

His Good

Angel.

It was a gay party that rode out of the courtyard of the Crawford House, that beautiful August morning, equipped for the toilsome ascent of Mount Washington.

The gentlemen were laughingly prophesying the speedy repentance of the ladies, when they should see how really rough the bridge path would grow by and by; the ladies protesting that only the gentleman were frightened; and amid the pleasant hilarity, the weather stained guides touched their hats to the crowd of loungers on the piazza, and spoke to the little shaggy mountain horses, and the cavalcade was lost to view in the spruce and hemlock thick covering the first part of the Crawford bridge path.

There were but ten of the party—four ladies, and six gentlemen—besides the guides.

All were mounted on the tough, rough-coated horses that are alone suited to this hard service; the gentlemen in nondescript suits of clothing, borrowed at the hotel—the ladies in coarse riding habits and straw hats.

A few words will suffice for the introduction of the larger portion of the party.

Three were family men—merchants, with their wives; two were young unmarried men—acquaintances of the families; one was a strange gentleman, who had been recommended by the landlord to take this opportunity of ascending in company with the others, instead of waiting, as he had proposed, till the following day, and then going up with a guide by himself.

His name was Ridgewood.

He was undeniably handsome, but there was a certain look of ennui, varied at times by something almost reckless, in the expression of his great, dark eyes, that might have satisfied a close observer that Mr. Ridgewood had drunk deeply of what are called the pleasures of life.

The other member of the party deserves more than a passing notice.

A beautiful woman like Constance Leach always receives more.

She was a fashionable belle, in her third season, chaperoned to the mountains by Mrs. Randolph, the stately lady, whose iron grey horse led the cortege.

Close behind Miss Leach rode Arthur Hurst, the only one of her satellites who had followed her on her tour.

Mr. Hurst was an aristocrat with wealth amply sufficient to keep up his state, and deeply in love with Miss Leach.

The lady's mother favoured the high-bred suitor; Constance said little on the subject.

Mr. Hurst was an agreeable companion—she felt no particular respect or regard for him beyond that. She was content to let him remain her friend.

Men called her beautiful. This morning she was more than that.

The keen mountain air had flushed her cheek to a more vivid crimson.

Her dark, earnest eyes glowed as she looked out over the magnificent picture opening around her.

She took no part in the merry conversation going on—indeed, it was doubtful if she heard it.

She wanted to keep silent and worship thus the infinitude of grandeur in which all thought of self was lost.

The path grew rough and toilsome.

The rugged brow of Mount Clinton was reached and passed.

Mount Pleasant and Franklin were gained, and then they descended into the valley between Franklin and Monroe, that twin brother of the imperial Mount Washington.

Constance was weary of riding, and despite the protestations of the guides, she would dismount and walk a while.

Mr. Hurst dismounted also, and the two scrambled over the rocks, gathering mosses, and burdening themselves with bits of stones as souvenirs.

Hurst soon became fatigued, and returned to his horse; but Constance begged to go on foot a little longer, it was such a relief from the unsteady seat on her pony.

How it happened she hardly knew—she had only stepped aside over the rocks for a moment to gather a cluster of scarlet berries that hung from the cleft side of a huge boulder; and when she looked about her, the entire party was out of sight.

She was alone!

She started at a swift pace, to follow them, as she thought, but it was growing

strangely dark around her, and there was a cold mist over everything, like that which surges up at random from the heart of the ocean.

The golden ritt of sunshine that a moment before had illuminated the granite forehead of Mount Franklin, was struck out, and only a dense white vapour remained in its place.

A terrible sense of desolation swept over her, as she hurried through the almost blinding fog, stumbling over sharp stones, and bruising her flesh against unseen masses of rocks.

A sudden turn brought her face to face with some dark object, and before she utter the scream that rose to her lips, Mr. Ridgewood addressed her—

'Pardon me if I frightened you. I knew the danger you incurred in turning aside from the beaten path for one moment, and I took the responsibility of following you. Let us go back.'

She yielded her trembling hand readily, it was so pleasant to have his companionship in this dreary gloom.

On they went, always ascending.

For an hour they proceeded thus, but no trace of the bridge-path appeared.

All was whirling mist and gaunt, black, shapeless rocks.

Nothing to tell you that ever the foot of man had passed that way.

Slowly the conviction forced itself upon the mind of Mr. Ridgewood that it was useless to go on—they were lost.

