

IN TIME OF TROUBLE.

The crash had come at last, and as in way of most catastrophes, it had fallen with the aggravated force of absolute unexpectedness on the person who was destined to feel it most.

When Dick Frant broke the seal—a tender pink in color, and stamped with a tiny spray of olive leaves—of his wife's last letter to him, he was more ignorant of what he was about to read therein than his own servant, who awoke their betters to the extent of always guessing at what their superiors knew.

Amid the chastened glow of the artistically-shaded lamps, and the thousand evidences of limitless wealth and boundless extravagance that filled Mrs. Frant's boudoir, Dick first learnt that his wife had left him. The note—for it was no more—merely stated the fact, and gave him the address at which she might be found for a few days. A curtly-expressed phrase of thanks for all his kindness precluded the signature. Their was neither contrition, shame, nor regret in any single line, nor was the name of the man she had gone to join mentioned.

As the tiny sheet of scented paper fluttered from his limp fingers to the ground Dick Frant smiled grimly. The whole circumstance was so wonderfully characteristic of his wife, Olive, as she had become since the sun of prosperity had shone upon her, and since luxury, and fine living, and soft lying had broken down the enforced austerity of a simply-bred English gentleman, and had pampered that beast of the flesh that lurks in the bodies of the saintliest of humanity.

As he bent with gloomy brows and tightened mouth above the dying fire, his unseeing eyes flashed into vitality as they lighted on a photograph, pushed aside to make more room for the ivories and flower vases, the bibelots of china and silver that overcrowded the wide mantelpiece. He drew it forth. It was faded in tint, hopelessly inartistic in pose, old-fashioned as regarded gown and coiffure, but the face that looked back at him was that of an angel; the large eyes and wide brow were candid and pure as a child's, and the little mouth, half parted as though in happy speech, seemed as fresh as a dew-kissed rosebud.

'How sweet she was in those days,' he murmured. 'How pure—and yet how brave when she put her little hand in mine and swore to face poverty and the world—won fortune—and lost her. Heavens! what irony! To gain what one fights for—and to lose what one has.'

He stooped to pick up the letter at his feet, and once more ran his eyes over its too few lines.

'I have left you.' Of course you will take steps immediately to free yourself. We shall be at the hotel Metropole for at least a week, then we go to the Riviera.'

'We.' For the first time he felt to wonder who was the man who had done him this great wrong. 'Was he some one whom she had met but lately during her last few months' brilliant progress through the great drawing-rooms of the West End? Was he some childhood's lover, the memory of whom had slept during the first years of struggling married life, and whose power had only regrown with the leisure of luxury? Was he a fleeting fancy or a lasting passion?

Was he a friend of his own? The hot blood of a man who has been outraged in his honor and his hospitality surged darkly to the roots of his slightly grizzled hair.

'Before God!' he cried aloud, raising his clenched fist skyward, 'if it is one whom I have trusted, and who has betrayed my faith, I will shoot him like the hound he is.'

And his oath taken he fell to thinking of the future—and of what was best to be done for her—and for her children.

For two days Dick Frant did not leave his great mansion in Grosvenor place. The answer given to the constant stream of business people who flocked to his city offices was that Mr. Frant was at home ill. Callers at the Grants' private house were told that Mrs. Frant was out of town. City husbands and West End wives put their heads together and came to the conclusion that something was amiss in the Frant ménage.

The early spring afternoon of the third day had already closed in, and the lights were twinkling through a damp, blurred atmosphere, when Mr. Frant turned into Northumberland avenue from Trafalgar Square. His coat collar was pulled up as high as his tawny moustache, and his hat of soft felt was dragged almost over ears and eyes. He walked very fast, and seemed afraid of being seen.

Within 20 yards of the Metropole he stopped short. His wife was there; she said so in her letter; and with all her faults he did not think she would descend to a petty lie—but how was he to find her? It was scarcely likely that her rooms were taken in her own name, especially as that other man was with her.

