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BY HAWLEY & CRUSER.

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THE WATER MILL.

Listen to the Water-mill,
Through the livelong day—
How the clicking of the wheel
Wears the weary hours away.
Languidly the autumn wind
Stirs the withered leaves;
On the field the reapers sing,
Binding up the sheaves;
And a proverb haunts my mind,
And a spell is cast;
"The mill will never grind
With the water that is past."
Summer winds revive no more
Leaves strewn o'er earth and main
And the sickle ne'er can reap,
The gathered grain again;
And the rippling stream flows on,
Tranquil, deep, and still—
Never gliding back again
To the water-mill.
Truly speaks the proverb old,
With a meaning vast;
"The mill will never grind
With the water that is past."
Take the lesson to thyself,
Loving heart and true;
Golden years are floating by,
Youth is passing too!
Learn to make the most of life—
Lose no happy day!
Time will ne'er return sweet joys
Neglected, thrown away!
Leave no tender word unsaid—
But love, while love shall last;
"The mill will never grind
With the water that is past."
Oh! the wasted hours of life
That have swiftly drifted by!
Oh! the good we might have done!
Gone! without a sigh!
Love that we might have once saved
By a single kindly word!
Thoughts conceived, but ne'er expressed
Perishing, unopened, unheard!
Take the proverb to thy soul—
Take, and clasp it fast;
"The mill will never grind
With the water that is past."

MY CONVICT ACQUAINTANCE.

HE WAS rather a slight built man of about five and thirty, tolerably well dressed, and having a foreign, tanned look about the face that told of residence abroad. He was my right hand neighbor in the row of the pit of the Olympic Theatre during the performance of "The Ticket-of-Leave Man," and he had drawn my attention to himself by the intense eagerness with which he had been listening to the dialogue, as his eyes seemed to devour every situation in the clever drama.

More than once I heard him utter a faint sigh, evidently unconscious that he was heard; and at last, when the hero is hemmed in by difficulties, and prosecuted by the black shadow of his own character, which follows him wherever he goes, my neighbor rested his hands upon the partition which separated us from the stalls, bowed his head, and remained unmoving for quite half of an hour.

And this during one of the most interesting phases of the drama.

I saw at a glance that this was no ordinary play-goer, but one who for some reason was deeply moved by the fiction enacted before him; and I tried to respect his emotion, which showed itself every now and then by a convulsive shrug of the shoulders.

At last he turned a sallow, laggard face towards me, and rose from his seat. "Will you let me go by?" he said. "I must get out of this."

"Let him pass me, and after a moment's hesitation, followed him into the fresh air. And it was well I did so, for the poor fellow gave a lurch as soon as he was outside, and would have fallen if I had not caught his arm.

A few minutes later, I had led him down into the Strand, where in the retired box of a well known coffee room, he revived under the influence of a little cold spirit and water, and gave me a feeble smile.

"I am very thankful to you," he said rising. "Good night. I am spoiling your evening's entertainment."

"If you will take my advice," I said, "you will sit quite still for another hour. You are not detaining me, for I have seen the piece before, and only dropped in to refresh my memory. It seems to move you."

He looked at me sharply. "Yes," he said after a pause, and speaking with intense bitterness, "It is so true!"

"I suppose it is," I said vaguely. "I have heard so."
"Suppose—heard!" he said excitedly. "Man, it is a fact dressed up in the form of fiction. I know it to my sorrow."

"Indeed?"
"Yes," he said in an undertone, as he arose once more—for his excited manner had made a shabby pressman look up from his paper. "Yes, I know, and I could prove it all. Good night, sir, and thank you. Yours was the first act of kindness I have encountered for many a day. Perhaps I should not have received it if you had known I was a ticket-of-leave man myself!"

I must confess to giving a start; and he saw it and smiled.
"I don't see how the fact of your being in trouble should have precluded my affording you help," I said.
"But it is the custom," he said bitterly. "You can't touch pitch without being defiled."

"I object to being ruled by your old proverbs or principles," I said. "Half of them are bosh, and a lot more are of the most contemptibly selfish tendency. If the pitch touching theory held good, there would be no Christianity. I say you can touch pitch without being defiled. You may make yourself look black; but pitch is a good, honest, wholesome vegetable gum and does not want blackguarding."

"You are a philosopher," he said sneeringly.
"Not I," I said. "We profess here in London to be a Christian people, and I was trying for once to act like one."

"Christians!" he exclaimed bitterly. "Well, yes—that's what we make a great parade of being; but I am afraid we are very hard on any one who has climbed over the palings—very hard indeed on a man; and as to woman, poor wretch! It would have been better for her if she had not been born."

He stood staring at me, hesitated, then waved his hand, as in token of farewell, and was passing me to go; but I caught his coat in my hand.

