

# PARROT & CO

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*The Place of Honeymoons*, etc.

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CHAPTER XX.

He That Was Dead.

"Yes, it is I, the unlucky penny; Old Galahad, in flesh and blood and bone. I shouldn't get white over it, Arthur. It isn't worth while. I can see that you haven't changed much, unless it is that your hair is a little paler at the temples. Gray? I'll wager I've a few myself." There was a flippancy in his tone that astonished Warrington's own ears, for certainly this light mockery did not come from within. At heart he was sober enough.

To steady the thundering beat of his pulse he crossed the room, righted the chair, stacked the books and laid them on the desk. Arthur did not move save to turn his head and to follow with fascinated gaze his brother's movements.

"Now, Arthur, I've only a little while. I can see by your eyes that you are conjuring up all sorts of terrible things. But nothing is going to happen. I am going to talk to you; then I'm going away; and tomorrow it will be easy to convince yourself that you have seen only a ghost. Sit down. I'll take this chair at the left."

Arthur's hands slid from the desk; in a kind of collapse he sat down. Suddenly he laid his head upon his arms, and a great sigh sent its tremor across his shoulders. Warrington felt his heart swell. The past faded away; his wrongs became vapors. He saw only his brother, the boy he had loved so devotedly, Arty, his other self, his scholarly other self. Why blame Arthur? He, Paul, was the fool.

"Don't take it like that, Arty," he said.

The other's hand stretched out blindly toward the voice. "Ah, great God, Paul!"

"I know! Perhaps I've brooded too much." Warrington crushed the hand in his two strong ones. "The main fault was mine. I couldn't see the length of my nose. I threw a temptation in your way which none but a demigod could have resisted. That night, when I got your note telling me what you had done, I did a damnably foolish thing. I went to the club bar and drank heavily. I was wild to help you, but I couldn't see how. At two in the morning I thought I saw the way. Drunken men get strange ideas into their heads. You were the apple of the mother's eyes; I was only her son. No use denying it. She worshiped you; tolerated me. I came back to the house, packed up what I absolutely needed, and took the first train west. It all depended upon what you'd do. You let me go, Arty, old boy. I suppose you were pretty well knocked up, when you learned what I had done. And then you let things drift. It was only natural. I had opened the way for you. Mother, learning that I was a thief, restored the defalcation to save the family honor, which was your future. We were always more or less hard pressed for funds. I did not gamble, but I wasted a lot."

The hand in his relaxed and slipped from the clasp.

"Some of these things will sound bitter, but the heart behind them isn't. So I did what I thought to be a great and glorious thing. I was sober when I reached Chicago. I saw my deed from another angle. Think of it; we could have given our joint note to mother's bank for the amount. Old Henderson would have discounted it in a second. It was too late. I went on. The few hundreds I had gave out. I've been up against it pretty hard. There were times when I envied the pariah dog. But fortune came around one day, knocked, and I let her in. I returned to make a restitution, only to learn that it had been made by you, long ago. A trick of young Elmore's. I shouldn't have come back if I could have sent the money."

Arthur raised his head and sat up. "Ah, why did you not write? Why did you not let me know where you were? God is my witness, if there is a corner of this world unsearched for you. For two years I had a man hunting. He gave up. I believed you dead."

"Dead? Well, I was in a sense."

"You have suffered, but not as I have. Always you had before you your great, splendid, foolish sacrifice. I had nothing to buoy me up; there was only the drag of the recollection of an evil deed, and a moment of pitiful weakness. The temptation was too great, Paul."

"How did it happen?"

"How does anything like that happen? Curiosity drew me first, for at college I never played but a few games of bridge. Curiosity, desire, then the

full blaze of the passion. You will never know what that is, Paul. It is stronger than love, or faith, or honor. God knows I never thought myself weak; at school I was the least impetuous of the two. Everything went, and they cheated me from the start. Roulette and faro. Then I put my hand in the safe. To this day I cannot tell why. I owed nothing to those despicable thieves, Craig least of all."

"Craig. I met him over there. Pummeled him."

"I didn't act like a man. Some day a comfortable fortune would fall to the lot of each of us. But I took eight thousand, lost it, and came whining to you. You don't belong to this petty age, Paul. You ought to have been a fellow of the round table." Arthur smiled wanly. "To throw your life away like that, for a brother who wasn't fit to lace your shoes! If you had written you would have learned that everything was smoothed over. The Andes people dropped the matter entirely. You loved the mother far better than I."