While he was still wondering how he should manage to see his wife, a swiftly passing figure pulled up short before him and a fresh young voice cried: 'By Jove! Is that you, Frant?'

There was more of astonishment than cordiality in the tone; but Dick Frant who for three days had eaten his heart out in shameful and friendless solitude was only conscious that a friend's face was set against his, and his two hands went out and caught the other by the arm. 'Trevannon! You! My dear boy, how are you?'

Lord Trevannon dexterously twisted his coat sleeve from Frant's grasp before he spoke.

'(O) So-so. These English springs are beastly trying though. I'm off to where the east winds don't blow directly.'

As the young man spoke a sudden thought flashed into Frant's weary brain. Lord Trevannon was his friend. Despite the 15 years that separated their ages, the two men, both in financial business and in private life, had been for many months past in cordial sympathy one with the other. They had no secret from one another even since Christmas twelve months, when Frant had got Trevannon out of a very ugly scrape with a girl at the Casual Theatre. Trevannon might be of assistance now. He might have heard—such news flies so fast—that his wife was at this moment—what name was it likely to have taken. He might even, as a family friend, assist at the interview that was to come.

As Trevannon finished speaking, Frant began, and in a few words, for he was not a verbose man, told his story.

'And you want to see her,' said Trevannon, slowly, as Frant stopped. 'For what reason?'

'To tell her that despite the wrong she has done me, I want her to come back. Not as my wife, Trevannon, but as the mistress of my home and the mother of her two children. The world need know nothing—and you—you are a gentleman, and will not speak.'

'Do you think she will go with you?' asked Trevannon's cold, clear voice out of the foggy darkness.

'I shall not ask her in my name—but in the name of her son and of her baby daughter. I do not think any mother can withstand the cry of her children,' said Frant, simply.

With a gesture, Lord Trevannon signed the other to follow. Swiftly they passed into the warm vestibule of the hotel, up the first flight of the wide stairs, and down a brilliant lit corridor.

'Here is Mrs. Frant,' cried Lord Trevannon, flinging open a door. 'Now you can speak.'

With a low cry a woman rose from before the fire and faced the two men.

'My husband here!' she murmured, while the lovely roses in her cheeks died in a creamy pallor.

Even in the shock of this sudden meeting Frant noticed that his wife only expressed astonishment at seeing himself.

'I met your husband outside, Mrs. Frant. He expressed a desire to see you,' said Trevannon, quietly, 'and as—'

'Lord Trevannon will not speak of this,' interposed Dick Frant. 'He is too much our friend.'

A questioning gleam came into Mrs. Frant's blue eyes as she looked from one man to the other.

His calmness seemed to reassure the lovely woman standing by the fireplace, for the color crept back into her face, and the slight trembling that had shaken her frame ceased.

'Olive,' began Frant, slowly, 'I have only a few words to say. I intend to ask you no questions; your own shame must be sufficient punishment to you, for you are a proud woman. I cannot now offer you forgiveness, for that would be to dishonor myself. But I ask you to come back home with me.'

'Back!—home!—with you?' cried Mrs. Frant.

'I ask you to return to my roof—to silence all gossip and scandal—for the sake of your children.'

Olive Frant's expression was not very pretty as she raised her fine eyes and looked at her husband in the face.

'For the children! I am to give up my best years of life—my ambitions—my prospects of a great marriage—for the children?'

'Muriel has cried for you for three days,' cried Frant.

Mrs. Frant waved aside the piteous appeal.

'Your wealth will not make it difficult for you to give her another mother. For myself, my own future contents me. You will give me freedom, of course?'

With the first note of anxiety breaking through the evenness of her charming voice.

'For what purpose?' cried Frant. 'That you may go from bad to worse? That you—'

'That I may become a countess,' she answered smiling and dimpling all over her beautiful face.

'A countess? Then—the man who has done this base thing—Trevannon?'

One glance at Trevannon's livid face gave Frant the clew to the whole wretched story of broken trust and dishonored friendship.

