Satan Sanderson

By HALLIE ERMINE RIVES,
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Chapter 29

IN the long hospital the air was cool and filtered, drab figures passed with soft footfalls and voices were measured and hushed. But no sense of coolness or repose had come to the man whose racked body had been tenderly borne there in the snowy dawn which saw the blackened ruins of Aniston's most perfect edifice.

Hugh had sunk into unconsciousness with the awe struck exclamation ringing in his ears, "Good God, it's Harry Sanderson!" He had drifted back to conscious knowledge with the same words racing in his brain. They implied that so far as capture went the odd, curious resemblance would stand his friend till he betrayed himself or till the existence of the real Harry Sanderson at Smoky Mountain did so for him. The delusion must hold till he could have himself moved to some place where his secret would be safer, till he could get away.

This thought grew swiftly paramount; it overlapped the right agony of his injuries that made the bed on which he lay a fiery furnace; it gave method to his every word and look. He took up the difficult part and, after the superficial anguish dulled, complained no more and successfully counterfeited cheerfulness and betterment. He shut nothing of the curiously recurrent and sickening stab of pain, searching and deep seated, that took his breath and left each time an increasing giddiness. Whatever inner hurt this might betoken, he must hide it the sooner to leave the hospital, where each hour brought nearer the inevitable disclosure.

He thanked fortune now for the chapel game. Few enough in Aniston would care to see the unfrocked, disgraced rector of St. James'. He did not know that the secret was Bishop Ludlow's own until the hour when he opened his eyes after a fitful sleep upon the latter's face.

The bishop was the first visitor, and it was his first visit, for he had been in a distant city at the time of the fire. Waiting the waking, he had been mystified at the change a few months had wrought in the countenance of the man whose disappearance had cost him so many sleepless hours. The months of indulgence and rich living—the money he had won from Harry—had taken away Hugh's slightness, and his fallen cheeks were now of the contour of Harry's own. But the bishop distinguished new lines in the face on the pillow, an expression unfamiliar and puzzling. The firmness and strength were gone, and in their place was a haunting something that gave him a flitting suggestion of the discarded that he could not shake off.

Waking, the unexpected sight of the bishop startled Hugh. To the good man's pain he had turned his face away.

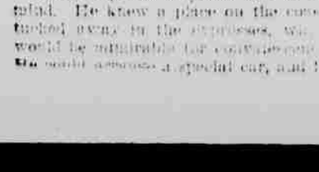
"My dear boy," the bishop had said, "they tell me you are stronger and better. I thank God for it!"

He spoke gently and with deep feeling. How could he tell to what extent he himself, in mistaken severity, had been responsible for that unaccustomed look? When Hugh did not answer the bishop misconstrued the silence. He leaned over the bed. The big cool hand touched the fevered one on the white coverlid, where the ruby ring glowed, a coal in snow.

"Harry," he said, "you have suffered—you are suffering now. But think of me only as your friend. I ask no questions. We are going to begin where we left off."

"I would like to do that," said Hugh, "to begin again. But the chapel is gone."

"Never mind that," said the bishop cheerfully. "You are only to get well. We are going to rebuild soon, and we



"We are going to begin where we left off."

want your judgment on the plans. Aniston is hanging on your condition, Harry," he went on. "There's a small cartload of visiting cards downstairs for you. But I imagine you haven't begun to receive yet, eh?"

"I—I've seen nobody." Hugh spoke hurriedly and hoarsely. "Tell the doctor to let no one come—no one but you. I—I'm not up to it."

"Why, of course not," said the bishop quickly. "You need quiet, and the people can wait."

The bishop chatted awhile of the parish, Hugh replying only when he must, and went away heartened. Before he left Hugh saw his way to hasten his own going. On the next visit the seed was dropped in the bishop's mind so cleverly that he thought the idea his own. That day he said to the surgeon in charge:

"He is gaining so rapidly I have been wondering if he couldn't be taken away where the climate will benefit him. Will he be able to travel soon?"