He stopped under the shelter of a great cliff, and put his travelling shawl over the shoulders of his companion.

'Miss Leach, he said I think you have a brave heart. Can you bear to know that we are lost?'

'I have known it all along,' she said, quietly. 'What shall we do?'

'I judge it best to remain here until the fog clears. A single misstep in this uncertain light might send us to destruction. See!'

Even as he spoke the mist momentarily lifted, and showed them, lying at their very feet, the black, fathomless abyss of a vast ravine, filled with clouds of seething vapor.

Constance shuddered and drew back.

'Men have perished on these mountains before now,' she said, reflectively. 'I wonder if their fate will be ours?'

'I trust not. This is the forerunner of a mountain storm, perhaps, and at this season of the year, such visitations are brief, I think. We shall have the sun out soon. We must be patient and wait.'

Constance leaned back against the rock, Mr. Ridgewood stood near with folded arms.

The wild desolation of the situation was terribly sublime.

Below them, hundreds of fathoms away, they could hear the sullen roar of a mountain stream, all around them sounded the hollow wail of the wind in the trees, and afar off rose the ominous peal of thunder.

Then there fell a calm.

The very silence smote on the ear ten times more dreadful than the voice of the fiercest tempest.

There was a blinding flash of lightning, accompanied by a burst of thunder almost deafening, echoing from cliff to cliff, till the whole place seemed alive with the roar, and then the thick clouds swooped down, and the rain fell in a torrent.

Ridgewood sheltered Constance the best he could but both were drenched.

The shower lasted only a few moments, then swept away in regal state, with its awe inspiring panoply of lightning and thunder, to invest some other towering cliff.

But the air did not clear. It was still vapoury and indistinct, and the darkness grew slowly, but surely, warning them that night was at hand.

Mr. Ridgewood sat down beside Constance and looked at her with a strange expression of interest.

It had been long since the man's heart had suffered itself to open sympathy.

'Miss Leach,' he said, 'it is certain that we must remain here tonight. There seems no other way. If I could only find the path, I might bring you assistance.'

She clung frantically to his hand.

'Oh! do not leave me! I would rather die than be left here alone! You will stay Mr. Ridgewood?'

'Certainly, if you wish it. But I had feared my presence might be objectionable. You knew nothing of me—you would prefer the utterest solitude to my company, if you could look into my past life.'

'It may be a singular time and place for a confession of this kind, but I am impelled to tell you just how vile a man I have been, and then see if you will ask me to stay.'

'I was the son of poverty,' he went on, rapidly. 'My father died, while I was yet a boy, leaving my mother to my care.'

She loved me—I loved her with my whole soul. Only the remembrance of her sweet love has kept me from utter ruin.

'After a while another love came between us. I do wrong to call it love—I should say passion.'

'Oh, Isabel! Isabel! To me she was the loveliest thing this side of Heaven.'

'For her sake I left my mother in her age, and went to a foreign land, that I might win gold with which to purchase the hand already plighted to me.'

'Five years I toiled, cheered by her letters, made happy by the thought of what was to come, and then, a rich man, I turned to my native land.'

'Returned to find Isabel two years married, and ready to laugh at what she called our pleasant flirtation.'

'It was wicked, I knew, but then and there I cursed her, and the curse was not a vain one.'

'To day she is the wretched inmate of a madhouse; her husband perished by her hand, and her children blush at the mention of their mother's name.'

'Well, after that, I plunged recklessly into dissipation.'

'My mother was dead—had died without giving me her blessing. Whom had I to live for?'

'Little a man like me cares for the approbation of those who do not love him.'

'I tried every excess. I drank. I gambled, I sinned deeply and darkly; but thank God! the memory of my mother kept me from wronging a single one of her sex.'

'For years I have been what the world leniently calls a 'man of fashion.'

'I have been flattered and caressed in society because of my wealth.'

'Beautiful women have smiled on me, and innocent girls would have bound their white souls into mine, so deeply stained.'

'Lately, I have grown restless; this kind of life is terrible.'

'I have felt at times an almost unconquerable desire to end it.'

'But I weary you. I have told you what I am—will you let me stay now?'

'You loved your mother—you love her still?' she said, slowly.

'Love her! My mother! A single word of hers, if she could speak to me out of Heaven, would bend him to her will like a very child. My mother! But for my faith in her, I had forsworn the God who made me.'

