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MALCOM KIRK.

A Tale of Moral Heroism In Overcoming the World.

BY CHARLES M. SHELDON. Author of "In His Steps," "Crucifixion of Philip Strong," "Robert Hardy's Seven Days."

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CHAPTER XL

A MOMENT OF DOUBT. Malcom read the four letters through one after the other without a word of comment. Only Dorothy, watching him, noted the expressions on his face. When he finished the letter from the Boston magazine, he looked up.

"Well?" said Dorothy slowly, as if Malcom had asked a question.

"It's a great offer," said Malcom. He was evidently very much moved by it And he rose and walked up and down.

Finally he stopped near the door. "I shall have to go out doors and walk off the excitement," he said, looking at Dorothy, with a faint smile. She was familiar with that habit. Malcom had often done that when tired of the cramped quarters of his little study in the parsonage.

He walked to the table, took up his hat and went to the door. He opened it and then turned back to Dorothy, who sat with her elbow on the table

and her chin in her hand thinking. "Will you go with me, dear?" Malcom asked quietly.

She rose without a word and, putting on her hat and cloak, went out with him. They walked out of the yard, and then, after a moment of hesitation, they turned and went down the narrow board sidewalk toward the main street of the town.

It was almost 11 o'clock. Nearly all the stores were closed, but every saloon was wide open. As they went by one of the largest on the first business corner two or three men near the door recognized Kirk and touched their hats, saying very respectfully as they did so, "Good evening, Mr. Kirk."

"Good evening, gentlemen," replied Malcom, touching his hat. He passed on with Dorothy, but with all the inner conflict going on she had time to think of the little incident and say to herself proudly, "Even the loafers and drinkers respect my husband."

And it was true, because they knew in their hearts that Malcom Kirk loved them, wretched, useless creatures as many of them were, down at the very bottom of the human scale, down where nothing but love could reach them.

As they went past one of the dancehouses they could hear the fingle of spurs on boots, the wild laughter of the women and the clink of glasses at

Dorothy shuddered and drew up closer to Malcom. To both of them it is probable that there was borne in upon them the lost abandoned life that always goes with the liquor trade, the desperate, lawless character of young men and women who represented so large a part of the social life of the town. What a relief it would be to get away from it all, back to the culture and refinement of books and companionable people and the life of freedom from moral struggle for the life New England home that might be theirs for the taking!

They had walked through the street and were out on the prairie road before either of them said a word.

Then Malcom said, while he pressed Dorothy's arm close to his own:

"What do you think I had better do?" She was not prepared to have him ask a question, and she was not ready with an answer.

"What would you do in my place?" he asked after waiting for her to answer his first question.

"Don't ask me, Malcom," cried Dorothy almost tearfully.

He bent his head and in the starlight saw her face moved with unusual excitement.

"It is true," he began to talk to himself, "it is true, as he says, 'the press is as powerful as the pulpit in these course Malcom was on the point of days,' I could certainly do as much good that way as any. I feel as if I could use my pen for the good of hu-

"Yes, yes!" Dorothy cried eagerly. She spoke as if Malcom's words had been a great relief to her. Then she went on almost passionately:

"What can you do here, Malcom? You can slave yourself to death out here with this little church and never accomplish much. You cannot do the church work and the writing too. You The Pomona M'f'g Co., will break down under it. How can you ever build again, with the hard times and so many families moving away and winter coming on? And your salary, little as it is, so cruelly delayed, it is a humiliation to keep on this narrow, pinched life, with no companionship to speak of, no money to buy new books, with a dead lift on a poor struggling church that will wear your life out before you have reached your prime. I don't mind for myself. Malcom, you know. It was 'for better, for worse, for richer, for poorer,' but it seems to me your life will be simply thrown away if you remain out here. Such an offer as this will not rome to you again probably. If I were

you"-She stopped, and Malcom eagerly

waited for the rest. "If I were you," Dorothy went on otrongly, "I would answer the letter at once and accept the offer. I want to see you succeed in life. I want to have the world know your strength as

I do." He made no reply, and they walked on a little farther. Then Malcom spoke as if again reasoning with him-

"I certainly could do as much good that way as any."

He was silent again. They had reached a place where the road branched off to "The Forks." They turned and went back toward the town. When they reached the first houses, they took the street which led past the ruins of the church and parsonage. They seem-

ed to do this without saying to each other that they would. Their walk back had been in silence.

When they reached the corner where the church and parsonage had stood. they stopped and looked at the ruins.

These were mournful, as such ruins always are. The foundation line of the church building looked pitifully small to Malcom as he thought of the little congregations that had so often met there for worship or the prayer service. And still he could not even there, as he viewed what seemed like a failure in life, he could not shut out himself as they had gone into the church that first night of their arrival in Courad three years before and had there made together their solemn promise to redeem the lost of Conrad. Were they about to break that promise because difficulties had come into the struggle? Was it possible that they were going to declare themselves beaten in the attempt to overcome? Were they about to choose the easy, comfortable physical life and shun the agony of the spiritual conflict with evil forces? Were they about to run away from duty as cowards? Was it duty to remain in Conrad? How about his duty to the temperance conflict?



