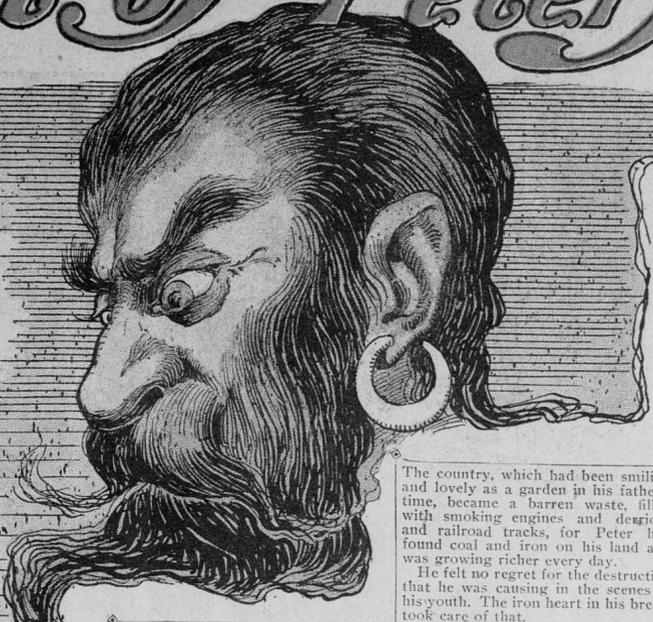


The Iron Heart of Peter Stark



heart again." It was his father's voice; but when Peter looked around nobody was to be seen.

"Give up my money?" said Peter. "Well, I should say not!"

The birds began singing again and the torrent splashed and the fish jumped. Every sound reminded Peter anew of some hour in his youth. Memories came rushing around like swarms of winged things. They flitted around his head on iridescent wings. They hummed in his ears with the music of the summer noons of long ago.

"I certainly was happy then," said Peter to himself. "I do believe that a soft heart is not such a bad thing in many ways."

"Peter! Peter!" cried his father's voice again. "Get your soft heart before it is too late."

"Hum!" said Peter. "I could never afford to pay the price. Whatever would I do without my wealth?"

Again the memories of far-off years clustered thick and bright around him. He saw himself wading with bare, brown feet in the brook, with never a care in the world. He saw his companions and himself wandering hand-in-hand through the woods, singing. All the faces of those whom he had known in childhood and in youth, in all the days before he got his iron heart, gazed down on him.

Suddenly they all vanished. The birds ceased their singing. The fishes ceased their leaping. A great silence brooded over the ridge, and Peter felt as if he could not bear this loneliness," he cried.

"Lonely you shall be now and forever," said his father's voice again, and now it was solemn and deep. "Lonely you shall be unless you regain your soft heart. Choose, Peter, for this is your last chance."

"I choose," cried Peter. "Take away my wealth if it will take away the iron heart too!"

Scarcely had he spoken when a blast of lightning flashed into the ground at his feet and he fell on his face. Before his senses left him he seemed to see, half shrouded in black clouds, the gigantic form of his traveling companion racing down the valley and beating the earth with an uprooted oak.

Crash after crash boomed the thunder. The trees on the ridge bent this way and that in the tempest. Ancient rocks, loosened from their foundations on the mountain tops, went hurtling to the valleys. The torrent, beating in a boiling pool, started over its banks and rushed down headlong in flood.

When Peter awoke he rubbed his eyes in amazement. The forest on the ridge stood unchanged. But as far as he could see down the valley in the light of the dawn everything was altered. Not a shaft-house chimney, not a derrick, not a single one of his structures were left standing. Everything had been laid prostrate by the great storm.

But, wonderful to say, Peter never thought of the wealth that he had lost. His heart was beating fast and hot in his breast, and he cried:

"I only hope that no one has been killed or hurt!"

He rushed down the hill and hurried to the people who stood in crowds surveying the wreck. They told him that everybody had escaped, and then began to condole with him on his losses.

"Losses?" said Peter with the first joyful laugh that he had uttered in years. "I have gained more than a kingdom this night!"

The people thought that his brain was turned; but Peter didn't care. He went abroad, smiling, and sat with his friends as of old and petted the children. And if he was not rich in money any longer, he was the richer in a better possession, for the pretty girl married him.

