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Selected Story. DONALD'S WIFE.

When Donald McKeon married his ward, Jessie Sumner, many of his friends said he had made a mistake.

She was a merry, laughing girl of eighteen, fresh from school; and he, her father's old friend, a quiet, self-contained man of thirty-five, and it can scarcely be wondered that at many wise heads were shaken over the ill-assorted match.

Jessie had always stood a little in awe of the quiet, stern man, who had been a frequent visitor at her father's house during his lifetime.

But she was quite unprovided for and Donald McKeon was wealthy; and when he asked her to be his wife in a matter-of-fact way, very much as he might have asked her to be his house-keeper, it seemed the easiest way to solve the troublesome problem of her life; and besides this, she knew her father to have been under obligations to him, and more than suspected that in three years she had spent at a fashionable school since her father's death had been at his expense.

And so they were married, and he took her to the old home, and his family had owned and occupied for generations.

It was quite a stately house, surrounded by handsome, old-fashioned grounds. But a little time ago it had been quite on the suburbs, but the city had reached out ever-encroaching arms until now it was surrounded by stately rows of brown stone and glaring new bricks.

But in spite of its great, handsomely-furnished rooms, its stores of plate and fine linen, and the bright, old-fashioned garden at the back, it seemed a dreary prison to the laughter-loving girl-wife.

Mr. McKeon had done what he could to brighten the old rooms, and had built a large conservatory, knowing that Jessie was fond of flowers, and she might have been quite happy had he known more of the ways and needs of women.

But he had always been devoted to business, caring little for the society of women, and knowing little of them, except the grim, old spinster aunt who had presided over his house since his mother's death, until he brought his young wife home.

It never occurred to him that it was a dreary sort of life for a girl like Jessie, alone in the gloomy old house all day, with only the servants and the ghosts of bygone generations for company.

And when she grew pale and listless, and lost her old elasticity of spirits, a fear that had haunted him since his wedding day took possession of him and poisoned his life—a fear that she had married him for home and position and already regretted her choice.

And then people began to discover that Mrs. McKeon was a very charming woman, and her husband a wealthy and influential man, and invitations began to pour in upon her.

And Jessie plunged into this new life of fashionable dissipation with a zest that was the natural reaction from the gloom and loneliness of the past year.

She spoke cruel, stinging words, that rankled and hurt him the more that he had learned to love her so dearly, as only reserved, self-contained men such as he can love, and then only when they heard all the treasures of their nature to lavish it in the middle life on the one woman who is their fate.

After that he opposed her in nothing, but it was through a great wall of ice had risen between them.

He devoted himself to business, and she became the acknowledged leader of the most exclusive circle in the city.

She was madly extravagant. She made the old house a marvel of aesthetic beauty, and entertained like a princess.

Mrs. McKeon's toilets, jewels and dinners became the models for her set.

Men worshiped her beauty; but for all their flatteries she had the same smile of cold contempt, and no man was bold enough to venture beyond the merest commonplace.

And so the years passed, and each one drifted them farther apart, until they seldom met, except at their own grand entertainments.

Each year she become more the slave of fashion, and he of his office. But through it all he loved her with an undying love, and his one thought was to gratify her every whim.

And when the dark days came—when ships that were sent out freighted with costly wares went down and were heard of no more—when houses that seemed stable as granite failed, and his wealth seemed melting away like a snow-wreath, his only thought was for her; and thought each day his hair grew whiter, and his form grew stooped with bending over the long columns of figures in which the balance was always on the wrong side he whispered, "For her sake," and struggled on and denied her nothing.

And even on the day when he came home, knowing that all his efforts had availed him nothing and he was a poor man, his only regret was for her, that he would never more be able to give her the things for which she had bartered so much.

He went into the grand, old library, which was almost the only room in the house that remained unchanged, and tried to collect his thoughts. How would he tell her? Was the question that reiterated itself through his brain, and for the first time in his life Donald McKeon was a coward.

The thought came to him of how she had chafed at her bonds when they were gilded with money, the closer relations a straitened income would entail.

And he resolved that this at least he would spare her. After all his obligations were met there would be something left, not more than she had often lavished on one dinner, perhaps, but still enough to keep her from absolute want. Jessie should have this, and he would go away and work for her and dream of her, but never again trouble her with his presence.