Were they about to break that promise? of others that awaited them in that If he had any real strength that way ought he to abandon the cause at this critical time? But how could Dorothy live this life of privation? How could he go on with his meager salary, humiliated by being in debt to the tradespeople and dependent for his living on the spasmodic giving of the churches that "indorsed" home missions, to be sure, but left the Home Missionary often unpaid or the recipient of boxes which sometimes were so clearly in the nature of charity that no self respecting man could take and use the

All this and more crowded into Maicom's mind as he stood there that night by the ruins of his church and home. The same thoughts were also in the mind of Dorothy, and with it all it seemed, too, as if to both of them came a half suppressed doubt as to the

taking.

"Don't you feel that we have tried our best to keep that promise we made that night in the church?" Dorothy asked, as she nervously pushed her foot against one of the stones at the

corner of the foundation. Malcom did not answer at first. Then he said evasively, as if he had been thinking of something else, "I'm sure I can do as much with my pen as I can

in a church." Dorothy did not look up or speak for some time. Then she said with rather

eager emphasis: "Why not write at once to the editor and tell him that you will accept his

offer?"

"I will," said Malcom in a low tone. They stood a little while longer by the ruins, and then turned away and went home. Somewhere in the great spaces of the infinite to Malcom and Dorothy it almost seemed as if a sigh from an angel of light breathed over the sleeping town that lay on the blackened surface of the prairie. What they felt was the inner uneasiness of spirit that the promise they had made three years before had been, if not broken, at least not lived out as it might have been. In Malcom's heart as he said to Dorothy, "I will," there was a distinct uncertainty of feeling. There was a lack of spontaneous joy at his action which he knew well enough meant that somewhere he had not been true to the

best that was in him. Nevertheless in the morning he wrote the letter in answer to the editor, accepting the position and asking him to give him time to sever his relations with the church, etc.

He took the letter and went out early after breakfast to mail it. He would hand in his resignation at the weekday church meeting and write to the super intendent later in the day.

He was thinking it all over as he neared the main stret, when a farm wagon drove up noisily and stopped

"Oh. Mr. Kirk, will you come right out to 'The Forks' with me? Phil is in a terrible way and has been calling for you all night!"

It was Mrs. Barton, and her thin, eager face looked down at Malcom as she sat there looking at him anxiously.

Into Malcom Kirk's heart there came a distinct shock, almost as if he had been detected in doing a selfish thing. Here again was this appeal for help coming at a time when it seemed to him as if the burden he was carrying was too great for him.

He looked up at Mrs. Barton.

"Why, certainly, I'll go right out with you," he said, every instinct of belpfulness in him rising and going out toward the cry for help.

Just then Carver came walking by. Kirk had the letter he was going to post in his hand.

"Say, Carver, will you mail this letter for me as you go by the office?" Malcom asked, and Carver engerly took the letter, more than wilking to do Mr. Kirk a favor.

Malcom at once got up into the wagon with Mrs. Barton, and they drove out of town rapidly. Carver stood watching them a moment, then he turned and went on down the street. At the first saloon he hesitated, but finally went in. Before noon he had of his sight the picture of Dorothy and gone into three or four different saloons that lay between him and the postoffice, and the letter remained in his pocket forgotten.

On their way to "The Forks" Malcom learned from Mrs. Barton that while Philip was on his back, unable to leave his bed, one of the farmer boys living on the next ranch had brought out several bottles of whisky and smuggled them into the house. The result was that young Barton was having delirium tremens while in the terrible condition caused by his de bauch at the time of the great fire-His mother had spent a fearful night with him, and at last, desperate and heartbroken, dry eyed, but weeping her blood away within, she had come into town for Kirk.

"It is all of the devil, this drink business," grouned Malcom as he went into the house and into the room where Phil Barton lay.

Never in all his life had Malcom Kirk seen such a sight. Barton knew him as he came in, and he spoke his name. Then he began to curse in the most awful manner. . The lower part of his body was paralyzed, but his arms moved incessantly, and his head rolled back and forth on the bed while he called on all hell to blast every living creature on earth.

Malcom put Mrs. Barton out of the room and shut the door. Then for three hours he spent the most trying period he had ever known by the side of a suffering and sinful human being. At the end of that time Barton lay quiet, and Malcom was weak and trembling, wet with perspiration and unnerved as if he had been facing as Malcom went to tell Mrs. Barton 20, and subscribers should indicate that Philip was sleeping. She had not been able to find any physician when she had gone in that morning and had left word for one to come out.

"What is going to become of my boy, Mr. Kirk?" Mrs. Barton asked as he was getting into the doctor's buggy to go back with him.

Malcom had not the heart to say anything at first. In his soul a profound horror and a divine indignation against the saloon greater than he had ever known had risen.