Constance laid her hand on his.

'I trust the man who loved his mother, Mr. Ridgewood. I am not afraid of you. I want you to stay with me.'

A strong emotion shook the frame of Guy Ridgewood.

He bent over the little soft hand, and when he lifted his face it was wet with something beside the rain.

'Will you help me to lead a better life? If we escape from this peril, will you be my friend afterwards?'

'Afterwards and always,' she said solemnly.

'And I—to help me Heaven!—from this hour forth, will never think a thought, or do a deed, the knowledge of which would cause the cheek of Constance Leach to redden for him who she had once called friend!'

A little silence fell between them, broken by a wild, wailing cry, coming up from the pathless wilderness below.

The blood in Ridgewood's veins grew cold; once before he had heard a cry like that, the cry of the terrible caracol in the forests of Asia.

There was but one other animal of that kind, the dreaded Siberian lynx, which even the well armed hunter shrinks from attacking.

These creatures were very rare, and confined almost entirely to the tangled ravines in the heart of the mountains, where they preyed upon the smaller beasts; but sometimes, driven by hunger, they had been known to ascend to the highest cliffs, and attack whatever came in their way.

Ridgewood's courage had been tried more than once in his life, and now he nerved himself for the contest.

He was unarmed, his only weapon a pocket knife, which he drew forth and unclasped.

Constance, white as the fog itself, stood just behind him, waiting breathlessly the appearance of the unknown foe.

She had but a moment of suspense.

Through the gloom gleamed a pair of eyes like fiery coals, and over the rocks crept the long, lithe form of the lynx, swaying from side to side.

Ridgewood cast one glance back at the girl, and then sprang forward just in time to save her from the clutches of the animal.

He put out his arm to ward off the blow of the savage paw, and it was crushed to the elbow in the powerful jaws of the brute.

Ridgewood's nature was brave and indomitable.

He had never yet yielded—he scorned to now.

He closed with the lynx in a deadly embrace, and though his flesh was fearfully torn, and he was wet with his own blood, he never relaxed his efforts.

Back and forth across the throat of his assailant, he drew the knife.

It reached the vital part at last, and with a fearful cry the monster rolled back among the rocks, dragging the man with him.

There was a struggle, but it ended soon. Ridgewood had triumphed. The lynx was in the death agony.

Constance sprang to the spot, and with her feeble strength, unclasping the grip of the dying beast from the body of her deliverer.

Ridgewood, faint from pain and loss of blood, could only drag himself a few feet from the scene of the conflict, and sink exhausted upon the ground.

She brought water from a hollow in the rock and bathed his forehead, she bound up his lacerated arm with her silken scarf, she held his head in her lap and besought him to rally, if only to speak to her once more.

All the night through he lay in that deadly stupor, but when the morning

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broke, fair and calm, the first ray of sunlight aroused him.

He rose to a sitting posture and looked around, realizing but dimly his situation.

The dead lynx restored his memory.

Clear and distinct he saw the bridge-path, not twenty rods distant.

'Save yourself,' he said. 'Yonder lie safety and life. For me, it matters little. You are young, beautiful, and beloved; secure your safety now, before another storm-cloud sweeps down upon the mountain.'

But she never moved from her old position.

Smoothing back the soft hair from his forehead, she answered, steadily—

'No, I will wait to have my deliverance with you.'

It came even sooner than they had dared to hope.

A wild bulloo from far above them rent the air—the name of Constance, called in the voice of Mr. Hurst.

She answered him strong, and clear, and a few moments later the whole party of the previous day was on the spot.

Of course, Constance was caressed and congratulated; and, of course, all the ladies admired the bravery of Mr. Ridgewood.

For themselves they had little to tell, except the anxiety they had suffered on Miss Leach's account, and of the fruitless endeavors the guides had made to discover her.

They had been all night at the search, assisted by the gentlemen of the party; while the ladies, under the guard of a foot traveller who had come along opportunely, proceeded to the Summit House.

A rude litter of the boughs of trees was constructed, and thus they carried Ridgewood down to Crawford House.

A surgeon staying there dressed his wounds; but all his efforts were not sufficient to ward off the fever that had already fastened upon him. That night he was in a raving delirium.

And that very night, sitting within the mountain shadows on the piazza of the hotel, Arthur Hurst asked the hand of Miss Leach in marriage, and was refused.

