

THE RANSOM.

PART I.

Methuen wriggled himself into a corner of the hut, rested his shoulder against the adobe wall and made himself as comfortable as the rawhide thong with which he was tied up would permit. "Well," Calvert said, "I hope you quite realize what an extremely ugly hole we're in."

"Garcia will hang the pair of us before sunset," I replied, "and that's a certainty. My only wonder is we haven't been strung up before this."

"You think a rope and a tree's a certainty, do you? I wish I could comfort myself with that idea. I wouldn't mind a simple gentlemanly dose of hanging. But there are more things in heaven and earth, Calvert—He broke off and whistled crazily."

"Moistened my dry, cracked lips, and asked him huskily what he meant."

"Torture, old man. That's what we're being saved for. I'm very much afraid. A Peruvian guerrilla is never a gentlemanly animal at the best of times, and Garcia is noted as being a most vindictive fellow to be found between the Andes and the Pacific. Then, if you'll kindly remember how you and I have harried him, and shot his men and cut off his supplies, and made his life a torment and a thing of tremors or the past four weeks, you'll see he had got a big bill against us. He'd hate us less, he'd have had us shot on sight when we were caught; as it is, I'm afraid he felt that a couple of bullets in hot blood wouldn't pay off the score."

"If he thinks the matter over calmly, he'll not very well avoid seeing that if his wiles us out there'll be reprisals to be looked for."

"And a great lot," replied Methuen, grimly; "he'll care for the chance of those. If we are put out of the way he knows quite well that there are no other men in the Chilean service who can keep him on the trot as we have done. No, sir. We can't scare Garcia with that yarn. You hope that because we're still alive there's hope. Well, I've sufficient faith in my own theory for this; if anyone offered me a shot through the head now I'd accept it and risk the chance."

"You take the gloomy view. Now the man's face is not altogether cruel. There's humor in it."

"Then probably he'll show his funniness when he takes it out of us," Methuen retorted. "Remember that punishment in the Mikado? That had 'something humorous' in it. Boiling oil, if I don't forget."

Involuntarily I shuddered, and the rawhide ropes cut deeper into my wrists and limbs. I had no great dread of being killed in the ordinary way, or I should not have entered the Chilean army in the middle of a hot war, and I was prepared to risk the ordinary woundings of action in return for the excitement of the fight. But to be caught and held a prisoner and to be deliberately tortured to death by every cruelty this malignant devil Garcia could devise, was a possibility I had not counted on before. In fact as the Peruvians had repeatedly given out that they would offer no quarter to us English in the Chilean service, we had all of us naturally resolved to die fighting rather than to be taken. And, indeed, this desperate feeling paid very well, since on two separate occasions when Methuen and myself had been cornered with small bodies of men and would have surrendered if it could have been guaranteed our lives, as it was we went at them each time so furiously that on each occasion we broke through and escaped. But one thinks nothing of the chances of death and maiming in those times. There is a glow within one's ribs which scares away all trace of fear.

"I suppose there's no chance of rescue?" I said.

"None whatever," said Methuen, with a little sigh. "Think it over, Calvert. We start out from the hacienda with an escort of five men, sing out our adios, and ride away to enjoy a ten days' leave in the mountains. The troops are left to re-ride; for ten days they can drop us out of mind. Within twelve hours of our leaving them, Garcia cleverly ambushes us in a canyon where not three people pass in a year. The poor beggars who form our escort are all gashed."

"Yes, but are you sure of that?" I interrupted. "I saw them all drop off their horses when we were fired upon, but that doesn't prove they were dead. Some might have been merely wounded, and when the coast cleared, it is just possible they crawled back to our post with the news. Still I own it's a small chance."

"And you may divest yourself of even that thin rag of hope. While you were being slung senseless across a horse. I saw that man without the ears go round with a machete and—well, when the brute had done, there was no doubt about the poor fellows being as dead as lumps of mud. Ah, and talk of the devil."

"The earless man swung into the hut. 'Buenos, señores,' said he mockingly. 'You will have the honor now being tried, and I'm sure I hope you will be pleased with the result.'"