At last he said: "Mrs. Barton, I hope to live to see the day when your boy will not be near this temptation. The saloon and all it represents is an ene my of mankind. We will not cease to work and pray and suffer until the curse of it is removed from our life as a state." For the time he had forgotten he was going away.

"Promise me, Mr. Kirk, that you will do what you can for Phil. There's no one living he thinks so much of. You saved his life. Save his soul too. Don't give him we will you, Mr. Kirk?"

Malcon to inbled. How could be tell this wretched, heartbroken woman, living in that desolate, ruined home, that he had already made his plan to leave Conrad. She clung to him as the largest and only hope for her boy that she knew. What could be say to her?

The doctor, who had been listening sympathetically, but in silence, had gathered up his reins, and the horses impatiently made a movement to start, and still Malcom Kirk said nothing.

"I know you won't give him up, Mr. Kirk. If you don't save him, no one else will. Don't you think he's worth saving?" She stood by the buggy and laid her

thin, worn hand on Malcom's arm. As he looked at it he thought of some old verses he had read while in the seminary about a mother's hands: Not all the ladies in all the lands,

With riches and titles and fame, Could beast of such beautiful, shapely hands As one that I could name. Her hands were without a jeweled ring.

And the fingers were thin and old. But a baby's fingers would round them cling. More precious than solid gold.

My mother has passed this earth away, To the land where death cannot be, But I'll never forget her as she lay, Hands clasped in prayer for ma.

They were old verses that some one had translated hastily from a German text, but Malcom remembered them, and they came to him vividly just now. "Of course I believe he is worth saying," said Malcom.

Mrs. Barton looked up to him again appealingly. You won't give him up, will you?"

"No; I won't give him up," replied

Malcom, but he hardly seemed to realize what the words meant. Was he not planning to go away from all this burden bearing? Had be not already written the letter accepting the place where he would be free to use his pen without this constant struggle to help the lives of others in this personal contact with

[TO BE CONTINUED NEXT WEEK.]

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Bar out the cigarette.

-Philadelphia North American.

The Lasting Effort. Sandy Pikes-Yer don't look well dis mornin', Billy.

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MODELING BRINGS MONEY.

Utilitarianism in Art Has of Late Been Receiving Confderable Attention.

The pursuit of art for its own sake is commendable in women. It is perhaps more commendable when to the furtherance of art ideals is added the earning of money with which to "keep the pot boiling." Of late, says an art authority, many of the women students of art, both east and west, who are specializing in clay modeling pay much attention to the commercial end of the work. Greek statues and renaissance friezes may be a more inspiring form of art and necessary for training and cultivation, out a model of a pair of andirons or candlesticks, a section of mantel or any other bit of house furnishing or finishing that will attract the attention of a manufacturer is more profitable from a money viewpoint.

Such models usually are shown at the public exhibitions of the art schools, and manufacturers on · lookout for new and original designs are willing to pay well for anything that appeals to their liking and that in their judgment, would sell well Besides the money that this warsaction puts into the pocket and hope that it inspires in the student it oft leads to more numerous orders and establishes a connection which is high. ly profitable, if making immediate money is a necessity at the end of the course.

DOG MAIL CARRIER.

The Sagacious Animal Watts for the Train and Takes Charge of Mailbag.

Out in Kansas, where so many things are different, there is a big St. Bernard mail carrier. He lives in one of the little "cross roads" towns where the only store, which is also the post office, is 30 rods from the railroad track. The train, says the Detroit Pree Press, always goes whizzing by at a good rate of speed, whistling as it approaches. Nep hears the whistle and hurries to the crossing and waits for the coming of the mail. The mail clerk kicks the leather bag out of the door and it falls somewhere in the vicinity of the road. Nep at once goes to the sack, and carefully taking it by the middle, so that neither end will drag on the ground, walks sedately to the store, where he deposits his burden in a safe place.

He does this every day, in spite of the weather, and the whole country knows and is proud of the dog mail Nep is four years old, is two feet

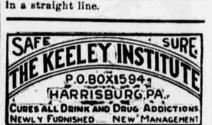
seven inches in height, and weighs 250 pounds. He has no difficulty in carryirg the sack, though the mail is often very heavy with the weekly papers from the county seat, for his teeth are strong and he has carried over 100pounds as a test of his strength.

Tommy Atkins Unhersed.

In one of the scrimmages before Ladyemith, various sections of infantry had been slapping away for some time at the Boer trenches, when it was decided to send forward a detachment of Dundonald's cavalry to try to head off a band of moving Boers. As the horsemen galloped past the infantry men, one lost his seat. The fallen rider -an Irishman-pulled himself together and chased his mount. As he ran past the infantry lines, the "Tommies" jeered at his undignified position. Paddy halted for a second. "Yes, ye may laugh, bhoys," he said, "for sure Oi'm nothin' but a common foot soldier now!"

Bees Have Keen Eyes.

Bees are said to see an enormou distance. When absent from their hive they go up in the air till they see their home, and then fly toward it



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