MY WIFE'S SON.

[*Concluded.*]

So the years, which have a way of slipping by so swiftly and silently, went on with no unusual excitement, and with a quiet happiness which is also unusual, I think. Comfort expressed the state of our lives—Constance's and mine. While far from being a passive, indolent character, Constance never stirred me up unpleasantly; she gave her opinion frankly, but with no temper. Her life, though uneventful, was full of interests not confined within our home. She could talk with me on any subject, but while I only skimmed the surface of things she generally startled me with her original, fresh ideas on different themes. She was keenly interested in other people, and while superior to most of those about her she never seemed so. She had a few warm friends whom she dearly loved.

She was one of those rare women who could keep house easily, without being either a poor or careless housekeeper. She had a happy knack of managing servants, who generally seemed to adore her. She was indulgent, yet knew where to draw the line.

One day I was surprised to find in my mail at the store a letter addressed to me in Donald's handwriting. While the boy wrote regularly to his mother he rarely communicated with me, and when he did so he only wrote a few lines.

I opened the letter with some surprise and curiosity; and read:

"May—, 18—

"DEAR MR. HASSAN: I'm in trouble. Won't you come to me? Inclosed please find check for travelling expenses. Please don't tell mother where you are going, as I don't want her worried.

"Sincerely yours,

"DONALD M. STARR."

"Well, this must be serious! What scrape has he tumbled into now?" I thought impatiently. "He need not be afraid of my telling his mother. Confound the boy he couldn't have chosen a more inconvenient time for me than now."

I made the best possible arrangements at the store for a short absence, and hurried home. I pleaded business to Constance, but it was my first concealment from her, and though many might think it foolish it troubled me.

When I reached C——I asked for Donald, and was directed to his rooms at a pretty cottage near the college buildings. A tired voice answered my knock with "Come," and I entered.

Donald sat by the window, book in hand, but as soon as he saw me he came forward at once.

"You want help?" I said, as we sat down, and I saw his pale, anxious face, so different from the care-free one familiar to me. "Now tell me all about it," and I inwardly braced myself to hear the worst.

"Thank you, sir," said the young fellow warmly. "You are very kind; I shan't apologize for troubling you, and shall take as little time as possible in telling you of my—my misfortune. But first you must pledge me your word of honor that you will repeat nothing that I confide to you without my permission."

"I don't know whether I can do that," I said hesitatingly.

"Then, sir, I cannot say a word,' said the boy. (How like the lad's expression was to his mother's.) I promised, and with downcast eyes Donald went on:

"You know, sir, that it is against the rules of the college for any of the students to enter a saloon. Lately a small and most disreputable one has been started in the town just below here. The boys were most emphatically warned that one visit there meant dismissal, or they would be expelled. A few nights since several of the students—more in a spirit of lawlessness than a desire for drink—ran off to this place. In spite of all their caution some hint of it leaked out at the last moment, and two professors went in pursuit. The boys were warned in time and escaped, but as luck would have one of them dropped one of my handkerchiefs with my name written in mother's plain handwriting in one corner. I had lent it to him one day at some entertainment where his was forgotten. He was not a friend of mine, and I see him but seldom as he is a sophomore; yet while those three boon companions go scot free I am the one of whom they have proof of guilt.

"It seems too silly and commonplace—the whole thing—and yet it has brought me into a world of trouble. I have been up before the faculty, and am threatened with being expelled. As you know, I'm a senior, and if this disgrace falls upon me I shall not be allowed to graduate. Even this is not the worst, but it is of mother I think. Such a thing would break her heart. It seems to me that I could not bear that." Donald broke off suddenly and began pacing the floor.

"But what do you mean?' Of course the student who dropped your handkerchief will not let you suffer for it?" I asked in astonishment.

"Well, he will, and does," said Donald.

"But mercy on us, boy, I shall go and expose him—I shall not let you suffer," I burst forth.

"But your promise," said Donald quietly.

"You're crazy, Donald, to do such a foolish Quixotic thing as this," I said impatiently. 'Are you so fond of this mean, contemptible fellow that you wish to shield him, or is it some crazy idea of honor you have?"

"Neither," the young fellow answered, looking straight into my eyes (strange that brown eyes could look so like gray ones.) "I am so anxious to graduate with honor, yet I cannot—must not—expose this fellow, because—I love his sister."