"I suppose we shall find that out later," said Methuen with a yawn, "but anyway, I don't think much of your hospitality. A cup of wine now after that ugly ride we've had to-day would come in very handy, or even a nip of aguardiente would be better than nothing."

"I fancy it would be a waste of good liquor," was the answer, "but you must ask Garcia. He will see to your needs."

A guard of twelve ragged fellows armed with carbine and machete had followed the earless man into the hut and two of them, whilst he talked, had removed the seizings from our knees and ankles. They helped us to our feet, and we walked with them in the dazzling sunshine outside.

"I'll trouble some of you for my hat," said Methuen, when the first glare blazed down on him; and then as no one took any notice of the request he lurched against the earless man with a sudden shove and knocked his sombrero on to the brown knotted turt. "Well, I'll have yours," said he; "it's better than nothing at all. Pick up the thing and put it on my head."

The guard drew a pistol. I thought he would shoot me comrade out of hand, and by his look I could see that Methuen expected it. Indeed, he had deliberately irritated the man to that end. But either because the nearness of Garcia and fear of his discipline stayed him, or through thought of a finer vengeance which was to

come, the earless man contented himself by dealing a battery of kicks, and bidding our guards to ward us more carefully.

In this way we walked along a path between two fields of vine, and passed down the straggling street of the village, which the guerrillas had occupied, and brought up in a little plaza which faced the white-walled chapel. In the turret a bell was tolling dolefully in slow strokes, and as the sound came to me through the heated air, it did not require much imagination to frame it into an amen. In the center of the plaza was a vast magnolia tree, filled with scented wax-like flowers, and splashed with cones of coral pink.

We drew up before the plaza of the principal house. Seated under its shade in a split-canoe rocker Garcia awaited us, a small, meager dark man, with glittering teeth, and fingers lemon-colored from cigarette juice.

He stared at us and spat, and the trial such as it was began.

I must confess that the proceedings astonished me. Animos there certainly was; the guerrillas as a whole were certainly going us short shift, but their chief insisted on at least some parade of justice. The indictment was set forward against us. We had shot, harried and harried, and in fact used all the harshness of war. Had we been Chileans in the Chilean service this might have been pardonable. But we were aliens from across the sea; we were freebooters, fighting not for country, but each for his own hand; and as such we were beyond the pale of military courtesy. We had earned a punishment. Had we any word to speak why this should not be given?

Garcia looked toward us expectantly and then set himself to roll a fresh cigarette.

PART II.

I shrugged my shoulders. It seemed useless to say anything. Methuen said: "Look here, sir; you've got us; there's no mistake about that. It seems to me you've two courses before you, and they are these: Either you can kill us, more or less barbarously, in which case you will raise a most pestilential buzz at your heels, or you can put us up to ransom. Now, neither Calvert here nor myself are rich men; but if you choose to let us go with sound skins we are prepared to pay 10,000 Chilean dollars apiece for our passports. Now how does that strike you?"

Garcia finished rolling his cigarette and lit it with care. He inhaled a deep breath of smoke. "Senior," he said ("his words coming out from between his white teeth with little puffs of vapor). "You do not appear to understand. You fight as a soldier of fortune and I am merely in arms as a patriot. I am no backster to traffic men's lives for money, nor am I a timorous fool to be scared into rebelling a culprit of his just dues."

"Very well, then," said Methuen, "murder the pair of us."

Garcia smiled unpleasantly. "You may be a very brave man," said he, "but you are not a judicious one. To a judge less just than myself this insolence might have added something to your punishment; but as it is I shall overlook what you have said and only impose the penalty I had determined upon before you spoke."

He lifted his thin yellow fingers and drew a fresh breath of smoke. Then he waved the cigarette towards the magnolia tree in the center of the plaza. "You see that bow which juts toward the chapel?"

"It's made for a gallows," said Methuen. "Precisely," said the guerrilla, "and it will be used as such inside of ten minutes. I shall string one of you up there by the neck to dangle between heaven and earth. The other man shall have a rifle and cross-bow, and, standing where he does now, he cut with a bullet the rope with which his friend is hanged, then you shall both go free."