With a cry he rushed from the room.

The case of Frant vs. Frant and Trevannon was scarcely a nine days' wonder. Everybody had seen it coming for so long. Slightly more astonishing was the fact that in due time the Earl of Trevannon made the fair Olive his countess, and took a house in town, and engaged a large establishment for the purpose of exploiting his bride.

Her memory could never fade with Frant for his nature was essentially faithful, but the poignancy of his grief had abated, and the sting of shame had lost its sharpest point as the first year of his virtual widowhood closed. His ill-fortune in love had entailed an inverse ratio of luck in business, and he was now a millionaire, but still the same quiet, kindly creature as ever. Next to the amazing of wealth his pleasure lay with his children.

On the anniversary of Olive's flight he sat alone in her one time boudoir. The whole scene came back to him, and with it some tears of sorrow. He brushed them aside to find a servant before him. A doctor requested his immediate attendance at No. 100 Park Lane. Would he go at once?

As he left his house and hailed a passing hansom his heart thrilled at the knowledge that he was going to meet the woman who had been his wife; for it was to Lord Trevannon's house he was summoned, and, living or dead, it was Lady Trevannon whom he should see once more.

She was not dead when he arrived, though so near the borderland of Time and Eternity that it could scarcely be said she lived. The doctors told him the pitiful story. A story of delicate health, temporary lost looks, neglect, quarrels, and, bitterest of all jealousies. That evening, despite the Countess's entreaties, the Earl had persisted in going out. A violent scene ensued, which ended in his Lordship leaving the house in a passion, and in her Ladyship falling from one fainting fit into another. When the doctors were summoned nothing was to be done but to mitigate the dying woman's last agonies and send her errant husband.

'She is afraid to die alone, and as he cannot be found in any of his accustomed haunts we ventured—'

Frant put the doctors aside, and going over to the bedside looked down on the woman who had ruined her own and his happiness for a paltry ambition. She was dying hard, but the drugs gave her bodily peace, though she moaned again and again.

Toward the end she roused in her memory, and she talked only in wandering fashion of Dick and her babies. She died at midnight, laughing weakly in her throat at some quaint trick of her tiny daughter.

It was almost light when Lord Trevannon, haggard, disheveled, and not quite sober, swayed into the room.

'What's all this fuss?' he spluttered. 'Hello, Frant! what are you doing here?'

'Since you have come, Lord Trevannon,

my duty here is finished,' said Frant, quietly, and arising from his place by the dead woman's pillow. 'She wanted the last grasp of a hand she loved before she drifted out into the dark waters. They sought for you in vain—so—I was fetched. You know she had loved me once—and when the end came—I think she was at peace.'

He laid his hand on the clay-cold brow, as though in everlasting farewell; then, looking neither to the right nor left, he turned and passed from the house into the gray dawn of the already waking street—Pick-Me-Up.

HIS VEILED VISITOR.

A Musical Director has a Strange Meeting With a Singer.

One of the duties of a musical director of a large comic opera company is the trying of voices. As soon as it is learned that such a gentleman is in the city, he is immediately besieged by all sorts of aspiring young singers, who, with the intention either of obtaining a place in his company or of finding out just how well they are suited for the theatrical profession, insist on being permitted to come before him and have him test their voices. It is tiresome work, sometimes, but he has to appear patient, and, what is more difficult, express his opinions with perfect candor.

Probably Mr. Silli Simonson, musical director of the Camille d'Arville opera company, has listened to the singing of more than five hundred aspirants in the past year. During the summer, when the aspirations of so many turn towards the stage, he averaged twenty a day.

'Some days,' said he the other day, 'it seems as though I should go crazy, for bad voices, like troubles, never come singly, and when one is forced on my ears, there is sure to be another one. But on the last Thursday of my stay in New York, just before we started out on our successful tour with "Madeleine" I had an experience, which I shall remember as one of the most interesting in my whole career. About a month ago I received at my summer home a letter from a lady in New York, who said that she was very desirous of having me hear her voice when I should come to the city. She knew that it was rather early in the day to write, but would I not please make an engagement? I did so, setting the time for that Thursday and wrote to her to that effect.'