"Oh!" I stopped in time to keep from adding "nonsense!"

"Yes, I love his sister." Donald repeated earnestly. "I have written to mother about her. It would kill her if there were serious trouble for her brother. It isn't as if they were not so alone in the world, either, but they are orphans, and the sister, who is the elder, has been like a mother to him. She bears him on her heart all the time, sir. I could hardly put it before you just as it is, for she has denied herself and borne so much for this brother. And now, before he is half through his college course, to have disgrace come upon him—and her. It would be too cruel. I am a man—it is best for me to stand it instead of a loving, helpless girl. If there is no alternative I must go. But I don't think that all is lost yet." Donald gave a singularly bright smile. "I knew that you were such an old friend of Professor Hicks, and I wondered—" for the first time Donald hesitated.

"Go on," I said. "What can I do?"

"I know you think me foolish, and I'm not sure that you would be willing, but I wondered if you would go to Professor Hicks and tell him solemnly that you were satisfied that I was perfectly innocent, but that the circumstances were such that I felt bound to be silent."

"Certainly I am willing," I replied, "but you know that Professor Hicks is against several, and he may think me partial——"

"Oh, but you could tell him that you've never cared for me," Donald broke in impulsively, then stopped, looking annoyed.

"Go on," I said once more.

"Well, you know, sir, you never have liked me," said Donald as if he apologized. "though I cannot complain of your treatment of me, and I felt that if you would say this to professor Hicks that your statement would have more weight than if, for instance. you—you—were my father or were fond of me."

"You seem to take it for granted that I belive you," I said.

"Yes, sir. You are a just man on the whole, and I think you know me well enough to be certain that whatever my faults I would not lie"—again his manner so like his mother's.

I looked at him curiously—I was beginning to think I had been mistaken in this tall, quiet young man, and no man likes to own himself as fallible as other poor mortals.

"I will see the professor at once," I said, "and may I congratulate you on your engagement with the fair unknown?"

"We are not engaged," said Donald simply. "Mother and I both decided that I was too young, and I felt that I must have something assured. I could not bind a girl—and especially one who has had enough uncertainties in her life—to a possible long waiting for a student not yet out of college. She must know I love her—I could not help that, sir—and I hope—as least I fancy that she does not dislike me."

As I could not keep my face perfectly sober I smiled outright, and then hurried off on my mission.

My old friend seemed unaffectedly glad to see me, and after we had talked over old times I introduced the subject uppermost in my thoughts, I told him the little I could, adding my unswerving belief—nay, knowledge—of Donald's innocence.

"It has astonished us all," said the Professor with a troubled air. "Donald's record has been so fine that we were amazed over this proof of his guilt. Of course I can imagine circumstances where it could be possible that Donald might be perfectly blameless, yet I cannot think that there is any student here who would permit such a thing." He looked keenly at me, but I flattered myself that my face was non-committal.

"The question that interests me is whether Donald is to be allowed to stay to graduate," I said. "If he isn't it will kill his mother, as well as blight the boy's prospects."

"I have always admired the boy, Chris. He seemed so manly good, not prudy good," Professor Hicks went on in the old, earnest way I so well remembered, "and you know how I always detested prigs. You say you are sure of the boy's innocence—so am I; but I surely don't understand you to say that Donald had never been a particular favorite of yours—why, man, he's one in a thousand."

I must say I felt quite uncomfortable under the scrutiny of those keen eyes of the learned Professor—I knew how miscreant students must hate to sit still under such a glance. It seemed not only to look about and around you, but through and into the deepest recesses of your being.

"Well, a man can be mistaken, can't he?" I blurted out like a boy. "One can't have the wisdom and insight of an ancient philosopher." An inscrutable look came into my old friend's eyes, but he said nothing.

When I took my leave he grasped my hand cordially. "I shall do what I can for your son, you may be sure," he said, "and shall write you the result."

"No, telegraph," I urged, to my own surprise. Again that queer look came into the Professor's eyes as he replied, "Very well, I shall do so."

I hurried back to Donald and told him of my interview. He thanked me most cordially.

"I feel that I must leave to-day, unless by staying I can do you good," I said.

"You have done everything possible—I must now await the result, and always have hope." Donald smiled as he said this, but his eyes belied his words. They were not only tired, but had a haggard look I had never seen there before.