"I think so," answered the surgeon. "We suspected internal injury at first but I imagine the worst he has to fear is the disfigurement. Mountain or sea air would do him good," he added reflectively. "What he will need is tone and building up."

The bishop had received this in his mind. He knew a place on the coast tucked away in the redwoods, which would be admirable for convalescence. He could secure a special car, and if himself could make the journey with him. He proposed this to the surgeon and with his approval put his plan in motion. In two days more Hugh found his going fully settled.

The plan admiratly fitted his necessity. The spot the bishop had selected was quiet and retired and, more, was near the port at which he could most readily take ship for South America. Only one reflection made him shiver—the route lay through the town of Smoky Mountain. Yet who would dream of looking for a fugitive from the law in the secluded car that carried a sick man? The risk would be small enough, and it was the one way open.

On the last afternoon before the departure Hugh asked for the clothes he had worn when he was brought to the hospital, found the gold pieces he had snatched in the burning chapel and tied them in a handkerchief about his neck. They would suffice to buy his sea passage. The one red counter he had kept—it was from henceforth to be a reminder of the good resolutions he had made so long ago—he slipped into a pocket of the clothes he was to wear away, a suit of loose, comfortable tweed.

Waiting restlessly for the hour of his going, Hugh asked for the newspapers. Since the first he had had them read to him each day, listening fearfully for the hue and cry. But today the surgeon put his request aside.

"After you are there," he said, "if Bishop Ludlow will let you. Not now. You are almost out of my clutches, and I must tyrannize while I can."

A quick look passed from him to his assistant as he spoke, for the newspapers that afternoon had worn startling headlines. The sordid affairs of a flaring town across the ranges had lit[illegible] interest for Aniston, but the names [illegible] Stires and Moreau on the clicking [illegible] had waked it thus late to the sen[illegible]tion. The professional caution of the [illegible]ner of human bodies wished, however, that no excitement should be [illegible]ed to the unavoidable fatigue of his [illegible]'s departure.

[illegible]is fatigue was near to spelling de[illegible] after all, for the exertion brought [illegible] the dreadful stabbing pain, and [illegible] time it carried Hugh into a re[illegible] where feeling ceased, consciousness passed and from which he strug[illegible] back finally to find the surgeon [illegible] anxiously over him.

"[illegible]n't like that sinking spell," the [illegible] confided to his assistant an hour [illegible] they stood looking through the [illegible]dow after the receding carriage. [illegible] announced. Yet he has [illegible] pain. He will be h[illegible] at any rate." He tapped [illegible] with his forefinger. [illegible] said after a pause. [illegible] Sanderson—in the pul[illegible] he doesn't appeal to me [illegible]."

[illegible] car which the bishop had [illegible] made a pleasant inte[illegible] Easy chairs were in the corners. [illegible] swung from a bracket, [illegible] cushioned couch had been [illegible] for the sick man. A moment [illegible] the start, as it was being co[illegible] to the rear of the resting train. [illegible] the bishop chatted with the con[illegible]ctor, a flustered messenger boy hand[illegible] him a telegram. It read:

I arrive Aniston tomorrow 5. Confidential. Must see you. Urgent.

JESSICA.

The bishop read it in some perplexity. It was the first word he had received from her since her marriage; but, aware of Hugh's forgery and disgrace, he had not wondered at this. The newspapers today pictured a still worse shame for her in the position of the man who in the name still was her husband, who had trod so swiftly the downward path from thievery to the worst of crimes. Could Jessica's coming have to do with that? He must see her, yet his departure could not now be delayed. He consulted with the conductor, and the latter pored over his tablets.

As a result his answering message flashed along the wires to Jessica's faraway train:

Sanderson injured. Taking him to coast train 46 due Twin Peaks 2 tomorrow afternoon.

And thus the fateful moment approached when the great appeal should be made.

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The evidence of the first day's trial of the case of the people against Hugh Stires was the all engrossing topic that night in Smoky Mountain. Barney McGinn perhaps aptly expressed the consensus of opinion when he said, "I allow we all know he's guilty, but nobody believes it."