"Sit down, man," I said; "you look faint. Come, join me in a chop and a glass of stout. You see, I want to act like a Christian, but you won't let me."

He hesitated still; then he glanced down in my smiling face, and once more took his seat, to half cover his face with his hand, remaining silent; while I ordered some supper, took out a cigar—offered him one, which he refused—and then began to smoke.

"And so you are a ticket-of-leave man, are you?" I said in a low tone; but he started, and glanced around, with a frightened, half hunted look.

There was no one heeding us, though; and his eyes sought mine once more.

"Yes, I was sentenced to ten years' penal servitude, and I served five, when they let me free, and I came back. I had better stayed."

"I suppose it is hard to get on without recommendations?" I said.

"Hard? Man, it's next to impossible. Look here, sir, you have sought this out; you have led me on to speak, or God knows I would not have said a word. You see here a man driven to desperation—broken-hearted, despairing—without a friend to turn to; set free to get an honorable living, but distrusted by everybody, and dodged by the police. Why, supposing I get a decent post, I am bound to go to the police officers to have my ticket signed at intervals, and if I did not, I should be taken before a magistrate."

"I will not ask you to believe me—how can I expect you to, when I say I was innocent of the crime for which I suffered? It is the cry of every criminal, from the murderer down to the boy who pilfers from a till. You will tell me I was tried by a jury of my own countrymen, before a judge, and had impartial treatment. Yes, I grant all that; but I was innocent all the same. Do you wish to hear more? Shall I go on?"

"More? Yes. Go on? Why?"

"You are sitting face to face with a returned convict."

"I am afraid I have sat face to face with a good many respectable members of society who ought to be convicts unrelented. Go on, man. We shall have the chops here soon."

His face worked as he looked at me, and his voice had altered a good deal, as he went on:

"It was an embezzlement case for which I was tried. I was one of the clerks in a large Lancashire cotton house and there were defalcations discovered."

"Why they pitched upon me, I never knew; but one morning I was called into the private room of the firm and questioned about certain amounts and could give no explanation; there had been a certain amount of cooking in the books, and in a couple of years, by the professional accountant's showing, about three hundred were missing."

"Fancy suddenly being called from your desk to go smiling into a room, expecting words of encouragement—the announcement that you are promoted or your salary raised—and then to be suddenly charged with embezzlement."

"I was completely stunned. I know I felt cold and damp, and I suppose I flushed and then looked pale—signs which those present interpreted to mean guilt. I faltered and grew confused, too, in answering questions—in short I was completely overcome; and at the end of an hour I was being taken to the police station, stunned, overpowered by this sudden change."

"I shall weary you with my long story. Let it suffice that there was examination after examination, and to my horror my brother was placed in the witness box to confront me; and he did so quietly, and without a shade of emotion, save at the last, when he broke down, and the magistrate told him that his display of feeling was most creditable to him."

"I was astonished to see how a net was closing in around me—innocent words and deeds now seemed to have suddenly taken a guilty color; and at last, to my horror, I was committed for trial, bail being refused."

"John came to see me then, and faced me trembling in the prison; but I turned my back upon him, and would not speak unless he came to me as a suppliant."

"He came again, this time begging me to hear him."

"I saw it all at a flash; he had been losing again. The race was three days before, but I took no notice of such matters, being a bookworm, while John was gay, and had sporting tastes. This was it."

"I shivered as I thought of it all, and seemed to see my mother's agony when she heard of it, as she must before many hours was over. She worshipped John, and idolized his young wife. John was two years older than I, but my junior in the counting-house; and I groaned in the bitterness of my heart as I thought of the agony it would bring upon those two women, when they heard of his disgrace."

"I say disgrace, for I had not a doubt now. I knew him to be the culprit, and in my own misery I forgot my own sorrow, longing the while for an opportunity to warn him of his danger."

"Ned, Ned, old fellow," he cried, sobbing like a child, "I did it. I did it, but I can't acknowledge it. Ned, it will break our mother's heart, and Ellen will despise me. Oh, this cursed gambling!"

"And your weakness," I said bitterly, as I realized it all—everything that he had said, and knew it to be true. "Go back to them, John," I said; "I will not betray you. Tell Mary—"

"I could say no more, but sat on my bench, blind, choking and half mad."

"But, there, I need not go into the story of my love. I bore it all, and never unclosed my lips. I took the credit to myself, as I was accused, of being the thief who had robbed his employers; for I knew, if I opened my lips, I should be in effect my mother's murderer, and the blight upon the happiness of John's young wife."

"It will be a lesson to him," I said, "of little consequence in the world; and as to Mary, she will forget me."

"My trial came on, and I was sentenced, as I told you; the bitterest trial of all being to see John stand there, calm and unmoved, one of the witnesses by whose words I was condemned."

