tom came. Eight o'clock—and almost nine. Oh, was it but a false glimmer after all?

Hark! The old step! strong, eager for home. Yes it was Tom, with the old grime upon his hands, and the odor of oil upon his garments.

"I have kept you waiting, Nellie."

"Tom!"

"I didn't mean to, but the work hung on."

Tom! You have been to the old shop."

"Yes, and I am to have the old place, and—"

"Oh, Tom!"

And she threw her arms around his neck and covered his face with kisses.

"Nellie, darling, wait a little and you shall have the old Tom back again."

"Oh, Tom. I've got him now, now—bless him! My own Tom! My husband, my darling!"

And then, Tom Darcey realized the full power and blessing of woman's love.

On the following Monday morning, Tom Darcey assumed his place at the head of the great machine shop, and no fear of his going back into his old habits.

A few days later Tom met Peter Tindar on the street.

"El, Tom, old boy, what's up? Yes—I see. But I hope you haven't forsaken us, Tom?"

"I have forsaken only the evil you have in store, Peter. The fact is, I concluded my wife and little ones had fed on husks long enough, and if there was a kernel left in my heart or in my manhood, they should have it."

"Ah, you heard what I said to my wife last night?"

"Yes," Peter, and I shall be grateful to you for it as long as I live. My remembrance of you will always be relieved by that tinge of warmth and brightness."

"Temperance Herald."

The Lepers' Home.

MEN AND WOMEN WAITING FOR THE DRY ROT TO END THEIR LIVES.

(Havana Correspondence of the Philad. Inq.)

A matter which, from its peculiar horror, I am not likely readily to forget, was a visit made to the Hospital de San Lazaro, at Havana, the home of the lepers. This ancient and terrible disease finds many victims among the low cast Cubans and the poverty-stricken Chinese, though it reaches its gaudy fingers into better society sometimes.

Leprosy is either inherited, or induced by poor food, and especially by the eating of stale fish. It seems to be a fisher's disease, in fact, seldom prevailing at any great distance from the sea.

Leprosy as seen in the West Indies, is simply a dry rot. The soul of a man is imprisoned in his body long after he is, to all intents and purposes, dead, and with all his mental faculties intact, he must endure the gradual falling apart of his earthly tenement, awaiting with that philosophy he may, the hour when the cancerous agent shall touch a vital point. This may not occur for many years; it may happen to-morrow. The traditions of the hospital do not point to any individual case of cure whereby the patient may gain ever so faint a hope. It might well be inscribed over the portal: "Let those who enter here leave all hope behind."

In form the hospital is a large quadrangle, entering upon a chapel. A high wall divides the wards of the men and the women. We entered the male department first. The leading peculiarity of the first patients met loitering in the corridors, was a claylike appearance of the skin and a depression or craving in the nasal portion of the face. The nostrils and lobes of the ear were globular, and holes were formed over the eyebrows. The voices of the men were nearly all changed, sounding indistinct and painful. Patients were bidden to approach, who hobbled to us upon the stumps of limbs long since robbed, by the process of disease, of flesh and ankle, and they held out for our inspection miserable remnants of arms, shriveled, warped and decayed, and yet these arms found cunning enough to grasp and remove hairs from matted heads of hair when we tendered a few bits of Spanish currency.

We saw in these low corridors perhaps forty men. Some were new comers, upon whom the disease had put but few marks as yet. Others were almost ready to go to the hopeless ward above, where we presently climbed. Here, upon beds in a double row, were the vestiges of what had once been men—corpses which breathed in speechless agony through the long week, and which yet clung to life as though even under these conditions it was sweet to exist. Tattered drapings hung from these breathing skeletons, whose every pose was the attitude of despair. No picture of Dore's illustrative of the Inferno could overdraw a scene like this. Enough of this. It was the greatest relief that we walked across the pleasant garden, planted with bananas and figs, and entered the women's ward, under the guidance of a fat, but devout Mother Superior. All respect to her and her staff of nuns, who labor here among the hopeless, pointing their fainting steps upward and slaving through the heat of years to alleviate the sufferings of those with whom they are appointed to live. The scenes amid the women were but a repetition of those across the rectangle. A few were telling their beads, some sewed and all were near in person and surroundings to the last degree. A bright little boy ran toward us with an orange in either hand. He was the pet of the hospital. His mother was an inmate far gone with the disease. He was not yet old enough to know the fate that awaits him. What a pity this bright little chap is not taken as a subject for scientific experiment. Can it not be that there exists some means of driving out the venom and building up the system of the unhappy progeny of lepers with healthy tissues?

Travelers' Column.

D. T. JOHNSTONE.

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WINTER 1879-80. O' and after Monday, November 17th, Trains will run on this Railway, in connection with the Intercolonial Railway, daily (Sundays excepted) as follows:

GOING SOUTH. No. 1. Express. Accommodation. Stations. Depart, 7:15 a.m., 1:30 p.m., 7:15 p.m., 11:30 p.m. Arrive, 1:15 a.m., 7:15 a.m., 1:15 p.m., 7:15 p.m.

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A. H. JOHNSON, BARRISTER-AT-LAW, SOLICITOR. NOTARY PUBLIC, ETC., ETC. Chatham, N. B. July 9, 77.

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