"I hear you say," said Methuen, "in other words you condemn one of us to be strangled slowly without chance of reprieve. But what guarantee have we that you will not slit the second man's throat after you have had your sport out of him?"

Garcia sprang to his feet with a stamp of passion, and the chair rolled over backward. "You foul adventurer!" he cried, "you paid mankiller!" and then he broke off with a bitter "Pah!" and folded his arms and for a minute held silence till he got his tongue in hand again. "Senior," he said, coldly, "my country's wrongs may break my heart, but they can never make me break my word. I may be a hunted guerrilla, but I still remain a gentleman."

"I beg your pardon," said Methuen. "We will now," continued Garcia icily, "find out which of you two will play which part. Afterward I will add another condition which may lend more skill to what follows. I will not coerce you. Kindly choose between yourselves which of you will hang, and which shoot."

My comrade shrugged his shoulders. "I like you, Calvert, old man," said he, "but I'm not prepared to dance on nothing for you."

"It would be simplest to toss for exit," I said.

"Precisely. But, my dear fellow, I have both hands trussed up, and no coin."

"Pray let me assist you," said Garcia. "Senior Calvert, may I trouble you for an expression of opinion?"

He leaned over the edge of the piazza and spung a dollar into the air. I watched it with a thumping heart, and when for an instant it paused, a dazzling splash of brightness against the red-tiled roof, I cried: "Heads!"

The coin fell with a faint thud in the dust a yard from my feet.

"Well?" said Methuen. "I congratulate you, old fellow. I swing."

He frowned and made no reply. Garcia's voice broke the silence. "Bueno, Senior Methuen," he said, "I advise you to shoot straight or you will not get home even now. You remember I said there was still another condition. Well, here you are. You must cut your friend down with a bullet before he is quite dead, or I'll string you up beside him."

Methuen gave a short laugh. "Remember what I said about that fellow in 'The Mikado,' Calvert? You see where the humor comes in? We've had that coin spun for nothing. You and I must change positions."

"Not at all. I take what I've earned."

"But I say yes. It works this way: I took it that the man who was hanging stood a delicate chance anyway, and I didn't feel generous enough to risk it. But now that the senior here has put it in the extra clause the situation is changed alto-

gether. You aren't brilliant shot, old man, but you may not be able to cut my down with a bullet, if you remember what you're firing for, and shoot extra straight. But it's a certain thing that I couldn't do it if I blew a away till doomsday. The utmost I could manage would be to fluke a pellet into your worthy self. So you see I must wear the hemp, and you must apply your shoulder to the rifle butt—laugh," he added, in English. "Grin and say something funny or these brutes will think we cared for them."

But I was incapable of further speech. I could have jibed at the prospect of being hanged myself, but the horror of this other ordeal turned me sick and dumb. And at that followed I looked on mutely.

There was a well on one side of the plaza, and the earless man went and robbed the windlars of its rope. With clumsy landsman's fingers he formed a noose, took it to the great magnolia tree and threw the noose over the projecting branch. The bell of the little white chapel opposite went on tolling gravely, and they marched my friend up to his fate over the sun-baked dust. They passed a throng around his ankles; the earless man lifted the noose to his throat; a dozen of the guerrillas, with shouts of laughter, laid hold of the hauling part of the line, and then a voice from behind fell upon my ear Garcia was speaking to me. With a strain I dragged my eyes away from the glare of the piazza and listened. He was smiling wickedly.

"So your pluck has cooled away?" he was saying, as the cigarette smoke welled up from between the white walls of his teeth. "Well, of course, if you do not care for the game, you can throw up your hand at once. You've only to say the word, and you can be dangling on that tough inside of a couple of minutes. It's quite strong enough to carry more fruit than it bears already. But it's rather hard on your friend not to try."

My wife came to me again. "You fool," I cried; "how can I shoot with my arms trussed up like this? If the whole thing is not a mock, cut me adrift, and give me a rifle."

He beckoned to one of his men, and the fellow came up and cut off the lastings from my wrists and elbows; and then, with a sour smile, he noticed some of the others who drew near and held their weapons at the ready. "I dare wager, Senior Calvert," he said, "that if you'd use me for a mark you would not score a miss. So I wish to insure that you do not shoot in this direction!" He raised his voice and shouted across the baking sunlight: "Quite ready here, amigos. So up with the target."

