

"Well, then, that settles it; and if she will not think me too presumptuous I will call, pay my respects, and add my persuasion too."

"Very well."

"You will convey my regards to Mrs.—ah; Mrs.—"

"Frazer. My name is Lillian Frazer."

"Ah, yes; Mrs. Frazer, and apologize to her for my seeming intrusion, but I am a stranger who will be more than honored by making her acquaintance."

With pleasant adieus they parted.

If Burton Renew slept late that morning,—well it was because his dreams were not all as dark as he had anticipated on the previous evening.

Christmas day! A clear, bright, crisp day. True the thermometer registered fifteen below, and a keen frost bit the more exposed parts of the person, and catching the stranger across the nostrils made his breathing heavy and difficult; but then the native only laughed at that and called it a beautiful day.

The city wore a respectable, holiday attire, and good humor prevailed.

Old fashioned sleighs with the still old fashioned *habitant* and his numerous family passed and repassed on all the thoroughfares; gay parties clad in blanket suits and daintily embroidered mocassins with snow shoes on, marched over the pure white mantle that covered the ground; down by the river's bank new skates were carrying their owners over and cutting fantastic figures on the glassy surfaces from which the snow had been diligently removed; horse and church bells commingled to make merry music for a merry day; the young proudly displayed old Santa Claus, gifts, and the old nodded happy smiles to those they knew, while all seemed to proclaim, "Peace on Earth and Good Will to Men."

The tickets for the new theatre's initial performance sold rapidly and well. But a few seats remained when Burton, whose face bore hardly a trace of the pain caused by last evening's disclosures, presented himself at the box office window and instead of requesting the usual courtesies, paid for two admissions.

Mrs. Frazer, a slight, sweet faced, well bred woman, received him with motherly warmth and accepted his invitation. It was many a long day, she explained, since she had seen a play, but to satisfy Lillian she would attend this one and in return begged that he would visit them, during his stay in the city, as often as his professional engagements would permit. He, himself, had a suspicion that it came as often as time and inclination would allow, his welcome would soon be worn out.

Amid a good deal of enthusiasm the curtain ascended on the first act of *Richelieu*. The fame of the star who appeared in the title roll, had long since reached even such an out of the way place as Riverville, but the applause which greeted Burton's *Adrian de Mauprat* was certainly flattering to its recipient. Critics of more experience than the local ones might have thought it too robust, censured it for lack of detail, but not even the severest could have found fault with the tenderness of the love scenes. That he was guilty of a grave breach of stage ethics must be admitted for on more than one occasion, he allowed the eyes of the gallant Chevalier to wander over the sea of upturned faces, and then rest on the two seats, third row front, occupied by Lillian and her mother.

The fourth act had been reached, and *de Mauprat* was about to be consigned to the place, over which, "the clouds of heaven look darkest, o'er the domes of the Bastille," when that awful cry, "Fire!" pierced the air. People starting to their feet caught it up, and instinctively repeated it; wild men and hysterical women rushed, jumped, pulled, tore and trampled upon each other in their frantic efforts to escape from the building. *Richelieu* forgot the solemn dignity of church and state, and with stentorian voice cried out, "Sit down!" Baradas tried to make a speech, DeBeringhen actually whistled a popular air, but their efforts were unavailing. To some extent, it may be claimed, they succeeded in restoring order, but the next moment gusts of black smoke filled the auditorium, flames terribly grand, shot up through the open spots left for the hot air radiators and ignited everything inflammable within their reach. Cries, groans and curses mingled with a hissing, licking, fantastic fiend that spat its vengeance upon them. Strong hearts grew faint, while weak ones took courage from their very desperation. Confusion reigned supreme. Julie might have been seen tenaciously clinging to the hated Loius, while Marion rushed across the house arm in arm with the most ragged stage hand.

Burton sprang from the platform and grasped Lillian.

"No, no; never mind me!" she cried. "Save my mother!"

Without stopping to reply he dropped her and took up the older lady who had fainted from sheer terror. The heat was becoming intense and the smoke suffocating; still, he managed to convey her to the footlights and lift her upon the stage. After he had assisted Lillian up he mounted before her comrades left the city.

"You have been more than kind to me and I can never repay you for it," he answered as he lifted the lid, took out his father's letter and handed it to her.

he rushed never pausing until he reached the end when, to his horror, he discovered that it was barred by heavy boards nailed over the unfinished door way. Twice he essayed to break through the obstruction but without success.

He attempted to retrace his steps but the flames drove him back.

"My God! We have missed the way! We are lost!" he cried, and overcame by exertion and fatigue sunk with his burden, insensible upon the floor.

"Help! Help!" shouted the terrified Lillian who had stayed closely beside him all the time.

Warmer and warmer grew the atmosphere, nearer and nearer came the flames, denser and denser became the smoke, louder and louder the girl tried to cry for assistance as her voice grew weak and weaker. Her brain reeled, she struggled with an unseen enemy, her senses stole away, calmly and peacefully she was sinking to sleep—Crash! Bang! the fire ladders' axes tore down the strong barricade and the three were carried out to the fresh air and safety.