He lived to be known again as "Soft-hearted Peter" and to hear his son called "Soft-hearted Peter," too. And he never regretted the loss of the iron heart for a single moment.

JULIUS MULLER.

ANCE, in that part of Pennsylvania that now is bare and dusty, with sooty smoke rising out of tall chimneys from skyline to skyline, there was a rich farm of many acres owned by old Peter Stark.

Old Peter was a shrewd business man and he accumulated a comfortable fortune. He always sold his crops to better advantage than did his neighbors, and his possession of ample cash enabled him to buy more and more land at favorable times.

Yet with all his shrewdness and success Peter Stark never turned an unseeing eye or a deaf ear to any one in need. His purse and his house were always open, so much so that throughout that part of Pennsylvania he was known as "Soft-hearted Peter," and when people spoke of him he was called by that name much more often than by his real name.

He lived to be a very old man. One day he called his only son and said to him:

"I shall die soon, and everything that I possess will be left to you. There will be no conditions, except one. I foresee great changes in the land. In years to come you may wish to sell all this that is ours now. Do so if you will. But promise that whatever may come, you will never sell the ridge at the north, suffer the trees there to be harmed, or destroy the torrent that now feeds the brooks running into the valley. And if trouble comes to you at last, as it must come to all of us, promise me that you will climb to the ridge and spend a whole day among the trees alone."

Young Peter promised, and soon afterward old Peter died. His son found that he had inherited not only his lands and wealth, but also his title. As the people had called his father, so they called him—"Soft-hearted Peter."

For some years young Peter lived on the farm, happy as any king; his father's blessing seemed to lie on all his undertakings, and men loved him as they had loved old Peter.

At last young Peter decided to go traveling to see the world. All the neighbors assembled to bid him farewell, and when he looked out of the car window and saw men and women and children waving their hats and handkerchiefs the tears started to his eyes and he felt an impulse to jump off and remain among them. But just then he noticed that a passenger opposite was looking at him with a smile, so he settled back in his seat, ashamed for having shown his feelings so plainly.

Before long the stranger looked at Peter and said:

"I see that this is your first journey, sir."

Now there was no reason at all why Peter should not be willing to admit that he had never traveled before, but somehow he hated to admit it. Besides, although the stranger was a handsome, elegantly dressed man, there was something about him that

Peter didn't like. So he answered sulkily.

"Let us be friends. We both have far to go and we won't be any the more uncomfortable if we furnish a little company for each other."

Peter, who had already repented of his sulkiness, could not well refuse. And soon he was intensely interested in his companion's conversation, for the stranger had seen everything. He could tell of the Rocky Mountains and the Himalayas and the South Seas and the ice. So when he proposed to Peter that they should see the world together, Peter assented eagerly.

They journeyed by railroad and ship for many months. They saw great cities and placid islands, wide plains and defiant mountains. But most of all they saw cities, for the stranger seemed to care for nothing else so much as to dive into crowded streets.

Peter, on the contrary, preferred the islands and the mountains. One night, when they were in the hotel together, he told his companion so.

"The great cities are beautiful and wonderful," said Peter, "but it grieves me to see the poor who are crowded in them, behind all the splendor."

"I will tell you what is the matter with you, Peter," said the stranger. "You are too soft-hearted. You waste money every day on beggars and others. You are too soft-hearted, Peter, and unless you cure yourself you will never be able to buy any of the beautiful things that we have seen."

"I wonder if I am really too soft-hearted," thought Peter. "What would he think if he knew that they actually call me 'Soft-hearted Peter' at home?"

Day after day the stranger showed Peter more beautiful things and made him long for them. And whenever he observed that Peter felt the least bit unhappy because he couldn't get them, he would tell him again that he was too soft-hearted.

So at last Peter believed it. And one night he asked his companion how he could cure himself.

"Nothing easier than that," said his companion. "To-morrow I will take you to a place where it can be done."

The next day they jumped into a train and went far into the hills, until Peter began to recognize the country and saw that they were going toward home. His soft heart leaped in his breast and the tears of joy came to his eyes.

"We will soon cure all that, Peter," said his companion, tapping him on the breast. And his eyes shone strangely like a cat's.