Late as Smoky Mountain sat up that night, however, it was on hand next morning, rank and file, when the court convened.

All the previous evening, save for a short visit to the cell of his client, Felder had remained shut in his office, thinking of the morrow. In his talk with Harry he had not concealed his deep anxiety, but to his questions there was no new answer, and he had returned from the interview more nonplused than ever. He had wondered that Jessica on this last night did not come to his office, but had been rather relieved than otherwise that she did not. He had gone to bed heavy with discouragement and had waked in the morning with foreboding.

As he turned from greeting his client in the packed courtroom Felder noted with surprise that Jessica was not in her place; not that he needed her further testimony, for he had drawn from her the day before all he intended to utilize, but her absence disturbed him, and instinctively he turned and looked across the sea of faces toward the door.

Harry's glance followed his, and a deeper pain beleaguered it as his eyes returned to the empty chair. He saw Mrs. Halloran whisper eagerly with the lawyer, who turned away, with a puzzled look. In his bitterness the thought came to him that the testimony had sapped her conviction of his

"I have learned his true character during these days."

innocence; that his refusal to answer her entreaties had been the last straw to the load under which it had gone down; that she believed him indeed the murderer of Moreau. To seem the cringing criminal, the pitiful liar and actor in her eyes! The thought stung him. Her faith had meant so much.

The ominous feeling weighed heavily on Felder when he rose to continue the testimony for the prisoner, so rudely disturbed the evening before. In such a community pettifogging was of no avail. Throwing expert dust in jurors' eyes would be worse than useless. In his opening words he made no attempt to conceal the weakness of the defense, evidentially considered. Stripped of all husk, his was to be an appeal to Caesar.

Through a cloud of witnesses concisely, consistently, yet with a winning tactfulness that disarmed the objections of the prosecution, he began to lead them through the series of events that had followed the arrival of the self forgotten man. Out of the mouths of their own neighbors—Devlin, Barney McGinn, Mrs. Halloran, who came down weeping, they were made to see as in a cyclorama the struggle for rehabilitation against hatred and suspicion, the courage that had dared for a child's life, the honesty of purpose that showed in self surrender. The prisoner, he said, had recovered his memory before the accusation and asserted his absolute innocence. Those who believed him guilty of the murder of Dr. Moreau must believe him also a vulgar liar and poseur. He left the inference clear: If the prisoner had fired that cowardly shot he knew it now; if he lied now he had lied all along, and the later life he had lived at Smoky Mountain, eloquent of fair dealing, straightforwardness of purpose, kindliness and courage, had been but hypocrisy, the bootless artifice of a shallow buffoon.

The session was prolonged past the noon hour, and when Felder rested his case it seemed that all that was possible had been said. He had done his utmost. He had drawn from the people of Smoky Mountain a dramatic story and had filled in its outlines with color, force and feeling. And yet as he closed the lawyer felt a sick sense of failure.

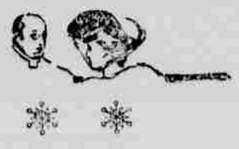
Court adjourned for an hour, and in the interim Felder remained in a little room in the building, whither Dr. Brent was to send him sandwiches and coffee from the hotel.

"You made a fine effort, Tom," the latter said as they stood for a moment in the emptying courtroom. "You're doing wonders with no case, and the town ought to send you to congress on the strength of it. I declare, some of your evidence made me feel as mean as a dog about the rascal, though I knew all the time he was as guilty as the devil."

The lawyer shook his head. "I don't blame you, Brent," he said. "For you don't know him as I do. I have seen much of him lately, been often with him, watched him under stress, for he doesn't deceive himself; he has no thought of acquittal. We none of us knew Hugh Stires. We put him down for a shallow, vulgar blackleg, without redeeming qualities. But the man we are trying is a gentleman, a refined and cultivated man of taste and feeling. I have learned his true character during these days."

"Well," said the other, "if you believe in him, so much the better. You'll make the better speech for the left. Tell me one thing. Where was Miss Holme?"

"I don't know."