III.

Burton did not quickly return to consciousness. When he did, it was only momentarily; just long enough for him to discover that he was in a strange room, in a strange house, with the face of a friendly physician bending over him and whispering something he could not understand. Deeper into the pillow sunk his head as reason moved step by step further away from its throne and never laid its deathly hand upon him. Seven long days and nights he lay there while his tongue, unbridled by thought, raved about his father, his mother, and the angelic singer of the midnight mass.

When the fight was over and a sound constitution and medical science had conquered the old doctor said: "Don't thank me, my boy; without the tender care of these two women you would never have pulled through."

He turned and beheld the smiling faces of Mrs. and Miss Frazer. He was convalescent. Every hour brought him renewed strength and vigor; it did more, it gave to him the company of Lillian. Day after day sped by and took its appointed place in the ranks of the past but what cared he; did not the next bring him the loving tenderness, the low rich voice, the bewitching beauty—all the delicious joy of the presence, grace, and beauty of the one woman of all in the world to him?

The Golden-Houde Company had secured another *de Mauprat* and he was not sorry because it freed him from a contract he was too honorable to wilfully break, because—will we confess it?—it left him more time to toy with the arrow of Cupid and recline in the pleasant shade of the siren who had enchanted him.

He was feeling the fullness of the lines the poet wrote:—

"There's nothing half so sweet in life
As love's young dream."

for the first time in his existence he had come to realize that indefinable something which attracts man to the fair sisterhood and makes him protest that no virtue exists which is not there. In a word he was in love and he rejoiced, glorified and revelled in its ecstasy of fulfillment and promise. It might be a dream—then he prayed that the awakening would never come; it might be reality—then with all the intensity he could command he thanked the Fate that decreed for him such pleasant lines. At the same time he did not forget his mother or the expressed wish of his father. Oh, no; that was his shadow on the festival; the only cloud that flecked an azure sky. Other matters might claim a share of his attention but could not totally supplant that. He honestly longed to be once more strong and vigorous that he might prosecute a diligent search for her, his mother; for though to him she was not even a remembrance yet she was his mother with all that the name implied and made more sacred by what she had unjustly suffered.

At last the doctor consented. He might go out doors for a little while every day. Then he announced his intended departure.

"Why you have no professional engagement; you might as well stay here until you are entirely recovered," urged Mrs. Frazer in the most pressing manner.

"I have a duty to perform; I must find my mother."

"Your mother? Ah, yes, I remember you spoke much of her during your illness," "I suppose I did. No doubt I talked at random and loosed family skeletons from their closets."

"Have you no knowledge of your mother's whereabouts?"

"None."

"I have no desire to be inquisitive; but did your father never tell you about her?"

"Madam, I haven't the strength to narrate to you what little I do know of her, how she was wronged, and what she has endured; but I owe so much to you and your daughter that I willingly make you a confidant of all my secrets. I will send at once to the Hotel for the papers that are in my trunk and you shall read for yourself all that I know."

"Your trunk is here; I had it removed before your comrades left the city."

"You have been more than kind to me and I can never repay you for it," he answered as he lifted the lid, took out his father's letter and handed it to her.

There were tears in her eyes as she

carefully perused it, and when finished laid it down with an audible sigh.

"That is the history of my parents, that is the poor, suffering mother I am intent upon finding if I have to search every inch of your country."

"Burton," it was the first time she had called him by his Christian name, "a mother would not be a mother if she would or could deny her own child. I knew you from the first, I knew you by your name, it was your presence in the cast that attracted me to the theatre on that awful day. You are my son!"

"Yes; she who lives by her pen, under the assumed name of Mrs. Frazer, is your mother, Sarah Renew!"

"Mother!"

"Son!"

They were clasped in each others embrace.

"Thank God, I have found you and so soon!" were the words he fervently uttered when he had recovered from his astonishment. "Now I can make some slight amends to you for the past. But," he added looking at Lillian, after a slight pause and somewhat embarrassed, "mother, I have also found a sister where I had hoped to find a—a wife."

"That need not interfere. Lillian is only an adopted child and it her heart ever says 'Yes' she knows that she'll be more than ever my daughter."

Burton felt a small hand slide into his while two bashful eyes told the tale he so longed to hear; and now, as he writes this, after a lapse of many years, a pair of soft white arms steal round his neck and a loving voice admonishes:

"Ah! don't tell them you prayed at that midnight mass."

THE TRIALS OF AN EDITOR.

He is Held Responsible for Every Act in Every Department.