Not far from Peter's home they alighted from the train, and Peter's companion led him up the mountain side till they reached the black mouth of a great shaft that seemed to bore straight down into the earth.

"Step in," said his companion, pointing to the bucket. He leaped in himself and the bucket descended slowly, till all that could be seen far above was a little circle of daylight. Down it went, down, faster and faster, so

that the rocky sides of the shaft, with the water streaming from them, seemed to be darting upwards past them.

Suddenly the darkness gave way to dazzling light and the bucket stopped. Peter stepped out and found himself in a huge vaulted chamber, all hung with glittering white crystals.

"Now," said the traveling companion, "we are at my home, and in a few moments you shall be cured of your soft heart."

He stepped to a niche in the rocks and returned with a finely polished, perfectly formed heart made of iron. "This," said he, "is the kind of heart to wear. I have one myself, and I have given it to many of the people whose wealth you admired so much. They are all much better off since they made the exchange."

"But how could you put it into my breast?" asked Peter, half frightened and half interested.

"Simple enough," was the reply. "This iron heart, as you can see, is hollow. I will simply press it into

your breast and lock it around the absurd soft heart to prevent it from making a fool of you."

The next instant, before Peter could utter a cry, his companion grew tremendously in height, till his head reached the crystal-studded ceiling. With one immense hand, as big as a steamship, he seized the trembling Peter, and with the other, presto! he pressed the iron heart to his breast. Immediately Peter felt strangely cold and indifferent. He put his hand to his heart and found that there was none of the tumultuous beating that he used to feel. With a suspicion that he quite new to him, he said:

"And what do you expect from me in exchange?"

"In exchange?" cried the giant, with a roar of laughter that seemed to make the mountain tremble, "my dear Peter, I want nothing in exchange. Don't you know me yet? I am Mammon, the Master of the Underworld. It is quite enough for me to send you forth with an iron heart, for now you will do my work."

So saying, his great hand, on which Peter sat, holding tight to the little finger, which was big as a mast, lifted Peter rapidly up the shaft. He went so swiftly that his senses fled. When he recovered he found himself sitting in the waiting room of the station; and he would have dismissed the affair as a strange dream if he had not touched his breast and found no heart-beat, no warmth, no sensation of any kind.

He felt none of the delight at being near home, such as he had felt the day before. But for all that, he wished to hasten there. For it had suddenly struck him that his affairs needed sharp attention.

The neighbors all crowded around him when he appeared, and Peter returned their greetings politely; but their delight at his return evoked no pleasure in his breast. He was glad when he reached his house and could escape them.

There he was met by the old steward, who still survived from his father's time. The old man tried to embrace Peter, whom he had carried in his arms when he was a baby. But Peter stepped aside and waited impatiently while the old man welcomed him home.

"Very well, very well!" said he at last, as the old steward wiped his eyes. "But let us get at the accounts."

They went at the accounts, and Peter demanded proofs of everything and criticized the expenditures, until the old man stole sadly from the room. "I can see," said Peter to himself, "that a strong hand is needed here."

All the land around him soon felt the strong hand. Tenants who were in arrears were dispossessed. All who were in debt to him were prosecuted.

Why Dogs Hate Cats

WHY does the dog hate the cat? Scientists have been investigating the enmity between these animals, and they believe that the instinctive hatred which certain beasts feel of each other is due to inheritance from ancient times, when the animals met in a wild state and preyed on each other.

The enmity between cats and dogs seems to be due more to hatred on the part of the dog than of the cat. The latter animal apparently hates dogs because dogs chase her; while the dog hates the cat because she is a cat.

A cat will feed at a place where a dog has been without betraying any signs of anger; but a dog generally becomes excited and wild if he scents the trail of a cat anywhere near his food or sleeping place.

Now this enmity is not to be explained by anything that happens between dogs and cats in domesticity or anything that ever happened between them as long ago as human history goes. In all these thousands of years dogs and cats have been kept as pets, and of all animals they are the two which should be the most friendly.

But the reverse is the case. One naturalist, Dr. Zell, seeks it in the fact that the common cat not only looks like, but smells like, the great cats of prey. And of those cats of prey there is one, much like a domestic cat in many ways, which hunts dogs by preference. This big cat is the leopard.