"Donald," I said, grasping his hand, "let us be friends—no, more than friends. I own that I have been foolishly prejudiced against you, but that is past——"

He would not let me go on; "It was a prejudice on both sides, I am afraid," he interrupted me in a frank manner, "but as you say, it is now a thing of the past. Certainly, as we both think so much of the same woman—" here he gave a look half shy, half amused at me, "we have one thing in common."

As I was whirled away on the swift-going train my thoughts seemed to partake of the train's motion—they seemed quicker and keener than usual. They were principally with and about Donald. So many things—trifling they seemed at the time—returned to me, of the opportunities I had willfully lost, to win the boy's love and confidence—was it still too late? It certainly spoke well for him that he could trust me so entirely in this affair. Would those stupid, dreamy professors know enough to acquit him, with that unfortunate handkerchief as proof? Why one look into the lad's eyes would be enough to offset that small and silent witness. As Professor Hicks had said, he was a boy to be proud of; he had spoken of him as "your son" and the phrase haunted me. Why hadn't he been my son as well as Constance's.

When I met my wife after these few days' separation I looked at her with new eyes. For the first time I seemed to partly realise her feelings as a mother.

At the dinner-table I incidentally praised Donald's capacity as a student. The sudden lighting of her eyes, the quick look of surprise touched me. What a jealous beast I had been!

How anxiously I awaited that telegram! Constance started me one day by saying: "Do you know, Christian, I've felt for days that Donald was in some trouble—aren't mothers foolish?"

"No, they are far too good for us, but we need them more than they imagine," I answered with feeling.

"Christian," said my wife with a look of relief, "you are so different."

I knew what she meant. With her quick instincts she had felt that she could, for the first time, speak freely to me of Donald.

At last the telegram arrived. I tore it open in furious haste. It ran:

"All serene. Donald is to graduate.

"SAMUEL HICKS."

"You seem very happy," said Constance. I longed to tell her all, but felt that Donald should be allowed to do that.

The lad graduated in June, and Constance and I went on to C—— to witness his triumph. His oration was praised universally and not a few declared that it excelled the valedictory. I thought there was no doubt about it. I was astonished at his originality and depth of thought.

I confess I was proud of the handsome, tall, young fellow who bore his honors so modestly, yet with a self-possession I almost envied. And in the evening, at the promenade concert, Donald brought up a young girl to whom he introduced us—Miss Henschel. I knew this must be the fair unknown. I had only thought of her in a careless way—a passing boyish fancy—a college flirtation—but after that meeting my opinion was shaken.

Marie Henschel impressed me as a girl of no ordinary calibre. I had seen more beautiful girls—never but one with the peculiar attractiveness she possessed. That look in her eyes showed character; it could not be assumed at pleasure. It came from experience in sorrow as well as a habit of thought. Yet she was not a grave young woman. Her smile was sunny. I could see that Constance felt drawn toward her at once. Yet, mother-like, she criticised while entertaining her most charmingly. It was almost unconscious yet none the less keen. I felt—and wondered that I should feel it—that she must look upon this lovely girl with a certain awe as the arbiter of fate to the one she loved so dearly. For better or for worse, this was probably the life-companion of her boy. It may seem strange that as there was no formal betrothal we should have felt as if this were a settled fact, but we did.

I had said as I watched Marie Henschel: "If that young scamp doesn't prove faithful to that girl he don't deserve his salt." But even as the thought passed through my mind I knew that Donald would prove as constant as the truest knight in old ballad or story.

After the commencement was over we three went off for a stay at the seashore.

It was there that we talked of his future. I had thought of it often lately, and wondered which of the professions he would select. To my surprise, when I asked him, he said: "I do not want a profession. Will you answer a question with perfect freedom?" I assented. "Would you care to take a partner in your business—one with capital?" he asked.

"I've always had a prejudice against partners—but you don't mean that you are the partner?" I added as sudden light visited my obtuse brain.

"Yes, I do," Donald said smiling, "but you must refuse if you have the slightest hesitation about it. I shall go into mercantile life of some sort, and I should like the benefit of your experience, if you could put up with my lack of it. Don't answer now, sir; I can wait."

Well, the result was that in the fall there was a new firm, a fine new building put up, with a new sign, Hassan & Starr. Donald's money was very acceptable to me in extending my business, and he seemed to think my established reputation and experience helped him, so it was a mutual satisfaction.