But I am fully aware of the fact that, on the other hand, there are some among our readers who are nursing sore little spots in their hearts toward the Journal, some member of its editorial staff—or, quite probably, toward myself. For I know only too well what a marvellously versatile person the responsible editor of a magazine is in the eyes of some. Every one cannot, of course, understand the necessary division of labor which connects itself with a widely-circulated periodical. There are some good people in this world who firmly believe that I set all the type in the Journal, keep the subscription list, write the wrappers, get all the advertisements, have absolute charge of every detail in the "premium" department, and in my odd moments of leisure edit the magazine. And so I have had much laid at my door. I have been abused in the most approved and orthodox fashion because I did not acknowledge some good woman's subscription or attend to her first number being sent to her with what she believed was only "decent dispatch." I have been read all sorts of riotous because I did not personally change some address on the subscription list, when, truth to tell, I would scarcely know where to find the subscription list, to say nothing of any name upon it. Certain numbers have gone astray, and I have been held responsible for them, Mr. Wanamaker, doubtless, little conscious of the load of guilt, really belonging to him, which I have, without murmur or complaint, carried on my shoulders. So many subscriptions have been sent "personally" to me and never heard from, that sometimes I have wondered whether my belief in my own honesty was not really but a mere delusion. I have been accused of purloining manuscripts; of appropriating "ideas" by the score; of inserting unreliable advertisements in the magazine; of failing to reply to more letters than I have ever received; of saying one thing in print and doing another thing in person; of taking money for subscriptions and never furnishing a copy of the Journal; of promising a "premium" and never sending it—until, when any new accusation is hurled at me, I have been surprised to find that there really is anything left in the category of crime of which to accuse me. So far as the versatility of my purloining genius is concerned, I should think I must be about the best all-round scoundrel in the world.—Bok in the *Ladies Home Journal*.

Not a Champion.

It was agreed among a dozen of us in the passenger coach that the woman occupying a seat near the middle of the car with her husband was the homeliest female we had ever seen. She was ten years older than the man, was cross-eyed, had a hair lip, was almost toothless, and her nose had been seemingly mashed flat. The man himself was at least common good-looking. Three or four of us in the front end of the car were sympathizing with him in a soft and gentle way when he rose up and came over to us and said:

"Gentlemen, you have been wondering if that woman is my wife. She is. You probably look upon her as the homeliest woman on the face of the earth. You are mistaken."

"Well," observed the Chicago man, "it isn't just the thing to criticize a man's wife before his face, but it—"

"Oh, you can speak your mind without offence," interrupted the man.

"Then I would remark that if she isn't the homeliest woman on this terrestrial globe I should like to see the other one."

"Very well; come into the next car back."

We followed him in, and there sat four females, ranging in age from 20 to 30, who discounted her by 50 per cent.

"They are five sisters, and I had my pick from the lot," quietly remarked the man. "And now, if any of you have a drop of whiskey about you, I'll—"

Every man of us handed him over a full flask, and told him he was welcome to every drop, and the bottles besides.—N. Y. Sun.

Politics Versus Science.

There are two subjects which are engrossing the conversational powers of the Dominion at present, and they are both worth discussing. One of them is the political situation, and the other is the new discovery of science, Rigby Waterproof Cloth.

The latter we think rather holds the floor, as the Ladies are participating. The goods are now on the market in Ladies' cloth as well as in Gentlemen's cloth and garments.

THINGS OF VALUE.

Silence is sometimes slander.

PELEE ISLAND CLARET for Dyspepsia is the same Grape Cure so famous in Europe.

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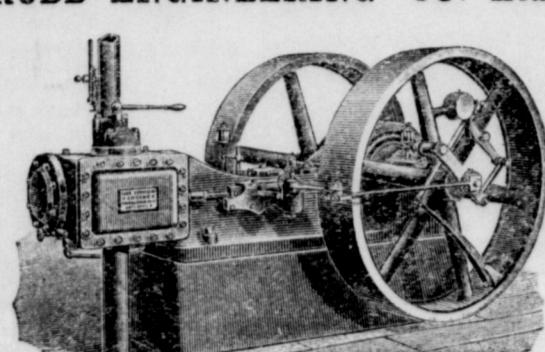
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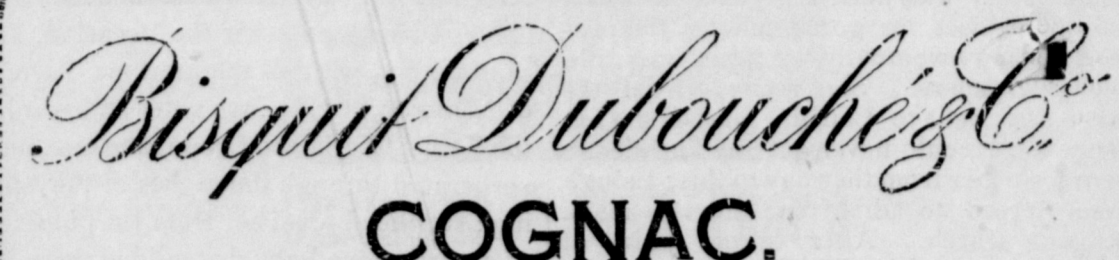
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