Chapter 30

TO stand face to face with Harry Sanderson—that had been Jessica's sole thought. The news that the bishop, with the man she suspected, was speeding toward her—to pass the very town wherein Hugh stood for his life—seemed a prearrangement of eternal justice. When the telegram reached her she had already gone by Twin Peaks. To proceed would be to pass the coming train. At a farther station, however, she was able to take a night train back, arriving again at Twin Peaks in the gray dawn of the next morning.

When the train for which she waited came in, the curtained car at its end, she did not wait for the bishop to find her on the platform, but stepped aboard and made her way slowly back. It started again as she threaded the last Pullman, to find the bishop on its rear platform peering out anxiously at the receding station.

He took both her hands and drew her into the empty drawing room. He was startled at her pallor. "I know," he said pityingly. "I have heard."

She winced. "Does Aniston know?"

"Yes," he answered. "Yesterday's newspapers told it."

She put her hand on his arm. "Can you guess why I was coming home?" she asked. "It was to tell Harry Sanderson! I know of the fire," she went on quickly, "and of his injury. I can guess you want to spare him strain or excitement, but I must tell him!"

He reflected a moment. He thought he guessed what was in her mind. If there was any one who had ever had an influence over Hugh for good it was Harry Sanderson. He himself, he thought, had none. Perhaps, remembering their old comradeship, she was longing now to have this influence exerted to bring Hugh to a better mind, thinking of his eternal welfare, of his making his peace with his Maker.

"Very well," he said. "Come," and led the way into the car.

Jessica followed, her hands clinched tightly. She saw the couch, the profile on its cushions turned toward the window where forest and stream slipped past—a face curiously like Hugh's! Yet it was different, lacking the other's strength, even its refinement. And this man had molded Hugh! These vague thoughts lost themselves instantly in the momentous surmise that filled her imagination. The bishop put out his hand and touched the relaxed arm.

The trepidation that darted into the bandaged face as it turned upon the girlish figure, the frosty fear that blanched the haggard countenance, spoke Hugh's surprise and dread. It was she, and she knew the real Harry Sanderson was in Smoky Mountain. Had she heard of the chapel fire, guessed the imposture and come to denounce him, the guilty husband she had such reason to hate? The twitching limbs stiffened. "Jessica!" he said in a hoarse whisper.

"Harry," said the bishop, "Jessica is in great trouble. She has come with sad news. Hugh, her husband, your old college mate, is in a terrible position. He is accused of murder. I kept the newspapers from you today because they told of it."

She had caught the meaning of the pity in his tone—for her, not for Hugh. "Ah," she cried passionately, lifting her head, "but they did not tell it all! Did they tell you that he is unjustly, wickedly accused by an enemy? That, though they may convict him, he is innocent—innocent?"

The bishop looked at her in surprise. In spite of all the past—the shameful, conscienceless past and her own wrong—she loved and believed in her husband!

Hugh's hand lifted, wavered an instant before his brow. Did she say he was innocent? "I don't—understand," he said hoarsely.

Jessica's wide eyes fastened on his as though to search his secret soul. "I will tell it all," she said, "then you will understand." The bishop drew a chair close, but her gaze did not waver from the face on the cushions—the face which she must read!

As she told the broken tale the car was still, save for the labored, irregular breathing of the prostrate man and the muffled roar that penetrated the walls, a multitudinous, elfin din.

"You see," she ended, "that is why I know he is innocent. You cannot"—her eyes held Hugh's—"you cannot doubt it, can you?"

Hugh's tongue wet his parched lips. A tremor ran through him. He did not answer.

Jessica started to her feet. Self possession was falling from her. She was fighting to seize the vital knowledge that evaded her. She held out her hand. In the palm lay a small emblem of gold.

"I don't understand."

"By this cross," she cried with desperate earnestness, "I ask you for the truth. It is his life or death—Hugh's life or death! He did not kill Dr. Moreau. Who did?"

Hugh had shrunk back on the couch, his face ghastly. "I know nothing—nothing!" he stammered. "Do not ask me!"