"And she must never know," quietly.

"Do you mean that?"

"I always mean everything I say, Arty. Can't you see the uselessness of telling her now? She has gone all these years with the belief that I am a thief. A thief, Arty, I, who never stole anything save a farmer's apples. They would have called you a defaulter; that's because you had access to the safe, whereas I had none." Arthur winced. "I don't propose to disillusion the mother. I am strong enough to go away without seeing her; and God knows how my heart yearns, and my ears and eyes and arms."

Warrington reached mechanically for the portrait in the silver frame, but Arthur stayed his hand.

"No, Paul; that is mine."

Warrington dropped his hand, puzzled. "I was not going to destroy it," ironically.

"No; but in a sense you have destroyed me. Compensation. What trifling thought most of us give that word! The law of compensation. For ten years Elsa has been the flower of the corn for me. She almost loved me. And one day she sees you; and in that one day all that I had gained was lost, and all that you had lost was gained. The law of compensation. Sometimes we escape retribution, but never the law of compensation. Some months ago she wrote me a letter. She was always direct. It was a just letter."

A pause. Arthur gazed steadily at the portrait, while Warrington twisted his yellow beard.

"The ways of mothers are mysterious," said the latter, finally. He wondered if Arthur would confess to the blacker deed, or have it forced from him. He would wait and see. "The father and the mother weren't happy. Money. There's the wedge. It's in every life somewhere. A marriage of convenience is an unwise thing. When we were born the mother turned to us. Up to the time we were six or seven there was no distinction in her love for us. But on the day the father set his choice upon me, she set hers upon you. You'll never know how I suffered as a boy, when I saw the distance growing wider and wider with the years. Perhaps the father understood, for he was always kind and gentle to me. I expect to return to China shortly. The Andes has taken me back. Sounds like a fairy tale; eh? I shall never return here. But did you know who Elsa Chetwood was?"

"Not until that letter came."

Neither of them heard the faint gasp which came from behind the portieres dividing the study and the living room. The gasp had followed the invisible knife-thrusts of these confidences. The woman behind those portieres swayed and caught blindly at the jamb. With cruel vividness she saw in this terrible moment all that to which she had never given more than a passing thought. No reproaches; only a simple declaration of what had burned in this boy's heart. And she had almost forgotten this son. A species of paralysis laid hold of her, leaving her for the time incapable of movement.

She heard the deep voice of this other son say: "Lots of kinks in life. There is only one law that I shall lay down for you, Arty. You must give up all idea of marrying Elsa Chetwood."

"It will be easy to obey that. Are you playing with me, Paul?"

"Playing?" echoed Warrington.

"Yes. Do you mean to sit there and tell me that you don't know why I shall never marry her?"

Arthur read the truth in his broth-

er's eyes. He smiled weakly, the anger gone. "Same old blind duffer you always were. I wrote an answer to her letter. In that letter I told her . . . the truth."

"You did that?"

"I am your brother, Paul. I couldn't be a cad as well as a thief. Yes, I told her. I told her more, what you never knew. I let Craig believe that I was you, Paul. I wore your clothes, your scarfpins, your hats. In that I was a black villain God! What a hell I lived in. . . . Ah, mother!" Arthur dropped his head upon his arms again. "Paul, my son!"

It was Warrington's chair that toppled over. Framed in the portieres stood his mother, white-haired, pale but as beautiful as of old.

"I am sorry. I had hoped to get away without you knowing."

"Why?"

"Oh, because there wasn't any use of my coming at all. I'd passed out of your life, and I should have stayed out. Don't worry. I've got everything mapped out. There's a train at midnight."

Arthur stood up. "Mother, I am the guilty man. I was the thief. All these years I've let you believe that Paul had taken the money. . . ."

"Yes, yes!" she interrupted, never taking her eyes off this other son. "I heard everything behind these curtains. You were going away, Paul, without seeing me?"

"What was the use of stirring up old matters? Of bringing confusion into this house?" He did not look at her. He could not tell her that he now knew what had drawn him hither, that all along he had deceived himself.

"Paul, my son, I have been a wicked woman."

"Why, mother, you mustn't talk like that!"

"Wicked! My son, my silent, kindly, chivalric boy, will you forgive your mother? Your unnatural mother?"