PART III.

Now up to this point I am free to own that since our capture I had cut a pretty poor figure. I had not whined, but at the same time I had not seen my way to put on Methuen's outward show of careless, brazen courage. But when I watched the guerrillas tighten on the rope and sway him up till his stretched out feet swung a couple of hand-spans above the ground, then my coolness returned to me, and my nerves set like icicles in their sockets. He was a six yards away, and at that distance the well rope dwindled to the bigness of a shoemaker's thread. Moreover, the upper two-thirds of it was invisible because it hung before a background of shadows. But the eighteen inches above my poor friend's head stood out clear and distinct against the white walls of the chapel beyond, and as it swayed to the pulping of the body beneath, it burned itself upon my eyesight till at all the rest of the world was blotted out in a red haze. I never knew before how thoroughly a man could concentrate himself.

They handed me the rifle, loaded and cocked. It was a single shot Winchester, and I found out afterwards, though I did not know it then, that either through fiendish wish to further hamper my aim, or through pure forgetfulness, they had left the sights cocked up at 300 yards. But that did not matter; the elevation was a detail of minor import; and, besides, I was handling the weapon as a game shot fires, with head up, and eyes glued on the mark, and rifle barrel following the eyes by instinct alone. You remember that I had no stationary target to aim at. My poor comrade was writing a-dwaving at the end of his tether, and the well rope swung higher and thither like some contorted pendulum.

Once I fired, twice I fired, six times, ten times, and still the rope remained uncut, and the bullets rattled harmlessly against the white walls of the chapel beyond. With the eleventh shot came a tinkling of broken glass, and the bell, after a couple of hurried nervous clanks, ceased tolling together. With the thirteenth shot a shout went up from the watching crowd, I had stranded the rope, and the body which dangled beneath the magnolia tree began slowly to gyrate.

Then came a halt in the firing. I had handed the Winchester back to the fellow who was reloading, but somehow or other the exploded cartridge had jammed in the breach. I danced and raged before him in my passion of hurry, and the cruel butes yelled in ecstasies of merriment. Only Garcia did not laugh. He rolled a fresh cigarette with his thin yellow fingers and leisurely rocked himself in the split-canoe chair. The man could not have been more unmoved if he had been overlooking a performance of Shakespeare.

At last I tore the Winchester from the hands of the fellow who was fumbling with it and eluded at the jammed cartridge myself, breaking my nails and smearing the breechblock with blood. If it had been welded into one solid piece it could scarcely have been firmer. But the thrill of the moment gave my hands the strength of pinners. The brass case moved from side to side; it began to crumble, and I drew it forth, and hurled it from me a mere ball of shapeless twisted metal. Then one of the laughing brutes gave me another cartridge, and once more I shouldered the loaded weapon.

The mark was easier now. The struggles of my poor friend had almost ceased, and though the well rope still swayed, its movements were comparatively rhythmic and to be counted upon. I snapped down the sights, put the butt plate to my shoulder and cuddled the stock with my cheek. Here for the first time was a chance for something steadier than a snap shot.

I pressed home the trigger as the well rope reached one extremity of its swing. Again a few loose ends sprang from the

rope and again the body began slowly to gyrate. But was it Methuen I was firing to save or was I merely wasting shot to cut down a mass of cold dead clay?

I think that more agony was compressed for me into a few minutes than most men meet with in a lifetime. Even the overlooking guerrillas were so stirred that for the first time their gibing ceased, and two of them of their own accord handed me cartridges. I slipped one home and closed the breechlock. The perspiration was running in a stream from my chin. Again I fired. Again the well rope was snipped.

One more shot. God in heaven? I missed! why was I made to be a murderer like this? Garcia's voice came to me coldly. "Your last chance, senior. I can be kept waiting here no longer. And I think you are wasting time. Your friend seems to have quitted us already."

Another cartridge. I sank to one knee and rested my right elbow on the other. The plaza was hung in breathless silence. Every eye was trained to see the outcome of the shot.