"I parted from my mother leaving her deceived. Why should I shatter the idol she worshipped? And in bitter mockery her words, urging repentance for my crime, fell upon my ears. Mary the woman I loved, I did not see, but she wrote and told me she did not believe me guilty, and would wait."

"It was her promise that enabled me to bear up during the time I was at one and another of the convict prisons, till the day I stood leaning over the bulwark of the transportship which was bearing me down the Channel away to Van Diemen's Land—a convict."

"I thought my heart would break, as I leaned there in the tight, half-grotesque convict garb, my close cap drawn to my eyes, my face cleanly shaven, and my hair cut short. It was so hard to believe that I was the same man, compelled to associate with a set who were nine-tenths ruffians, with scarcely a redeeming trait."

"And here was the soft, blue sea and across it the gray and ruddy cliffs of the Cornish coast. Land's End would soon be in sight, for we were close to the Lizard, and soon we should be out upon the open sea."

"Good-bye," I muttered, with my hands firmly clasped—"good-bye home—mother—Mary. Brother, you have been to me like Cain, for you have taken my life."

"I did not move, but stood watching there till we were ordered below, and the next morning home was far astern."

"At the end of five years, after the hard toil of a convict in the colonies, I was back here in England, a broken man. The hope seemed crushed out of me, and I expected nothing now. Still, my heart beat high, as with a little money, my own earnings, I was, after the usual preliminaries, set free, with plenty of advice as to avoiding my former evil course, all of which I heard patiently, before setting off for the north."

"I arrived to find that my mother had died; my brother had sailed with his wife for America two years before."

"I had one more hope—my greatest—Had Mary kept her word?"

"God bless her! she had; and was toiling on and waiting patiently for my return. Sir, can you wonder at my emotion as I sat and saw that realistic piece to-night? It was as if the writer had known my life. I could not bear it, and, as you know, I came away."

"Well?"

"Well! well, I am a ticket-of-leave man. I cannot get employment; and when I do I cannot keep it. God help me, I have been a hundred times almost driven into crime; but that the thought that she who waited five years through evil report is waiting still, I should—pish! Why should I worry you?"

"There is such a thing as patience in this world," I said quietly.

"Patience?"

"Yes; ah, yes—chops. You are faint."

The hot-plats were thrust down before us at this moment, and my newly acquired friend after a little forcing, purloined of his supper.

We parted that night an hour later—he with a card in his pocket, I ruminating upon the truth of the word of certain people who gave me birth—that I had a natural tendency for getting into bad company."

I had an idea that night that my acquaintance would find that the tide had turned in the morning; and I believe that to be the case, for he is now in the employment of one who knows the story, and is getting on."

"But, my dear sir," I said to his employer one day, "you surely are not such a flat as to believe that story about his innocence?"

"Friend Gray," he said, buttonholing me, "I never troubled myself about it—All I know is that I never had my books kept so well before; that his sweet, pale-faced, subdued little wife is an angel, and that I kicked a warehouseman out of my office for telling me I had a ticket-of-leave man in my employ. If your acquaintance robs me after this, may God forgive him—for my part I will."

"You feel comfortable in your own mind, then, about what you are doing," I said.

"Perfectly, my dear boy, and so do you."

"And, do you know, I think my old commercial friend is quite right."

MAY BAILY.

BY PAULINE GRANT.

"BUT SUPPOSE he should recognize me, after all, Helen?"

"Not a bit of danger of that, May; you are too well gotten up for that, thanks be to your servant."

"Well, let me take a long, last, lingering look at myself, and I'm off," and she stepped to the glass and surveyed herself. She gave a little laugh.

"Ugh! how my teeth gleam through my dusky complexion! We must remedy that. Go down and get me some huckleberries."

The desired berries were brought, and enough partaken of to bring the gleaming teeth to a color not conspicuously observable through contrast with her general appearance.

"There you are, Mary, so transformed your own father wouldn't recognize you. Complexion utterly changed, eyebrows blackened, hair tucked out of sight under a widow's cap, seddy black dress, and worn cotton gloves. Who would look for the rich and flattering heiress in this guise? Here—let me adjust your veil. There—you'll do for a poor widow of thirty-five. I think."

"Well, Helen, I hope we may find that Harry Smith has been slandered," was the rejoinder; "but I could never promise to marry him with such a doubt unresolved."

"No, indeed, May. But go; my blessing will follow you," she added laughing.

Down the back stairs stole the quiet, poverty stricken woman, and gained the street by a back alley. Drawing her veil closely over her face, she slowly walked along till she reached the door which bore the sign, "Henry Smith, Attorney & Counselor at Law." Ascending the stairs, she stood at the office door, and tapped timidly.

"Come in," was the rejoinder from within.

Tremblingly May pushed open the office door of the man who had the day before besought her to become his wife.