As soon as the arrangements were fairly settled up there among the mountains, Donald was the accepted *fiance* of Marie Henschel.

They were married soon after.

It was at the pretty, quiet wedding at Marie's aunt's that Donald surprised me more than I thought possible in a man of my years. As Constance and I came near to kiss the bride, so sweet and tremulous in her happiness, Donald said quickly: "Oh, father, you will love her, wont you?" It was the first but not the last time Donald called me by that new title. I should never have dared ask for it, but the voluntary giving of it was more gratifying to me than I can ever express.

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General News and Notes.

For insomnia in summer time take a cold bath at bed time.

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DEAR SIRS,—I have much pleasure in certifying that after suffering severely for 15 months from diarrhœa, which came on after childbirth, previous to which I had suffered from dysentery for some months, I was cured by Dr. Fowler's Extract of Wild Strawberry.

ANNIE M. GIBSON, Brilipatam, India.

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Chatham, N. B. August 18th, 1892.

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THE GREAT SOUTH AMERICAN
NERVINE TONIC
AND
Stomach and Liver Cure
The Most Astonishing Medical Discovery of the Last One Hundred Years.
It is Pleasant to the Taste as the Sweetest Nectar.
It is Safe and Harmless as the Purest Milk.
This wonderful Nervine Tonic has only recently been introduced into this country by the proprietors and manufacturers of the Great South American Nervine Tonic, and yet its great value as a curative agent has long been known by a few of the most learned physicians, who have not brought its merits and value to the knowledge of the general public.
This medicine has completely solved the problem of the cure of indigestion, dyspepsia, and diseases of the general nervous system. It is also of the greatest value in the cure of all forms of failing health from whatever cause. It performs this by the great nervine tonic qualities which it possesses, and by its great curative powers upon the digestive organs, the stomach, the liver and the bowels. No remedy compares with this wonderfully valuable Nervine Tonic as a builder and strengthener of the life forces of the human body, and as a great renewer of a broken-down constitution. It is also of more real permanent value in the treatment and cure of diseases of the lungs than any consumption remedy ever used on this continent. It is a marvelous cure for nervousness of females of all ages. Ladies who are approaching the critical period known as change in life, should not fail to use this great Nervine Tonic, almost constantly, for the space of two or three years. It will carry them safely over the danger. This great strengthener and curative is of inestimable value to the aged and infirm, because its great energizing properties will give them a new hold on life. It will add ten or fifteen years to the lives of many of those who will use a half dozen bottles of the remedy each year.
IT IS A GREAT REMEDY FOR THE CURE OF
Nervousness, Nervous Prostration, Nervous Headache, Sick Headache, Female Weakness, Nervous Chills, Paralysis, Nervous Paroxysms and Nervous Choking, Hot Flashes, Palpitation of the Heart, Mental Despondency, Sleeplessness, St. Vitus' Dance, Nervousness of Females, Nervousness of Old Age, Neuralgia, Pains in the Heart, Pains in the Back, Failing Health, Broken Constitution, Debility of Old Age, Indigestion and Dyspepsia, Heartburn and Sour Stomach, Weight and Tenderness in Stomach, Loss of Appetite, Frightful Dreams, Dizziness and Ringing in the Ears, Weakness of Extremities and Fainting, Impure and Impoverished Blood, Boils and Carbuncles, Scrofula, Scrofulous Swellings and Ulcers, Consumption of the Lungs, Catarrh of the Lungs, Bronchitis and Chronic Cough, Liver Complaint, Chronic Diarrhœa, Delicate and Scrofulous Children, Summer Complaint of Infants.
All these and many other complaints cured by this wonderful Nervine Tonic.
NERVOUS DISEASES.
As a cure for every class of Nervous Diseases, no remedy has been able to compare with the Nervine Tonic, which is very pleasant and harmless in all its effects upon the youngest child or the oldest and most delicate individual. Nine-tenths of all the ailments to which the human family is heir are dependent on nervous exhaustion and impaired digestion. When there is an insufficient supply of nerve food in the blood, a general state of debility of the brain, spinal marrow, and nerves is the result. Starved nerves, like starved muscles, become strong when the right kind of food is supplied; and a thousand weaknesses and ailments disappear as the nerves recover. As the nervous system must supply all the power by which the vital forces of the body are carried on, it is the first to suffer for want of perfect nutrition. Ordinary food does not contain a sufficient quantity of the kind of nutriment necessary to repair the wear our present mode of living and labor imposes upon the nerves. For this reason it becomes necessary that a nerve food be supplied. This South American Nervine has been found by analysis to contain the essential elements out of which nerve tissue is formed. This accounts for its universal adaptability to the cure of all forms of nervous derangement.