He sat down and wrote a letter, telling her this simply, directly, and with the great love he bore her breathing through every word.

The servant had told him she would not be in for some time, and he took the note himself up to her room.

He played on, and gradually the burden was lifted. Music gave him the comfort she ever gives to those who truly love her. It was no longer a wail of despair, but a pean of thanksgiving for victory gained.

So absorbed was he that he did not hear a soft footstep enter the room. A hand was laid on his shoulder, and a tremulous voice said:

"Donald."

His hand came down with a sudden discord on the keys. It was the first time Jessie had ever called him by that name.

He turned and saw her standing there in her dressing-gown of soft cashmere. The firelight was sending long rays down the stately gloom of the library, and she looked very beautiful against the rosy background.

"You read my letter, Jessie?" "Yes; and I am sorry for your sake, Donald; you have worked so hard for your wealth."

"Do not think of me, Jessie. It is not for myself I care. I am not afraid of poverty. But, oh, my child, if I could save you from this! If it were at the sacrifice of my own life, as heaven is my witness, I would not spare it!"

She came close to him and laid her hands in his.

"Donald, there is a better thing you can give me than wealth can buy. Give me back the love I so madly threw away. Let me work with you and help you, and I will bless the day that made us poor!"

"Jessie," he said, "are you sure of this? Do not try to deceive me. Do not say it if it is not true. I could go away now and learn to bear it, but to open my heart to this new hope and then find I was mistaken would kill me!"

"Donald, do you think I am made of stone—that I could know all your kindness and patience all these years, and not learn to love you? Oh, so often I have longed to kneel at your feet and ask your forgiveness, but I believed I had forfeited your love by my folly."

"And you will not regret the loss of wealth and luxury?" he said, incredulously, "and can be happy with only my love?" "You forget papa and I were poor before I married you, Donald, and I was happier in those old days than I have ever been since I learned to hate the things that cost me so much, and envy the poorest woman happy in her husband's love."

He turned the sweet, tear-wet face to the firelight, and bent down and looked into her eyes. And then he took her close in his arms. "My darling—oh, my darling!" he said, softly.

And in their hearts there was a gladness that all the treasures of the world could not buy.

Miscellaneous. THE PATRIOTIC WIDOW OF THE CONGAREE. BY BENSON J. LOSSING, LL. D. I was at Fort Motte Station, near the Congaree River, in South Carolina, on a bright frosty morning in January, 1849.

You know, was Marion's right-hand man when hunting Tories. He stuttered when hurried. Comin' suddenly on a Tory camp, one night, he wanted to tell us to fire quick. He said, "Fi—fi—fi—fi—Shoot, darn ye!" and we blazed away in the dark.

"Why was this called Fort Motte?" I inquired.

"Bless your soul!" said the old soldier with animation. "Don't you know Becky Motte lived here? Mighty plucky woman was Becky Motte. A purty woman too; as purty as a picture, though she was well-nigh forty year old, and had a darter married to General Pinckney. She was a Charleston lady, and this was her best country house, a healthy place. The British drove Becky and her little darters out of her house, dug a big ditch all around it, piled up a high bank of dirt around the edge of the ditch, and so made a fort of it; a purty strong fortagin muskets and rifles. It was a nice house, but not so fine as Mr. Love's which Becky built right away after the war. I helped draw timber to build it."

"The British drove Mrs. Motte and her family out of her house, did they? Where did they go?" I asked.

"To her overseer's on yonder hill," he replied. "Becky was a rich widdier; lost her husband early in the war, and lived here in the summer. At that farm-house she showed real grit that made us all feel as if we could willingly die for her; yes, die for her."

"How did she show grit?" I asked, as I seated myself on the log by the side of the veteran.

"Well, you see," said the old patriot, as his voice waxed stronger by the stimulus of vivid recollections, "they had her house, and five hundred red-coats were in and around it. Leftenant-Colonel Lee—Legion Harry, you know—a dashing young trooper only twenty-five year old, had joined us with his light-horsemen, and we all pushed forward, horse and foot, for this place to drive off the Britishers. That very mornin' some troopers from Charleston come to the fort with dispatches for Lord Rawdon at Camden. They were about to leave, when we appeared at Becky's farm-house. They were skered and didn't go. Lee had a little six-pounder, which he placed in battery on the knoll yonder. The red-coats had no artillery; and so we had 'em we reckoned."

