

JIM AGAIN.

"Jim has a future front of him," That's what they used to say of him.

When Jim was twenty years of age, All costumed ready for life's stage,

When Jim was thirty years of age He'd made a world-wide pilgrimage,

The heir to all earth's heritage Was Jim at forty years of age,

At fifty years, though Jim was changed, He had his knowledge well arranged,

At sixty—no more need be said, At sixty years poor Jim was dead:

The great deeds we are going to do Shine on the vastness of the blue,

NETTIE'S TRIAL.

A lovers' quarrel! They are not uncommon, they do not always bring life-suffering or even remorse;

For the words were: "Unless you can tell me why you were at the quarry on Wednesday evening,

And in reply she could only say: "I cannot tell you. If you will not trust me, we must part."

"Trust you!" was the furious answer. "Trust a girl who has assured me again and again she loved me, who has no male relative, father or brother, and yet meets a man in a mysterious place after dark!

Grief would have its way at first, but after a fit of sobbing, little Nettie lifted her pretty face, and took herself to task.

"This is my gratitude," she thought, "that at the first sacrifice I make I cry like a baby and am heart-broken. But—Oh, Stephen! if you only trusted me!"

She thought over one by one the benefits she owed to Marion Alton Raymond, her cousin. Five years before, when Nettie was only fifteen, she had been orphaned and penniless, and Marion Raymond was keeping a little trimming store, earning a bare living for herself and her three-year-old boy.

Marion had borne her heavy cross patiently, had worked faithfully to support her boy, and been a kind friend to Nettie. When Nettie had shared the hard-earned home for a year, Marion's uncle died, and left her Alton Hill and a large fortune.

Then Nettie became a petted darling. The best teachers, the prettiest costumes, the choice of pleasures, were all hers, and Marion's friends knew they could not better please her than by showing kindness to Nettie.

Marion's wealth had proved truly a friend in need, for one year after her uncle's death, she became a confirmed invalid. An incurable disease of the spine held her helpless and suffering, and it was only her unselfish persistence that prevented Nettie from devoting her whole life to nursing duty.

But Marion would not have it so. She had a large circle of friends, who did not hold her responsible for her husband's crime, and she insisted upon Nettie's acceptance of all their invitations and civilities.

Even when love came, and Nettie would have sacrificed Stephen, if Marion asked it, she had smiled upon the wooing, knowing him to be a true, good man, worthy even of Nettie. The engagement was not generally known, but the two were betrothed when Stephen, with his own eyes saw his darling, his dainty, refined, little fiancée under circumstances that appalled him.

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safe enough usually for those who wished to meet secretly.

Stephen having called at Alton Hill, was utterly amazed to find Nettie absent after eight o'clock. Mrs. Raymond had received him, and explained that Nettie had gone to a neighbor's, but had refused to send Stephen to escort her home, as asked and expected.

She had been agitated, and was deadly pale and unlike her usually calm, serene self, and Stephen was puzzled when he left the house.

"I am very sorry you saw me," she said, "but, since you did, I can only say that you mistake my motives and errand."

"I did not intend to tell me of it!" "No. You should never have known if you had not seen me."

"I cannot." "Nor why you met him?" "I cannot!"

Words failed to move her from this position of resolute defiance, though her face was pale, and she evidently suffered deeply from her lover's anger. Still, she said nothing after her return to the house, and Marion was too ill to question her.

"Poor Marion! Oh! if I could have spared you!" she cried. "Dr. Nelson so warned us against all excitement, and you have had a shock that was terrible. I only had known what that letter contained!"

"Even if you had, I must have seen it," whispered the invalid. "Send for Dr. Nelson! This pain is unendurable!"

Days of agony, followed by utter prostration, ensued, and Nettie was an untiring, faithful nurse. But neither skill nor love could overcome the fatal symptoms developed by the shock of those dreadful tidings. Only a few weeks before Nettie's betrothal, Marion had followed her only child to the grave. She had wearied herself with nursing; she had left the house for the only time in years, to attend the funeral, and had so added to her already heavy illness, that the doctor had warned Nettie that any further strain, mental or bodily, would be fatal.

Two weary weeks had passed, when a note was handed him: "I need a true friend, who will perform

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a service for me without question, and who will keep a secret. Will you come?"

No, he would not, he resolved. He had been deceived, and would not play cat's paw for any woman. And yet—

"I knew you would come," Nettie said, springing gladly to meet him, as of old; not lifting her shy, blushing face for his caress, but pallid, careworn and sad, a very gray shadow of her bright little self.

