

MEMORIAL DAY ADDRESS.

The Son of a Gallant Father is the Orator on Decoration Day.

An Able Address Delivered by H. H. Milroy Before a Large Audience on May 30, 1905, at the Opera House.

Veterans of the Union! Fellow Citizens! The day of the sword is fast passing away. To-day nations resort to war only when all other means of preserving peace have failed.

War brings out the best and worst passions of man; the noblest and basest. It builds up nations, it preserves them, and it destroys them.

Peace was then used as a time of preparation for war; might made right, and the strong oppressed the weak.

Europe has been the most famous battleground of the world, and to-day the nations of Europe are maintaining large standing armies, prepared for deadly conflict if occasion can be found and one dares to take advantage of the occasion.

They still govern themselves by the old maxim: "In time of peace prepare for war." This has been the actuating policy of the governments of the old world since the dawn of history.

Thanks to the wisdom of our fathers, we have no standing army to menace our liberties, coerce our ballot or to threaten the destruction of our country.

A citizen who, when his country is in danger, its very life at stake, will throw aside his trade, profession or occupation, leave home and all that is dear to him and volunteer as a soldier, has more of an incentive to fight, and fight well, than a professional soldier—a soldier in a standing army, who fights merely because he is forced to fight.

The volunteer soldier of America is a being sui generis. They are of all stations and occupations of life; the scholar and the sage; the minister and the lawyer; the merchant and the mechanic; the capitalist and the laborer—educated men and all patriotic from principle.

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the victorious Union armies swung into Pennsylvania avenue in the grandest and greatest military parade this country has ever seen, and "Old Glory" was waving over them with every star in the field.

But there is another side of the picture. There is the empty sleeve, the desolate home, the widow, the orphan, the misery and suffering that war entails, the forced marches, the bivouac in winter's snow or in the rain, the hunger, the lack of clothing and of shelter, the hospital, the prison, the battle field with its dead and dying, and the thousands of silent graves that will be decorated to-day.

I remember, when as a little child, I saw a brigade march in after months of hard service in the field, and many, if not most, of the men were in rags that the veriest tramp of to-day would not wear. I remember a hospital scene: An immense building that had been a cotton warehouse, its three stories filled with hundreds of brave soldiers, suffering from wounds or sickness, on cots close together, with but a narrow aisle between, and the hollow cheeks, the sunken eyes, the wasted limbs and the stilled groans, and, last, the sheet drawn up over the head, and all that remained of a brave man carried out to the dead room.

Yet these veterans here and their comrades in history answered death's roll call, and whose graves will be graced with flowers to-day, responded to our country's call in her hour of danger and volunteered, leaving their homes and their all, went to the front and endured the hardships of march, bivouac and battle, prison and hospital; and thousands never returned to their loved ones at home, but sleep on southern battle fields.

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THE COUNTERFEIT COIN

CHAPTER I.



I rose and opened the door. Late one Saturday afternoon in a certain December 1st by a good sea coal fire in my office, trying to muster courage enough for an encounter with the cold winds and driving storm outside.

Half ashamed to confess my cowardice to myself, I had done every unnecessary thing I could think of to kill time, till at last I was reduced to the necessity of counting over the contents of my purse. This, however, was but a brief resource.

I compared the eagle on the one side with my remembrance of such ornithological specimens as I had seen in traveling museums, and of the eagle—then solemnly believed to be of solid gold—which in my boyish days kept watch and ward over Tommy Townsend's coffee house.

A knock at the door checked the half uttered malediction, and was only repeated when I cried, "Come in!" Had spiritual rappings been invented then I might have thought that Satan, his patience exhausted by this new device, was about to foreclose the mortgage he is popularly supposed to hold on every member of our profession.

And while I had been lingering idly by my fire, dreading to face the storm, this scantily clad girl had walked all the way from her distant garret. She did not tell me that she was weary and chilled to the very heart, but I read in her pinched face, in the frown, sleek which covered her dress of faded mourning, and in the eagerness with which she drew toward the fire, as a starving man would approach food, all that she was from the storm, she had managed to cover the papers she brought from its drenching with a care which told more strongly than any words the importance to her of the trifling sum she was to receive for the copying.

This was the first time I had ever employed her—in fact I did not often find it necessary to obtain such extraneous aid in getting through my business, and the present occasion was due less to the pressure of my own occupations than to the whims of one of my best clients, who had declared that he would see me in a still worse place than Wall street before he would spend time in deciphering my legal chirography, or the school-boy potbooks and hangers of my only and very juvenile clerk.

I took the paper and ran my eye over its contents. They were written in a neat, plain hand, just stiff enough to show that the consciousness of copying for a lawyer had marred the writer's ease. As copies they were scrupulously correct and finished even to the numbering of the folios in the margin. I silently reckoned the price, and as I did it occurred to me that I could only pay it that evening by the sacrifice of my half eagle. It was in vain that once more I opened my purse, which certainly was not Fortunatus', for I found nothing more there than I had seen in it an hour before—small change of the very smallest variety. Could I put her off till Monday? Without that half eagle my Saturday night's marketing would be a very small affair.