He caught her before her knees touched the floor; and, ah! how hungrily her arms wound about him.

"What's the use of lying?" he cried brokenly. "My mother! I wanted to hear your voice and feel your arms. You don't know how I have always loved you. It was a long time, a very long time. Perhaps I was to be blamed. I was proud, and kept away from you. Don't cry. There, there! I can go away now, happy." Over his mother's shoulders, now moving with silent stabbing sobs, he held out his hand to his brother. Presently, above the two bowed heads, Warrington's own rose, transfigured with happiness.

The hall door opened and closed, but none of them regarded it.

By and by the mother stood away, but within arm's length. "How big and strong you have grown, Paul!"

"In heart, too, mother," added Arthur. "Old Galahad!"

"You must never leave us again, Paul. Promise."

"May I always come back?"

"Always!" And she took his hand and pressed it tightly against her cheek. "Always! Ah, your poor blind mother!"

"Always to come back! . . . I am going to China in a little while, to take up the work I have always loved, the building of bridges."

"And I am going, too!" It was Elsa, at her journey's end.

Jealous love is keen of eye. There was death in Arthur's heart, but he smiled at her. After all, what was more logical than that she should appear at this moment? Why sip the cup when it might be drained at once, over with and done with?

"Elsa!" said the mother, holding Warrington's hand in closer grasp. "Yes, mother. Ah, why did you not tell me all?"

Arthur walked to the long window that opened out upon the garden. There, for a moment, he paused, then passed from the room.

"Go to him, mother," said Elsa, wisely and with pity.

The mother hesitated, pulled by the old and the new love, by the fear that the new-found could be hers but a little while. Slowly she let Paul's hand fall, and slower still she followed Arthur's footsteps.

"I wasn't quite brave enough," he said, when she found him. "They love. And love me well, mother, for I am the broken man."

She pressed his head against her heart. "My boy!" But her glance was leveled at the amber-tinted window through which she had come.

To Warrington, Elsa was a little thinner, and of color there was none; but her eyes shone with all the splendor of the oriental stars at which he had so often gazed with mute inquiry. "Galahad!" she said, and smiled. "Well, what have you to say?"

"I? In God's name, what can I say but that I love you?"

"Well, say it, and stop the ache in my heart! Say it, and make me forget the weary eighteen thousand miles I have journeyed to find you! Say it and hold me close for I am tired! . . . Listen!" she whispered, lifting her head from his shoulder.

From out the stillness of the summer night came a jarring note, the eternal protest of Rajah.

THE END.

## Temperance

(Conducted by the National Woman's Christian Temperance Union.)

### A RECENT CONVERT.

The announcement of his conversion to prohibition was made at exercises at the Franklin union in Boston by ex-Governor Foss, who has been three times elected chief executive of the state of Massachusetts.

"I have been thinking that it's about time for me to stop voting for the licensed saloon," said Mr. Foss. "So long as I make it a rule to have my superintendents and foremen discharge men who are addicted to liquor, how inconsistent it is for me to support an open saloon near my manufacturing establishment, where the men have to go back and forth two or three times a day."

"This question of prohibition is a very large one. It may be the most important social, political and moral question of today. Certainly it is an economic question. From an economic viewpoint, why shouldn't we have national prohibition?"

Abraham Lincoln said: "You can't have a nation half slave and half free. We can't have a nation half wet and half dry. It is impossible perfectly to enforce prohibition in a state surrounded by liquor states."

"I believe national prohibition is in the interest of public health. In my three years as governor of Massachusetts I saw 20,000 or more people locked up in this state and \$5,000,000 a year appropriated for their support. They were there on account of liquor, mainly. It is ridiculous to stand in the way of this movement. The large cities get a comparatively small fund from licenses. Aside from every other consideration, economically, we here in America must come to national prohibition."

### PANAMA-PACIFIC EXHIBIT.

The per capita consumption of alcoholic liquor in non-prohibition Wisconsin and prohibition Kansas is shown at the exhibit of the National Woman's Christian Temperance union at the Panama-Pacific exposition. A hoghead having a sixty-four gallon capacity represents the amount of liquor consumed per capita in Wisconsin, and a tiny keg represents the amount used in Kansas.