The domestic cat and her larger relative, the wild cat, have never harmed the race of dogs; but their

great speckled cousin is, and always has been, the most ferocious of dog-murderers, and the cat must pay for it.

Authorities agree that there is no animal that the leopard would rather eat than the dog; as a result, there are many villages in the districts in which leopards are plentiful where nobody can keep a dog. The great cats will not hesitate to break into the houses to seize their favorite dish.

But, says the doubter, the modern dog certainly could not have known leopards in many thousands of years. He has been a domestic pet in regions where there have been no leopards since man first appeared.

That is true, says Dr. Zell. But he points to the fact that dogs have a habit of turning around several times before they lie down. This, he says, is due to the fact that when they were in a wild state they had to do this to press down leaves and twigs in order to prepare a bed for themselves; and as they have not overcome this habit in all their years of domesticity, it is quite natural that they should still inherit fierce hatred of any creature that smells like a leopard.

Dogs and cats are not the only animals that still show inherited fear or hatred of other beasts which they have never seen themselves. Thus the rhinoceros is frantically in fear of anything white, and naturalists say that this is because, once upon a time some big white animal hunted him. But that must have been long ago, for there are no big white animals now where the rhinoceros dwells.

Chickens that have never seen a fox will cackle and run in fear if they come across the place where the animal has passed or where his carcass has been dragged. If a fox has been anywhere near a cat's drinking dish, the cat will not approach it.

How Birds Soar

IN THE past few years the desire of mankind to discover a means for navigating the air has led to a deep study of the flights of birds and a great deal of material has been gathered.

It is beginning to be the consensus of opinion that the bird world as a whole is not nearly perfect in its attainment of flight.

All birds that have to flap their wings continually, such as sparrows, finches, thrushes, crows and so on, are still in an imperfect stage.

More advanced are such birds as pigeons, swallows, etc., because they can dart ahead for a space after they have gained a good start by the rapid flapping of the pinions.

But the only perfect fliers are the eagles, vultures, albatrosses and other great fowl that can rise and fall, sway and soar in the air indefinitely without moving their wings perceptibly.

Now, how do these big birds manage to ascend to great heights without flapping their wings? It is certain that such birds as the eagle and the vulture can soar into the air gradually till they disappear from the eye of the beholder, and yet it will be quite impossible to denote a single motion of anything except the tail.

One observer, Erich Hoffman, had an unusual opportunity to gather some facts that bear on this question. Two years ago he was in the Caucasus on a mountain peak that ascended close to another one. Over the latter there soared a great eagle, and far as he was from earth, he was quite close to Mr. Hoffman.

When he was seen first he was hanging almost motionless in the air. Suddenly he moved swiftly ahead, pointing his head slightly toward the sky, and thus he glided along without

flapping a wing till his motion had ceased of itself. As it stopped, he lifted his wings high in the air, dropped his head and permitted himself to fall.

As soon as he had fallen a short distance, his broad pinions spread out to their fullest extent again and immediately the impetus gained by the fall sent him gliding forward and upward, so that within a few moments he had actually slid upon the air to a position higher than he had been in before.

After he had done this five times he had ascended so high without flying once that the observer could see him only as a black speck in the air.

The eagle's method was exactly that of a boy who slides down a hill in a wagon, and thus gets enough speed to carry him up the next hill. Only in the eagle's case his hills were of air.

Are Moon Craters Coral?

Everybody who has seen a chart of the moon as drawn by astronomers knows of the curious, irregular, ragged rings which have been called "moon craters" for many years.

Now astronomers have raised the question whether or not they really are the craters of extinct volcanoes, as has been supposed for so long. One of them asks:

"How would the ocean bottoms of the earth appear to a man in the moon if all our seas were to disappear?"

"Exactly as the moon craters look to us," is the answer.

So now some of the astronomers are interested in the attempts to prove that the moon's curious surface is not at all volcanic, and that the "craters" are nothing more or less than coral reefs and the remains of other coral-like structures which have been left high and dry by the evaporation of lunar oceans.

THE GANGES PUZZLE

A washing that would take one maiden six days to perform is done by Lala, Loti and Bimi. Loti does two-thirds as much as Lala. The labor is worth 1 rupee per day. Loti receives 2 rupees. How much does Bimi get?