CRAWFORDSVILLE, IND., AUG. 20, '86.
To the Great South American Medicine Co.:
DEAR GENTS:—I desire to say to you that I have suffered for many years with a very serious disease of the stomach and nerves. I tried every medicine I could hear of, but nothing done me any appreciable good until I was advised to try your Great South American Nervine Tonic and Stomach and Liver Cure, and since using several bottles of it I must say that I am surprised at its wonderful powers to cure the stomach and general nervous system. If everyone knew the value of this remedy as I do you would not be able to supply the demand.
J. A. HARPER, Ex-Treas. Montgomery Co.
REBECCA WILKINSON, of Brownsvalley, Ind., says: "I had been in a distressed condition for three years from Nervousness, Weakness of the Stomach, Dyspepsia, and Indigestion, until my health was gone. I had been doctoring constantly, with no relief. I bought one bottle of South American Nervine, which done me more good than any $50 worth of doctoring I ever did in my life. I would advise every weakly person to use this valuable and lovely remedy; a few bottles of it has cured me completely. I consider it the grandest medicine in the world."
A SWORN CURE FOR ST. VITAS' DANCE OR CHOREA.
CRAWFORDSVILLE, IND., June 22, 1887.
My daughter, eleven years old, was severely afflicted with St. Vitus' Dance or Chorea. We gave her three and one-half bottles of South American Nervine and she is completely restored. I believe it will cure every case of St. Vitus' Dance. I have kept it in my family for two years, and am sure it is the greatest remedy in the world for Indigestion and Dyspepsia, and for all forms of Nervous Disorders and Failing Health, from whatever cause.
JOHN T. MISH.
State of Indiana, Montgomery County, } ss:
Subscribed and sworn to before me this June 22, 1887.
CHAS. W. WRIGHT, Notary Public.
INDIGESTION AND DYSPEPSIA.
The Great South American Nervine Tonic
Which we now offer you, is the only absolutely unfailing remedy ever discovered for the cure of Indigestion, Dyspepsia, and the vast train of symptoms and horrors which are the result of disease and debility of the human stomach. No person can afford to pass by this jewel of incalculable value who is affected by disease of the stomach, because the experience and testimony of many go to prove that this is the ONE and ONLY ONE great cure in the world for this universal destroyer. There is no case of unmalignant disease of the stomach which can resist the wonderful curative powers of the South American Nervine Tonic.
HARRIET E. HALL, of Waynetown, Ind., says: "I owe my life to the Great South American Nervine. I had been in bed for five months from the effects of an exhausted stomach, Indigestion, Nervous Prostration, and a general shattered condition of my whole system. Had given up all hopes of getting well. Had tried three doctors, with no relief. The first bottle of the Nervine Tonic improved me so much that I was able to walk about, and a few bottles cured me entirely. I believe it is the best medicine in the world. I can not recommend it too highly."
MRS. ELLA A. BRATTON, of New Ross, Indiana, says: "I cannot express how much I owe to the Nervine Tonic. My system was completely shattered, appetite gone, was coughing and spitting up blood; am sure I was in the first stages of consumption, an inheritance handed down through several generations. I began taking the Nervine Tonic, and continued its use for about six months, and am entirely cured. It is the grandest remedy for nerves, stomach and lungs I have ever seen."
No remedy compares with SOUTH AMERICAN NERVINE as a cure for the Nerves. No remedy compares with South American Nervine as a wondrous cure for the Stomach. No remedy will at all compare with South American Nervine as a cure for all forms of failing health. It never fails to cure Indigestion and Dyspepsia. It never fails to cure Chorea or St. Vitus' Dance. Its powers to build up the whole system are wonderful in the extreme. It cures the old, the young, and the middle aged. It is a great friend to the aged and infirm. Do not neglect to use this precious boon; if you do, you may neglect the only remedy which will restore you to health. South American Nervine is perfectly safe, and very pleasant to the taste. Delicate lad