The body span to one end of its swing: I held my fire. It swung back, and the rifle muzzle followed. Like some mournful pendulum it passed through the air, and then a glow of certainty filled me like a crink. I knew I could not miss that time; and I fired; and the body in a lump and shapeless heap fell to the ground.

With a cry I threw the rifle from me, and raced across the sunlit dust. Not an arm was stretched out to stop me. Only when I had reached my friend and loosened my friend and loosened that horrible ligature from his neck did I hear voices clamoring over my fate.

"And now this other English, your excellency," the earless man said, "shall we shoot him from here, or shall we strangle him up in the other's place?" But the answer was not what the fellow expected. Garcia replied to him on a shriek of passion. "You slaughtering brute," he cried, "another offer like that, and I'll pistol you where you stand! You heard me pass my word; do you dream that I could break it? They have had their punishment, and if we see one another again, the meeting will be none of my looking for. We leave this pueblo in five minutes. See to your duties, Go!"

The words came to me dully through the heated air. I was almost mad with the thought that my friend was dead, and that the fault was mine, mine alone! I listened for his breath; they did not come. I felt for a heart-throb; there was not so much as a flutter. His neck was seared by a ghastly ring. His face was livid. And yet I would not admit even then that he was dead. With a cry I seized his arms and moved them first above his head till he looked like a man about to dive, and then clapped them against his sides; repeating this an indefinite number of times; praying that the air I drew through his lungs might blow a little more smouldering spark of humanity and kindle it once more into life.

The perspiration rolled from me: my mouth was as a sandpit; the heavy scent of the magnolia blossoms above sickened me with its strength; the sight departed from my eyes. I could see nothing beyond a small circle of the hot dust round, which waved and danced in the sunlight and the little green lizards which came and looked at me curiously and forgot that I was human.

And then of a sudden my comrade gave a sob, and his chest began to heave of itself without my laborious aid. And after that for awhile I knew very little more. The sun-baked dust danced more wildly in the sunshine; the lizards charged to darker colors; the light went out; and when I came next to my senses, Methuen was sitting up with one hand clutching at his throat looking at me wildly.

"What has happened?" he gasped. "I thought I was dead, and Garcia had hanged me—Garcia. No one is here. The pueblo seems deserted. Calvert, tell me!"

"We have gone," I said. "We are alive. We'll get away from here as soon as you can walk."

He rose to his feet, swaying. "I can walk now. But what about you?"

"I am an old man," I said, wearily old. "In the last two hours I have grown a hundred years. But I think I can walk also. Yes, look, I am strong. Lean on my arm. Do you see that broken window in the chapel? When I fired through that the bell stopped tolling."

"Let's go inside the chapel for a few minutes before we leave the village," said Methuen. "We have a very narrow escape, old man. I feel thankful."

There was a faint smell of incense inside the chapel. The odor of it lingers by me still.

A YEAR'S SUNSHINE

Will Not Fade Garments Dyed With Diamond Dyes.

No other method of home dyeing gives colors one-half so fast and beautiful as Diamond Dyes. The colors are full, rich, bright and handsome, and so fast and firm that a year's sunshine will not cause them to fade.

It is not so when garments and goods are dyed with the poor imitation dyes that many dealers sell for the sake of large profits.

Goods colored with the crude dyes soon fade, and become dingy and ugly. It should be borne in mind, that the common dyes cost the same price as the tested and popular Diamond Dyes, but cannot for a moment be compared with them.

If you would save money and time, put your trust at all times in the never-fading Diamond Dyes; the user is never disappointed. Refuse inferior dyes offered by dealers, and insist upon having the "Diamond."

Tommy-Pop, what is the difference between a political editorial and a creed? Tommy's pop—Well, if it favors your political party it's an editorial, and if it favors the other side it's a creed.—Philadelphia Record.

Rheumatism cured in a Day.—South American Rheumatic Cure, for Rheumatism and Neuralgia radically cures in 1 to 2 days. Its action on the system is remarkable and mysterious. It removes at once the cause and the disease immediately disappears. The first dose greatly benefits.