"Will you go for me, without question, on an errand of life and death?" she asked. "I will," he said, gently, but not tenderly.

"In Heath street," she said—and he shuddered, for only the most wretched of Bayswater poor lived there—in Heath street, you will find a Mrs. Smith's. It is No. 85. Ask for Bill Jones, and tell him he must come here tonight, after dark."

"None! I dare not send one. But he must come!" "Oh, trust me! Only trust me!" she pleaded.

With a heart heavy as lead, and yet strangely moved to obey her request, Stephen left Nettie, to seek for Bill Jones. He was not surprised to see the tall bearded man he had seen once before at the quarry. But he was shocked to recognize upon his face the unmistakable signs of mortal illness. Evidently whatever the man's life had been, it was nearly spent. A dry hacking cough, extreme emaciation, hollow eyes and hectic flush, all told plainly their pitiful story.

And the message brought on such violent agitation, such an exhausting fit of coughing and suffocation, that in mere humanity Stephen granted the stranger's request that he would accompany him to Alton Hill, and went to secure a carriage for the drive.

It was dark when they reached the house, and Nettie was watching. She did not seem surprised to see Stephen, but motioned him to wait, while she led the strange visitor up the broad staircase.

The little mantle clock chimed three times, and midnight had nearly come, but still Stephen lingered. Some strange hope held him to the room where Nettie had left him, and he paced up and down, waiting.

Waiting till nearly at night's noon, the door opened, and Nettie came in. "I hoped you would wait," she said. "Will you come with me?"

"Up the broad staircase, to a large room above. Upon a couch there, dressed in a snowy wrapper, lay the still form of Marion Raymond dead, and beside her upon the floor crouched the man Stephen knew only as 'Bill Jones.'"

"You must help us," Nettie said, "and Marion told me to trust you. You guess who this is?"

"The stranger lifted his head. 'Tell whom you will,' he said, in a hollow, faint voice; 'I'm almost gone! I've killed my wife! I've starved, begged, stolen! What does it matter now? Bring the police, and tell them Henry Raymond is found at last!'"

"Your cousin's husband?" Stephen whispered, throwing off the burden on his heart in one deep sigh.

"Yes; I met him, at her prayer, to give him money to flee again from justice. But he had been so ill, he could not go. The shock of his return, after so many years' absence, killed Marion. You will help me to conceal him? He cannot live many days."

Not many hours, Stephen thought; and he was right. Before the day dawned, Henry Raymond had gone, leaving earthily justice or vengeance, and Nettie carried should rest in death in the cemetery where wife and child lay beside him.

Nettie was Marion's heiress, by a will made when Mrs. Raymond believed her husband must be dead. But the little maiden's wealth did not give her the deep happiness she felt when Stephen pleaded for forgiveness for his want of faith, and she once more felt his kiss upon her lips and his words of love greeted her ears.

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Physical exercise pursued in youth cannot in after years keep the body in proper condition, if that exercise is discontinued and neglected. It is owing to this criminal neglect that we see so many weak and puny men and women around us.

The calls and duties of this American age lead us so deeply into the mazes of business, literature, art and science, that money is "god," and health is neglected to win the golden idol.

The counting house, the work-shop, the household and society, with all their turmoils and cares, cause overworked men and women; they get no physical exercise of the right kind; they become weak in body and brain; their nerves are unstrung; they are cross and irritable, and are subjects of insomnia, headache and dizziness.

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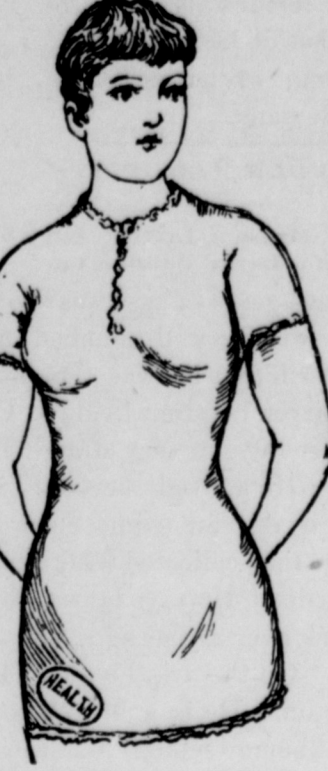
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