The large bronze Japanese bell in this exhibit reminds one of the thousands of men who, giving up the habit of smoking, contributed their pipes to make this bell to commemorate the work of Mary Allen West, a W. C. T. U. missionary to Japan.

The boys are interested in "Prosperity Statistics," showing, for instance, that there are twenty automobiles to every one hundred farmers in dry Kansas, while there is only one to every one hundred farmers in wet Missouri.

The famous Polyglot petition, containing 7,000,000 signatures, which was originated by Frances E. Willard and has been presented to several countries, is of historic value.

### NORTH DAKOTA DEVELOPMENT.

Many interesting facts are being brought out concerning the states that have been under prohibitory laws for some years, that they may help and encourage other states that are now meeting the wet or dry issue and that will at coming elections have the question to decide. The 1910 census shows that prosperous development along all lines in North Dakota is startling.

Not only did the population increase 80 per cent in the decade from 1900 to 1910, but her wealth increased 281.9 per cent, or from \$225,166,751 in 1900 to \$76,814,205 in 1910; the value of farm products increased 211 per cent, or from \$64,252,000 in 1900 to \$220,000,000 in 1910. Its live stock increased in value in the same period 155 per cent, probably a larger increase than any other state. The crops increased 234.4 per cent, or from \$53,911,419 in 1900 to \$180,279,872 in 1910, a percentage exceeded by no other state. North Dakota's agricultural wealth is greater than that of the seven combined New England states. Her bank deposits from 1898 to 1913 increased by more than 1,000 per cent.

### THE BETTER RISK.

"How the use of alcohol shortens life" was one of the interesting features of the discussion recently before the Association of Life Insurance Presidents at the Hotel Astor, New York. Mr. Arthur Hunter, chairman of a committee which studied the cases of 2,000,000 policy-holders in an investigation for 43 life insurance companies into the causes of premature deaths, said that alcohol played a leading role in hastening death.

On the other hand, the Equity Life Assurance company has passed through three of its eleven years without the loss of a single life of a total abstainer, although nine-tenths of its insured lives are total abstainers.

## Summer Luncheons

in a jiffy  
Let Libby's splendid chefs relieve you of hot-weather cooking. Stock the pantry with Libby's sliced Dried Beef and the other good summer meats—including Libby's Vienna Sausage—you'll find them fresh and appetizing.



**Question of Supplies.**  
"Daisy," remarked her Sunday school teacher, "don't love your cat too much. What would you do if it died—you wouldn't see it again?"  
"Oh, yes, teacher; I should see it in heaven."  
"No, dear, you're mistaken; animals cannot go to heaven like people."  
Daisy's eyes filled with tears, but suddenly she exclaimed triumphantly, "Animals do go to heaven, for the bible says the promised land is flowing with milk and honey, and, if there are no animals, where do they get the milk!"

**The Fire Fiend.**  
Mayor Thompson of Chicago, who is advising stricter measures to prevent insurance frauds, said:  
"There are, you know, a great many business men who in their ideas about insurance are like Exe."  
"I'm afraid, father," said Exe's son, "this property isn't worth repairing any more."  
"Very well, son," said Exe. "Send, then, for Smith of the Marine and Fire company at once. Let us always bear in mind the old proverb: 'What can't be cured must be insured.'"

**Keen Rivalry.**  
"All the farmers hereabouts seem to own motor cars. I don't suppose an automobile salesman could do much business in this community."  
"Oh, yes, he could. The farmers about here have quit trying to see who can raise the finest cattle and the biggest crops. Every one of them is trying to get hold of a car with improvements the other fellows' cars don't have."

**Sympathetic.**  
Meeker—Poor man!  
Bleeker—To whom do you refer?  
Meeker—To the chap who is going to marry my former wife.  
Bleeker—But I thought he was rich.  
Meeker—So he is—poor man!

**Balancing the Scale.**  
"Isn't that song rather low?"  
"Yes, that's why I'm singing it at the top of my voice."  
Sour-faced piety seldom lands many converts.

## To Build Strong Children

Supply their growing bodies with right food, so that Brain, and Muscle, and Bone development may evenly balance.

## Grape-Nuts

FOOD  
was originated to supply, in proper proportion, the very elements required by the human body for growth and repair.

To supply children a dish of Grape-Nuts and cream for breakfast regularly, is to start them on the road to sturdy health.

"There's a Reason" for Grape-Nuts  
Sold by grocers.