Why she could not have told, a week ago, she might have answered him differently; but now, there was no other course.

Three days later, the tourists left the mountains, but before they departed, Constance went to the sick chamber of Mr. Ridgewood.

He was not able to converse much, but he hoped to see her that winter in New York.

She gave him her hand to kiss, said good-bye, and went away.

That winter Constance Leach went down to the wharf to see a company of friends set sail for Europe.

They were on board; she stood on the quay waiting for the boat to start.

Someone brushed hastily past her.

The indescribable thrill that passed through her frame made her turn, and she saw Guy Ridgewood.

His eyes met her; he came towards her. He was dressed for travelling, and the pile of luggage near by spoke of a long absence, perhaps.

He took her extended hand.

'Will you wish me bon voyage, my friend?' he asked.

'Where are you going?'

'To England.' Something in her face must have encouraged him to speak, for he continued: 'I shall never return. This whole continent is not wide enough to hold you and me, Constance Leach, unless we dwell together! I have dared to love you, and as the only recompense I can make, I will put the ocean between us.'

She laid her other hand on his arm.

'Ob, Guy,' she said, 'do not go. Stay with me. We will dwell together.'

His fingers closed over hers, his lips murmured some low, impassioned words, lost to all ears but hers, and then the steamer sailed without him.

A week afterwards they were married.

The fashionable world wondered and commented, but Constance Ridgewood cared little. She was happy in her husband's love.

A Brave Girl.

A New York exchange prints the following account of the courage and presence of mind of a girl sixteen years of age, who, last winter, with great danger to herself, rescued a child from a burning room:

Jacob and Annie Moser and their two year old daughter live in two back rooms in a dingy New York street. One day Mrs. Moser left her baby while she went across the hall to talk to a neighbor. The little one pushed the door to, so that it locked with a spring, and as it appears, soon found some matches and set its dress on fire.

Its shrieks brought the mother to the door, only to find it locked. She screamed and

other tenants were soon crowding about her.

No one seemed to know what to do except sixteen year old Sarah Goldstein. She ran up stairs to her own apartment, got out of the window, descended the ice coated fire escape, broke the window, and jumped into the Mosers' room.

The child's clothing and the table cloth were ablaze. Seizing the cloth, she tore the burning part off. Her own clothing caught fire in the operation, but she wrapped the cloth about the baby and smothered the flames in a few seconds.

Her hands were badly burned, but she burst open the door, and without paying any attention to the frantic mother or the crowd outside, dashed down the stairs with the child and hurried to the Jewish hospital eight or ten blocks off.

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She Couldn't Even "Crow."

A tired, sleepy, but happy group of city waifs left the cars at a country station, and were met by a somewhat apprehensive knot of women, who were to assume the care of the little visitors for a few weeks.

Bringing up the rear of the group of children was a boy of nine years, clothed with an air of self confidence, but with little else. In his arms he held a baby sister of such winsomeness that there was a simultaneous movement among the women, each of whom wished to engage the baby.

The boy refused to be separated from his charge, and critically scanned the face of each bidder for the prize. He finally decided in favor of a plain little woman, whose body was hardly big enough to hold the generous heart which had been enlarged by the care of a numerous family of her own.

One of the women who had wished to take the baby was a showy spinster. Although unsuccessful, she had bid high in smiles and those unintelligible little cries and chirps with which women try to win the confidence of babies.

When the ragged brother was asked why he had not chosen to go to her home, he answered, promptly:

'Oh, I spotted her, right off. She's no mother. When she was trying to talk to baby she couldn't even get the hang of the crow.'

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Time and the Philosopher.

Sir William Robinson, at one time Governor of Trinidad, recently read a paper before the Royal Colonial Institute of London in which he has incorporated many of the quaint sayings of the natives, one of which follows, being peculiarly rich in negro philosophy:

The late Bishop Rawle, passing a negro sitting in idleness by the roadside, asked him how he managed to pass the time.

'I sit in de sun, massa, an let de time pass me!' was the smiling reply.

Robert was Trick-d.

Not long ago a man was arrested on a tramcar, charged with picking a lady's pocket. At the police station he was searched, but as the lady's purse was not found upon him, he was discharged. On the following morning the policeman who had arrested him discovered the purse in his own coat pocket, where the culprit had evidently placed it.

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