THE COUSINS.

"But, dear, I can't afford it."

"What nonsense, Kate. You are actually getting stingy."

A flush came into Kate's pure pale face. "I am sorry you should think so, she said. "But saving is a matter of duty with me."

Annie Devereaux was impolite enough to say "Fudge." But as the two were cousins, the freedom of speech was overlooked, and Annie went on, determined to carry her point.

"Just think, Kate Carter, what a chance this is! You may never have another. It isn't often that such singers come so near us. And we should have such a charming drive. That part of the treat shan't cost you a cent. And for us who have never been out of our own neighborhood, so to speak, how delightful it will be to have cousin John meet us, as he has promised, and take us to the Warren House after the concert. Why, Kate, I never in my whole life 'put up,' as they say, at a hotel."

"Annie, I cannot go, and that is the end of it," said Kate. "Take Ella Brown with you."

"Mother's ultimatum was that if you wouldn't go, I must stay at home. I think you are as mean as you can be. You haven't the least disposition to oblige."

So saying, Miss Annie rushed out of the room, slamming the door after her in a venetian fashion, quite unlike her usual amiability.

Kate, left alone, could not restrain a "good cry." The concert was a great attraction to her as to Annie. The drive and the supper appealed to her girlish tastes. But she had made a promise. The promise was to herself, and Annie would have considered that she might rightfully break it; Kate considered it sacred. Both Kate Carter and Annie Devereaux were working girls. Each lived with a widowed mother, and they filled positions not over lucrative in the two most important dry goods stores of their bustling manufacturing village. They were bright and attractive, and customers found it pleasant to be served by them, so ladylike were their manners and their attire, so pleasant the expression of their clear eyes, so deft the flashing movements of their nicely-kept hands. To an ordinary observer, the cousins seemed to possess great wealth. But in Kate there was a strength of purpose, and will, drawn from underlying principle, that Annie largely lacked.

About a month after the concert and Annie's disappointment, it was announced among the young people of Banwick that a sleighing party was on foot. This time, Kate Carter did not refuse the invitation that came from Mr. Alec Forrest. Truth to tell, she anticipated keenly the ride, and all the more that snow was a rarity so near the sea-coast, the village of Banwick skirting a broad bay into which the tide brought daily breaths from the great ocean-world outside.

The morning of the ride was the brightest and rosiest of the winter, far. As Kate lifted her head from the pillow, she uttered a little cry of joy at the marvellous beauty that met her eyes. Fresh snow had fallen during the night, and now lay as a feathery coating of dazzling white on every branch and twig of the great horse-chestnut by her window. It made the apple tree in the near-by garden look as if they had suddenly burst into a pale imitation of their May-time blossoms. A short distance away, the bay, full to the brim with the morning's tide, glistened in the beautiful light, while the sail of a vessel, like a great white wing, was perfectly reflected in the clear depths. On the opposite shores, pale blue wreaths of smoke were curling from the chimneys, and masses of evergreens, powdered with silver, caught the pink flush of the coming sun.

"Oh, what a day for our ride!" exclaimed the happy girl, as she sprang up and began the morning toilet. And as she brushed the soft waves of her hair, she could but see that the face in the mirror was as fair as the morning; that the blue of the waters was in her eyes, and the flush of the skies in her soft oval cheeks. This set her thinking of one who was never far from her thoughts. She should see him two hours later; and all day his voice would be in her ears, his looks in her heart. Other maidens, no doubt were looking in the glass and indulging in similar reveries apropos of the same outing so delightfully anticipated.

In due time the gay party was on the road, their nerves keyed to the utmost exhilaration by the delicious atmosphere, the presence of congenial friends, and the rapid motion of the spirited horses.

Kate Carter felt that she had never been so happy in her life. Alec Forrest had paid her many little attentions in the past, but never before had he shown his choice of her society in so marked a way. Besides, there was a softness in his glance, an accent to his words that, spite of herself, set her heart thrilling.

They were well on toward the end of their sleighing, when Alec began telling the story of his life, not doubting that the sweet girl at his side would be a sympathetic listener. It was a story of struggle, of work of self-denial for the sake of a widowed mother and young brothers and sisters.