The bishop had risen in alarm. He thought her hysterical. "Jessica! Jessica!" he exclaimed. He threw his arm about her and led her from the couch. "You don't know what you are saying. You are beside yourself." He forced her into the drawing room and made her sit down. She was tense and quivering. The cross fell from her hand, and he stooped and picked it up.

"Try to calm yourself," he said, "to think of other things for a few moments. This little cross—I wonder how you come to have it? I gave it to Sanderson last May to commemorate his ordination." He twisted it open. "See, here is the date, May 28. That was the day I gave it to him."

She gave a quick gasp, and the last vestige of color faded from her cheek. She looked at him in a stricken way. "Last May?" she said faintly. Harry Sanderson had been in Aniston, then, on the day Dr. Moreau had been murdered. Her house of cards fell. She had been mistaken! She leaned her head back against the cushion and closed her eyes.

Presently she felt a cold glass touch her lips. "There is some water," the bishop's voice said. "You are better, are you not? Poor child! You have been through a terrible strain. I would give the world to help you if I could."

He left her, and she sat dully trying to think. The regular jar of the trucks had set itself to a rhythm—no hope, no hope, no hope! She knew now that there was none. When the bishop reentered she did not turn her head. He sat beside her awhile, and she was aware again of his voice, speaking soothingly. At moments thereafter he was there, at others she knew that she was alone, but was unconscious of the flight of time. She knew only that the day was fading. On the chilly whirling landscape she saw only a crowded room, a jury box, a judge's bench and Hugh before it, listening to the sentence that would take him from her forever. The bright sunlight was mercilessly, satanically cruel and God a sneering monster turning a crank.

Into her conscious view grew distant snowy ranges, hills unrolling at their feet, a straggling town, a staring white courthouse and a grim low building beside it. She rose stumblingly, the train quivering to the brakes, as the bishop entered.

"This is Smoky Mountain," she said with numb lips. "That is the building where he is being tried. I am going there now."

The bishop opened the door and gave her his hand to the platform. The train was to stop but ten minutes. He stood a moment watching her as she pressed to the street; then, with the sadness deep in his heart, entered the station to send a telegram.

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Hugh's haggard face peered after them through a rift in a window curtain. What could she have suspected? Not the truth! And only that could betray him. Presently the bishop would return, the train would start again, and this spot of terror would be behind him. What had he to do with Harry Sanderson?

He bethought himself suddenly of the door. If some one should come in upon him! With a qualm of fear he stood up, staggered to it and turned the key in the lock. There was not the wonted buzz about the station. The place was silent save for the throb of the halted engine, and the shadow of the train on the frosty platform quivered like a criminal. A block away he saw the courthouse. Knots of people were standing about its door waiting for what? A fit of trembling seized him.

All his years Hugh had been a moral coward. Life to him had been sweet for the grosser, material pleasures it held. He had cared for nobody, had held nothing sacred. He had now only to keep silence, let Harry Sanderson pay the penalty, and he need dread no more. Hugh Stires, to the persuasion of the law, would be dead. As soon as might be he could disappear, as the rector of St. James' had disappeared before. He might change his name and live at ease in some quarter of the world, his alarm laid forever.

But a worse thing would haunt him to scare his sleep—he would be doubly blood guilty!

In the awful moment while he clung to the iron bars of the collapsing rose window, with the flames clutching at him, Hugh had looked into hell and shivered before the judgment, "The wages of sin is death." In that fiery ordeal the cheapness and swagger, the ostentation and self esteem, had burned away, and his soul had stood naked as a winter wood. Dying had not then been the austere terror. What came after? That had appalled him. Yet Harry Sanderson was not afraid of the hereafter. He chose death calmly, knowing that he, Hugh, was unfit to die.

Suppose he told the truth now and saved Harry. He had never done a brave deed for the sake of truth or righteousness or for the love of any human being, but he could do one now. For the one red counter that had been a symbol of a day of evil living he could render a deed that would make requital for those unpaid days. He would not have played the coward's part. It would repair the wrong he had done Jessica. He would have made expiation. Forgiveness and pity, not reproaches and shame, would follow him, and it would balance perhaps the one dreadful count that stood against him. He thought of the scaffold and shivered, yet there was a more terrible thought: It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God!