"Who were Lee's troopers?" I asked.

"Mostly young Virginians, I reckon, ready to go wherever his country needed brave men. He was a handsome young man, with large black eyes and brown hair. The gay uniform of his men made the homespun clothes of Marion's brigade look meaner than ever. But we had the grit as well as they."

"How did you take the fort with only that little field piece?" I inquired.

"Lee dismounted his troopers, led 'em into a narrow hollow up to a shop way from the fort, and with the help of some negroes, began to dig toward it, and throw up breast-works, while we took post at the field-piece to defend it in case the red-coats should come out and attack us. They were ordered to surrender. They said they wouldn't. Just then we heard that Rawdon was retreating from Camden, and had sent troops to join the garrison at Fort Motte. That very night their camp fires were seen on a hill not far away. The sight made us lively, I tell ye. Something must be done quickly. To batter down their works with our baby cannon, or reach them by digging trenches, would take too much time. But Lee was up to anything.

"We must burn 'em out," he said.

"The shingles on the house were dry as tinder, for the sunshine was hot on that day at the middle of May. 'I can send fire to 'em with arrows,' said Lee, 'and they'll blaze in a minute.' But he didn't like to do it. Becky Motte was his friend, her son-in-law was his friend; but his thoughts of his country first, and his friends afterwards. When he mentioned it to Becky, the plucky woman clapped her hands, and said,

Good! good! Do it if you can. Burn the house if they won't surrender! Wasn't that real grit—real patriotism?"

"Lee sent another order for the red-coats to surrender. They knew help was nigh, and they wouldn't do it. 'Have you a man who can shoot straight with a bow and arrow?' he asked Marion. 'Yes,' the General said: 'Nathan Savage is as good a shot as any Indian.'"

"A bow an arrows were quickly made and taken to Lee's headquarters at the farm-house, with Nathan. He tried the bow, and said, 'It ain't strong enough.' 'Here darter,' said Becky to her youngest, who married Colonel Alston, 'run and git the Indian bow and arrows.' Turpentine torches were fastened to two or three of the arrows, and Nathan sent them like blazing stars straight to the roof. The shingles smoked, and we hurrahed. They blazed, and we shouted. The red-coats ran up, and began to knock off the burning shingles. Shots from the six-pounder raked the loft, and sent Britishers scamp'ring pell-mell below. Purty soon a white flag was seen waving, and at noon we had 'em; the red coats were all our prisoners. Warn't we happy fellers! I didn't mind the bullet hole in my arm a bit, jist then. Becky Motte, plucky Becky Motte, was as happy as any of us, though her fine house was in ruins. She invited the British officers, as well as ours, to her farm-house to lunch; and, perfect lady as she was everywhere, she was as purlike to her country's enemies as to its friends.

"While we were at the table," continued the old soldier, "word came to our general that some of his men were 'amusin' themselves by hanging Tories. Marion hurried out, and, with his drawn sword, ran to the spot in time to save the life of one of 'em. It was Tom Cunningham, who died at Kingstree last year. The general threatened to kill any man who should attempt to harm another prisoner. A just man, a brave man, a Christian man, was General Marion."

When the venerable soldier had finished his narrative, I strolled to the mansion of Mr. Love, where I spent several hours very pleasantly. He said the narrator was a worthy pensioner, and a man of truth; and the traditions of the country and official reports were in general agreement with his story of the capture of Fort Motte by Lee and Marion. I wrote the old soldier's name on a scrap of paper, soon lost it, and have been unable to recall it.—S. S. Times.

A WHISKEY TRAGEDY. THE TERRIBLE RESULT OF THE SPIRIT OF A YOUNG CIVIL ENGINEER. From the City of Mexico Two Republics.

A terribly sad and tragic event occurred at Acambaro, in the State of Michoacan, the present terminus of the Mexican National Railway. A number of men were seated at the supper table in the Hotel Diligence, a place frequented by railroad men whose business called them there, when Mr. F. V. Syberg, a man about 28 years of age, employed as civil engineer by the Mexican National road, entered the room, greatly under the influence of liquor. He walked up to one of the men at the table and in a few moments there was a violent dispute between the two over some trivial matter. It ended in Syberg's exclaiming: "I'll shoot you!"