"But what will hers be without it?" said my conscience. "If you feel the inconvenience of an empty pocket so much, what must it be to those who earn food and shelter from day to day? Daily bread is something more than a mere form of speech to them?" Perhaps a little would serve her immediate wants. Selfishness received this suggestion very approvingly, and I

turned from my reveries to the copyist to make the suggestion. She stood on the other side of the fireplace as motionless as if she had been a carved pillar placed there to support the mantel against which her shoulder rested. One foot—a neat one, even in its worn, wet shoe—peeped from beneath her dress, as if drawn irresistibly toward the grateful warmth. Indeed her whole attitude seemed to express the same feeling. She did not bend and crouch over the fire as a beggar would have done. She did not shiver before it and court its cheerful heat as if it had blazed on her own hearthstone.

Scarcely swerving from the most erect position as she leaned against the marble, her clasped hands hanging before her, she seemed to be bracing herself against an attraction that would draw her completely into the flame. I could almost fancy that, if left to itself, her slender form would be drawn closer and closer, till finally it mingled with the flickering blaze and with it passed into viewless air.

But when I lifted my eyes to her face I saw that she was at least unconsciously of the fancied impulse. Her fixed eyes and a faint smile on her lips told that some pleasant thought had beguiled her even there into a day dream. Following the direction of her gaze I saw that it rested on the same solitary coin which had been the subject of my own meditations, and which lay just where I had dropped it—on the table—when startled by her knock.

Modern critics are very fond of talking about the suggestive in art and literature. To my own mind, because it is hackneyed and worldly, I suppose they would say there is no word in the language so suggestive as money—no work of art that brings up so many and so varied thoughts as those very remarkable profiles and effigies which adorn our current coin. Draw in itself, if the philosophers will have it so, yet as a means, a tool, a path, it is not wonderful in the versatility of its power. What magician ever worked such wonders in the material world? What spirit works so universally, so unfailingly, so unceasingly, in the moral? Even that single coin on my table—that infinitesimal drop in the great ocean of wealth—how much less within the circumference of such a small piece of metal.

To my own mind—worldly and hackneyed, as I have before observed—it had been suggestive of a great many things. Compressed within its disk, I had seen my Sunday dinner—ample, done to a turn, rich with dripping gravy and smoking hot from the roasting jack. From its metallic rim I had already slipped in imagination the rare old Anonitilado. A fragment of the gold had curled my lips in fragrant wreaths of smoke. And if I, to whom even half eagles were not infrequent visitors and who, if I had known poverty at all, had known him only as a neighbor to be shunned, and not as an inmate to be fought, who, even in my Christian estate, had been spared the pain of seeing him enter at my own door, and sit down with my dear ones at their scant meal; if I could see so much in a half eagle, what a worldwide prospect of happiness might it not open to that poor girl's eyes? I dared not dwell on the things she might see there, lest I should loathe myself and the well fed Christian men around me, who so rarely grant such visions to the starved eyesight, but I immediately gave up all thoughts of sending the girl away without her money.

Yes, her money! For hers it was by all that can make good title in law or equity; earned by the fragment of her young life she had given for it; earned in the very flesh from her wasted frame and the blood from her pale cheeks.

What business had I to be speculating and sentimentalizing thus about the affairs of a young lady with whom I had only a little business transaction. I might have known that such an unprofessional train of thought would lead to some blunder. The earthen pot and the iron one never can swim safely together in fact or fable. Consequently I broke in upon the poor girl's reverie with the most awkward question in the world: "Have you any change, miss?"

CHAPTER II. "It that rascally boy of mine has not made a good fire," said I to myself as I walked down town the Monday morning following, "I shall certainly give him the thrashing in which I have stood indebted to him so long."

From this novel species of accord and satisfaction, however, the much-thereof-deserving youth was saved by an unexpected incident. Seated by the cheerless and neglected garage as I entered I

behold my visitor of the preceding day arrayed in night. Her pale, sad face was even paler and sadder than before, and I thought there were tears in her eyes and traces of many that had preceded them. But perhaps this was owing to the smoke now pouring from the mass of paper and wet wood with which Tom, as usual, greeted my arrival.

"I am sorry to tell you, sir," she said, after answering my salutation, "that the coin you gave me was a bad one."

"A bad one—my beautiful half eagle a counterfeit! In what of earth can confidence then be placed? I took it in my hand; it certainly had every appearance of being genuine."

"Positively, you must be mistaken, my dear. I could not be deceived so easily." And feeling that I undoubtedly appeared to her as a gentleman, whom the daily inspection of unlimited gold coin had made a perfect Sir Oracle upon the subject, I drew myself up before the fire—

As who should say, "Let no dog bark." Her lip quivered as she replied: "Indeed, sir, I am very, very sorry, but it must be so, for—for you know I had no other but that."

"And pray how did you learn it to be a counterfeit?"

"When I left here, sir, I went directly up—to a place where some of our things were; I went to pay the little man we had borrowed on them when my mother was taken sick, and the man took the half eagle and said it was a counterfeit and gave it back to me."

"Nonsense, child, the man was mistaken."

She did not argue the point, but made a brief apology for the trouble she had given me, and hesitated.

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