'On Wednesday I received a letter from her. She wanted to make particular terms. In the first place she insisted that there should be no one within hearing of her voice when she should sing to me. Then she demanded that she should sing without my seeing her. If I would have a screen in the room, behind which she would stand, it would be very much of a favor. On these conditions she would come and no others. I thought it was very strange, but put it down to her shyness, and agreed to the terms.'

'Well, Thursday came, and the hour when I was to hear the singer. I went in the afternoon to the theatre where Miss d'Arville was rehearsing with her opera company, and waited in the music room for my visitor. In a little while there drove up to the doors a magnificent carriage, with footman and coachman and grandly liveried. Out of it jumped a lady, heavily veiled, but of a magnificent figure and evidently young. Coming into the theatre she inquired for me and was sent up to where I was waiting.

'Will you pardon me,' she said, 'for not telling you my name? That which I have signed to my letters is a nom de plume as, perhaps, you have imagined. For certain reasons, I prefer to maintain an incognito, but I trust that you will appreciate my desires, and make no effort to find out who I am.' Very strange, thought I, but I passed it over and asked if she were ready to sing. She handed me some music, which I found to be Gounod's 'Ave

by day telling us that this person has been cured of dyspepsia, that person of Bad Blood, and another of Headache, still another of Biliousness, and yet others of various complaints of the Stomach, Liver, Bowels or Blood, all through the intelligent use of Burdock Blood Bitters.

It is the voice of the people recognizing the fact that Burdock Blood Bitters cures all diseases of the Stomach, Liver, Bowels and Blood.

Mr. T. G. Ludlow, 334 Colborne Street, Brantford, Ont., says: 'O During seven years prior to 1886, my wife was sick all the time with violent headaches. Her head was so hot that it felt like burning up. She was weak, run down, and so feeble that she could hardly do anything, and so nervous that the least noise startled her. Night or day she could not rest and life was a misery to her. I tried all kinds of medicines and treatment for her but she steadily grew worse until I bought six bottles of Burdock Blood Bitters from C. Stork & Son, of Brantford, Ont., for which I paid \$5.00, and it was the best investment I ever made in my life. Mrs. Ludlow took four out of the six bottles—there was no need of the other two, for those four bottles made her a strong, healthy woman, and removed every ailment from which she had suffered, and she enjoyed the most vigorous health. That five dollars saved me lots of money in medicine and attendance thereafter, and better than that it made home a comfort to me.'

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Maria,' a difficult selection at the best and hardly the one to be usually chosen by aspirants for the stage.

'Now,' said my strange visitor, 'I have your promise not to seek my identity, and to let me sing veiled and behind a screen. When you are ready, I am.' Then she stepped behind a large screen that there is in the room, and announced that she was prepared.

'I played the introduction to the music, and she started to sing. Her first notes showed me that she was not only possessed of a beautiful voice, but one that had been splendidly trained. As she progressed I became more and more surprised, for the strange woman was really a singer whose equal I have seldom heard. Her voice was full and strong, yet so delicate and sweet that its tones brought out of the grand song a meaning and expression I had never before discovered in it. I was simply dumfounded, and as she finished I sat there too much surprised to say anything. In the midst of my wonder and admiration, she came out from behind the screen. "Well," said she by way of interrogation

"Madame," I replied, "your voice is marvelous. Who are you?" My unknown laughed. "It would do you no good to know," she said, "so there is no need of your being so serious."

"But," said I, "I should be at least permitted to see your face. A lady with so grand a voice as yours must be possessed of a most interesting face. Won't you remove your veil?"

"I would rather not," said she, "especially as you have complimented me on my voice, but if you insist—"well—and with a quick movement, she pulled away the heavy veiling that covered her face. I would have given almost anything not to have seen her countenance. She was most awfully disfigured. How, I can scarcely describe, for she replaced her veil so quickly. But I saw enough to make my heart sick.