Henry Smith sat at a table which was strewn with law papers, with his feet over the arm of a chair, and a half consumed cigar in his teeth. Casting a glance at the meek looking little figure before him, which glance seemed to assure him that there was no call for politeness on his part, he leaned back in his chair and remarked:

"Well, madame, what do you wish?"

"Can this be the exquisite Mr. Smith, who is so courteous to ladies in society?" thought she. But she said, in a voice which trembled from suppressed excitement:

"Will you allow me to be seated a moment, sir? I am not strong, and the stairs have taken away my breath."

"Chairs over by the window there," was the reply, but he never lowered his feet from the table on which they rested, or laid aside his cigar.

After a moment's pause, in which the pale, dark woman seemed to collect breath and composure, she drew a paper from her pocket, saying—

"If you please, I called to see you for charity. My husband was killed six months ago by a fall from a building, and left me penniless. I worked, and earned a meagre support for my self and little ones, by copying, until I was no longer able to get even that to do. Being ill with overwork and anxiety, I could no longer support my little family, and my children have been taken to the poor-house. People who have known how hard I tried to do for them have helped me a little, and so I have been saved from

going there too. If I can succeed in keeping along for a few days, until I have a little more strength, I hope to obtain work, and be able to take care of myself again. Here is a paper, with the names of those who know me, and that I am not an imposter, and who have helped me in my illness and poverty."

Not a word from Henry Smith—the while, but he coolly puffed the cigar.

"Will you not help me a little from your abundant means?" said the poor widow.

"Oh, dear!" yawned he. "I wish beggars could be abolished by statute." Then to the women, "Really, madam, your story is well gotten up, but so far as I am concerned, no beggars need apply. If you can support yourself, why, go to the poor-house. That's the place for such as you."

"But sir—"

"My dear woman, there's the door. I cannot be bothered any longer."

Slowly and sadly the poor woman wended her way down the stairs and into the street, until the corner shut her from sight, then fairly flew until she reached the residence of one of the wealthiest men in the city. Here she rushed in at the door, and unceremoniously up stairs into the pretty room she had shortly before left. Tearing off the widow's garments, she was soon engaged in telling her friend the result of her mission.

"It's just as you told me, Helen—Henry Smith has no more heart than a stick of wood, and no more politeness than her cheeks burned at the thought of his rudeness. And to think he should come here and be so devoted and polite to me, when it is all false to his true nature. Thank Heaven! I've found him out in time."

Helen laughed softly, and said:

"What answer shall you give him this evening, May?"

"Wait until evening and see," was the reply, as May went on with her toilet.

Meanwhile, Henry Smith, after mentally condemning all beggars to torture, slowly betook himself to his lodgings, and arrayed himself scrumptiously for the purpose of calling to receive his answer from the young lady of his affections; but in the midst of his thoughts of her, the pale face of the little widow would intrude itself.

"Confound the creature!" he soliloquized as he neared the mansion. "I can't keep her out of my mind. There was something familiar about her, as if I had known her some time. But, pshaw! who has any sympathy for beggars? I shall be one myself in a month if I don't get the girl of old Bailey, with her father's cash."

Ring the bell, the servant showed him into a brilliantly-lighted parlor, where in silk and jewels, shown the fair young girl whom he had asked to be his wife.

She arose to meet him, and he eagerly began—

"Dearest May, I'm all impatience for your answer. Don't keep me in suspense another moment. Is the treasure mine?"

With painful distinctness every word of the answer smote on his ear.

"Oh, dear! I wish beggars could be abolished by statute."

He opened his eyes and stared at her then the truth seemed to barst upon him.

"May! Miss Baily!" gasped he. "What does it mean?"

"Really, sir, your story is well gotten up, but so far as I am concerned, no beggars need apply."

Catching up his hat, Henry Smith left the house so hurriedly that the door slammed. If he did not gain the heiress and her money, let us hope he gained in wisdom and charity.

A bashful youth was paying his addresses to a lass in the country, who had long despaired of bringing things to a crisis. He called one day, when she was alone at home. After settling the merits of the weather, Miss said, looking aly into his face, "I dreamt of you last night." "Did you? Why, now?" "Yes, I dreamt you kissed me!" "Why now? What did you dream your mother said?" "Oh, I dreamt she wasn't home."

A light dawned on the youth's intellect, and directly something was heard to crack—perhaps his whip, and perhaps not; but in about a month more they were married.

"Should any female teacher enter into matrimonial relations her place will become vacant," is the classical wording of a resolution lately adopted by the Brooklyn, N. Y., Board of Education.

When a man detects a missing button after getting on a clean shirt, no one in the house is aware of the fact. He takes off the shirt and puts on another, quietly smiling all the while. He never, never speaks of it to a soul.

John O'Neil killed his father-in-law and his mother-in-law at St. John, N. B. the other day, they having persuaded his wife to leave him.

To remove warts—rub the afflicted part against a buzz saw.