"And," said the young man in serious tones, "I'm still prevented from making a home for myself. My brother Fred must go through college before I can think of that. My mother has always taught us that doing our duty is better than pleasing ourselves. But, Kate, I should like you to know how glad I should be to please myself in one thing."

Kate's blush was an encouraging as well as charming reply. But as the lover waited for some word of sympathy, there broke into their mood a sharp cry—"Careful! Careful!" and then the loudly spoken words: "I wish Tom wouldn't drive that halibut beast when he has Annie along. I've told him so many a time."

It was the driver in the nearest sleigh, who spoke, impressed by the frisky dyes of the horse driven by Annie's escort, Mr. Tom Collins Grey. As the last words left his lips, the great spirited creature, alarmed at a tall ghost of a weed by the wayside, sprang out of the road, nearly upsetting the sleigh. But the skillful driver brought him to the track, and Annie's silvery laugh pealed out in answer to the little frightened shrieks of the other ladies.

The destination was safely reached, the dinner was eaten, and a walk undertaken to see a frozen waterfall, and the mysteries

of the winter forests. The latter pleasure lasted so long that the party were hungry once more. Supper was partaken of, and all in a glorious moonlight the young people started on their homeward ride.

"Clear the track, boys!" shouted young Grey, who was the last of the party at the start. "My flyer won't be held back."

"Good-bye," called out Annie, as her sleigh fairly flew by the others, and was seen for a moment flashing over the long white track, then disappearing in the shadows of a bit of woodland.

"I'm glad I'm not in her place," thought Kate, anxious for the daring driver and his charge. Five minutes later there came a long, shrill shriek.

"Annie! That dreadful horse! Oh, hurry, Alec—Mr. Forrest!" exclaimed Kate.

Some of the faster horses came up and passed, every driver doing his utmost to reach the spot of the supposed accident. Supposition soon became knowledge. In a moment all the sleighs had reached the place of the disaster. At one side of the road lay Annie on a heap of furs, her face as white as the moonlight. It was soon discovered that the poor girl had a broken arm, a compound fracture at that. She was taken home with as little suffering as possible to herself. Kate Carter going first to prepare Mrs. Devereaux to see her daughter return in such sad plight. When the invalid arrived, Kate drew Annie's mother into a corner:

"Old Nichols isn't fit for a job like that," she said. "He would do his best, but—"

"What shall we do?" interrupted Mrs. Devereaux.

"Telegraph for Dr. Archer at once."

"But—"

"Leave it all to me, auntie. I will ask Mr. Grey to telegraph as soon as possible. Poor dear! how she suffers! Oh, auntie, you can never know what a relief it was to me when she opened her eyes."

It was some time before Annie came to the realization of the fact that her cousin Kate had taken upon herself the responsibility of sending for the widely-known and trusted surgeon, and of paying his large fees. But one day when her cousin was sitting by her bedside, she suddenly burst out:

"Oh, Kate, if it hadn't been for you I might have lost the use of my arm. What with her overdone rent, and her grocer's bill, and those dreadful nervous attacks, poor mamma would never have dared to send for that great flashing star of a doctor. But this will be a lesson to me. My salary has been just as large as yours, but I have spent it all; half of it for useless things."

"Now you are exaggerating," said Kate, patting her cousin's pale cheek. "I will admit that a part of your salary has been frittered away. 'You have never appreciated, dear, what can be done with many little things. I made up my mind when I first began to earn money for myself that I would save fifty cents a week at least.'"

"You have a mind that is capable of being made up," interrupted Annie. "I felt that this was a debt that I owed to myself," continued Kate, "and I was surprised to learn how easy I could pay it. The new gloves were carefully watched for the first trip; the new boots changed for old ones on all possible occasions; the old gown was made over; the underwear renewed, leaving the old garments in a fit state for unusual necessities, the stockings were darned in time; the little excursion that I felt I did not need was given up; and so—"

"And so you have kept your resolution these five years and have saved three hundred dollars, and it has all gone for—"

Here the eager, interrupting voice was stifled by sobs that took Kate's sweet encouragement to scotch.