Seated at another table close at hand was a young man named R. B. McCabe, who was in the employment of the road as a line repairer. He had strapped to his belt a pistol in its holster. Syberg, at the time of making his threat to shoot, was unarmed, but noticing McCabe, who was a friend of his, close at hand with a pistol in sight, he rushed over to him and attempted to snatch it from his holster in order to shoot the other man. McCabe, who was perfectly sober, jumped to his feet, clapped his hands to his weapon and exclaimed: "Leave that alone, sir; I don't allow any man—I don't care if he is my best friend—to take my pistol from his holster!"

This action on McCabe's part both surprised and angered Syberg, who thereupon lost all thought of the original quarrel, and, turning on McCabe, administered to him a terrible tongue-lashing. McCabe is reported to have stood the same for some time, and then to have got up and started for his room at the depot. Syberg followed him toward the house, and McCabe said: "Go away, and don't bother me any more. I don't want to hurt you, because I know you'll regret this when you sober up."

In spite of all entreaties, however, Syberg persisted in his abuse, and had followed McCabe to the door of the latter's room in a menacing manner, when McCabe turned on him and gave him a terrible blow on the nose with his fist, which knocked him to the floor. Syberg arose bleeding and rushed out of the room. In a few minutes he returned with his pistol in his hand. McCabe saw him coming, however, and jumping into his room slammed the door and got behind, so as to keep Syberg out.

Syberg gave the door a couple of shoves, and finding that he could not make it yield he drew back, aimed his pistol at the door, and deliberately fired five shots through it. He then ran to the entrance of the depot, and stopped to see what had been the effect of his shots. In a second McCabe opened the door of his room and staggered out, bleeding profusely from wounds in his abdomen—each of the five shots having taken effect. In his hand he held a cocked revolver.

"Boys," he gasped, "I'm shot; I'll be a dead man inside of five minutes, but I'm going to kill the man who shot me." Syberg seemed to fully comprehend the situation then for the first time, and he started from the door into the open air. McCabe caught sight of him as he went out the door, and apparently endowed with superhuman strength he started on a run after his fleeing assailant. He ran about five hundred feet swiftly, and was within ten yards of the fleeing man, when he pulled up short, took deliberate aim and fired. The ball struck Syberg in the back of the head and came out of his mouth, breaking his jawbone. The moment he was struck Syberg staggered forward and fell bleeding to the ground. McCabe rushed to him, grabbed him by the hair, turned him face up, and then, with the glaring, glassy eyeballs of the dying man, gazing into his own pale face, on which the seal of death had already set, he placed the muzzle of his pistol against the marble forehead and blew the whole top of Syberg's head off. Then pointing the pistol to the breast of his fallen, and, by this time, dead assailant, he fired the remaining three charges of his pistol into the body. The last shot had been fired—McCabe stood for one moment upon the horrible scene—its terrible reality appeared to fill his mind for the moment—he started back—his useless weapon fell from his hand—his senses reeled—he staggered a few steps, the death mist gathered over his eyes, he reeled and then just as the horrified spectators came rushing to the scene, he fell, and to the friend who knelt by his side, he whispered in his dying breath: "I'm sorry, Jim, for this—I didn't want to do it—I didn't want to kill him—I—I"—the gasps grew greater—the whispered words were hard to catch—"I couldn't help it, Jim—'twas he shot me and I had to do it; telegraph to the folks at home, Jim—its hard to die this way, Jim, and I'm very sorry it happened," 'twas he shot me and I had to do it; the whisper, low though it was, ceased—the head fell back—the glassy eyes took on the cold fixed stare of death—the avenger had followed his poor insane assailant on his journey into the dark impenetrable beyond.

Mr. Syberg, when sober, was deemed one of the best-natured fellows of the road—kind, civil, obliging in every way and thoroughly competent, he was everywhere esteemed. He was originally from Little Rock, Ark., where his father, who is a civil engineer, now resides. Mr. McCabe was at one time a resident of Pennsylvania, but prior to coming to Mexico he lived in a town near Rochester, N. Y. He was a sober, industrious young man, and was much esteemed.

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