"I beg your pardon," I stammered, "I would not have—"

"Don't apologize," said the woman, "it was my fault. But—well, Mr. Simonson, I thank you for what you have said of my voice. Try to think as well of me as possible, and forget that you saw my face."

Before I could say any more she was gone, and from the moment she drove away in her carriage to this day I have not seen or heard of her again. Whenever I take my place to conduct a performance I cannot help glancing over the theatre to see it is not in the audience, and when I enter the Hollis Street theatre sure to impel me to look for this strange singer.

KILLED BY IMAGINATION.

The Soldier Thought the Pin Prick of a Friend Was a Bullet.

"In my opinion," remarked the college professor, who rose from the ranks during the last war to the position of colonel, "the imagination of men does more injury to the cause of courage than all the appliances of war yet discovered. I had a remarkable case happen to me during the battles around Richmond. That is to say, it happened to another man, but I was part of it. It was on a skirmish line, and I was lying behind a log with two other men—I was only a private then—one of whom was an inveterate joker, and the other was one of the imaginative kind of soldiers. In fact he was so imaginative that he was almost scared out of his wits, and when bullets and shells began flying through the woods, cutting off saplings clipping limbs all around us, and barking the top of the log behind which we lay, I thought the fellow would burst a blood vessel, or go crazy, or do some other foolish thing becoming a soldier. Tom, the joker, noticed the man's terror and called my attention to it. Then he reached out and dragged in a stick cut from the trees above us by a bullet, and fixing a pin in it proceeded to have his fun. The man was at the far end of our log, ten feet from Tom, and I was just beyond Tom on the other side, and I am free to confess, was nervous enough to wonder at Tom's manner at such a time. However, I couldn't help watching his movements, and actually laughed to see him sliding the pin-pointed stick along toward the unsuspecting victim. Having got it at the right distance he waited for a smashing volley of bullets, and just as it came he prodded the man. Well, it was really funny to see the chap jump and yell and roll over, and we both fairly howled. But it wasn't so funny when the man didn't move after his first startled action, and Tom looked around to me in a secret kind of way. His surprise found expression in an oath and he called to the man. There was no answer, and he called again with the same result. Then he crept over to him and gave him a shake. That brought no response either, and Tom dragged him around blue, with the eyes staring wide open, and the man was as dead as Julius Caesar, with never a mark on him save, perhaps, that one pin scratch in his back."

BORN.

Halifax, June 26, to the wife of M. Elister, a son.

Halifax, June 26, to the wife of R. M. Symonds, a son.

Halifax, June 15, to the wife of E. W. Mansfield, a son.

Truro, June 14, to the wife of Fred Anderson, a son.

Louisburg, June 16, to the wife of D. M. Skinner, a son.

Halifax, June 28, to the wife of E. L. Sandford, a daughter.

Pugwash, June 17, to the wife of D. F. Lewis, a daughter.

Halifax, July 2, to the wife of James Rosborough, a daughter.

Louisburg, June 23, to the wife of Lawrence Butes, a son.

Upper Stewiacke, June 26, to the wife of Luther Bites, a son.

East Halifax, June 30, to the wife of William O'Leary, a son.

Kings, N. S., May 17, to the wife of John W. Robinson, a daughter.

South Berwick, June 27, to the wife of H. D. Woodworth, a daughter.

Louisburg, June 16, to the wife of Capt. John Power, a daughter.

Louisburg, June 16, to the wife of Councilor Le-Yahs, a daughter.

Truro, July 2, to the wife of R. F. Archibald, a son.

Boston, June 20, to the wife of M. A. Carder, a son.

Shelburne, June 20, to the wife of E. M. Bill, a son.

Sydney Mines, June 18, to the wife of Rodrick McDonald, a daughter.

Halifax, June 26, to the wife of M. Elister, a son.

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