He made his way again to the door and unlocked it. It was only to cross that space, to speak, and then the grim brick building and the penalty.

With a hoarse cry he slammed the door and frantically locked it. The edge of the searching pain was upon him again. He stumbled back to the couch and fell across it face down, dragging the cushions in frantic haste over his head to shut out the sick throbbing of the steam that seemed shuddering at the fate his cowering soul dared not face.

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The groups outside the courthouse made way deferentially for Jessica, but she was unconscious of it. Some one asked a question on the steps, and she heard the answer. "The state has just finished, and the judge is charging."

The narrow hall was filled, and, though all who saw gave her instant place, the space beyond the inner door was crowded beyond the possibility of passage. She could see the judge's bench, with its sedate, gray bearded figure, the jury box at the left, the moving, restless faces about it, set like a living mosaic.

She became aware suddenly that the figure at the high bench was speaking, had been speaking all along:

"With the prisoner's later career in Smoky Mountain they had nothing to do nor had the law. The question it asked—the only question it asked—was, 'Did he kill Moreau?' They might be loath to believe the same man capable of such contradictory acts—the courageous saving of a child from death, for example, and the shooting down of a fellow mortal in cold blood—but it had been truly said that such contrasts were not impossible—nay, were even matters of common observation. Prejudice and bias aside, and sympathy and liking aside, they constituted a tribunal of justice. This the state had a right to demand, and this they, the jury, had made solemn oath to give."

The words had no meaning for her ears. "What did he say?" she whispered to herself piteously. She caught but a glimpse of the prisoner as the sheriff touched his arm and led the way quickly to the door through which he had been brought.

It opened and closed upon them, and the tension of the packed room broke all at once in a great respiration of relief and a buzz of conversation.

A voice spoke beside her. It was Dr. Brent. "Come with me," he said. "Felder asked me to watch for you. We can wait in the judge's room."

Chapter 31

MEANWHILE in the narrow cell Harry was alone with his bitterness. His judicial sense, keenly alive, from the very first had appreciated the woeful weakness, evidentially speaking, of his position. He had no illusions on this score. A little while—after such deliberation as was decent and seemly—and he would be a condemned criminal, waiting in the shadow of the hempen noose. In such localities justice was swift. There would be scant time between verdict and penality—not enough, doubtless, for the problem to solve itself. For the only solution possible was Hugh's dying in the hospital at Aniston. So long as the other lived he must play out the role.

And if Hugh did die, but died too late? What a satire on truth and justice! The same error which put the rope about his own neck would fold the real Hugh in the odor of sanctity. He would lie in the little jail yard in a felon's grave, and Hugh in the cemetery on the hill beneath a marble monument erected by St. James' parish to the Rev. Henry Sanderson. In the dock or in the cell, with the death watch sitting at its door, it was all one. He had elected the path, and if it led to the bleak edge of life, to the barren abyss of shame, he must tread it. He was powerless to help himself still. He had given over his life into the keeping of a power in which his better manhood had trusted. If it exacted the final tribute for those ribald years of Satan Sanderson the price would be paid.

A step came in the corridor. A voice spoke his name. The summons had come.

Before the opening of the door the hum of voices in the courtroom sank to stillness itself. The jury had taken their places. Their looks were sober and downcast. The judge was in his seat, his hand combing his beard. Harry faced him calmly. The door of a side room was partly open, and a girl's white face looked in, but he did not see.

"Gentlemen of the jury, have you arrived at a verdict?"

"We have."

There was a confusion in the hall—abrupt voices and the sound of feet. The crowd stirred, and the judge frowningly lifted his gavel.

"What say you, guilty or not guilty?"

The foreman did not answer. He was leaning forward, looking over the heads of the crowd. The judge stood up. People turned, and the room was suddenly a-rustle with surprised movement. The crowd at the back of the room parted, and up the center aisle toward the judge's desk staggered a figure—a man whose face, ghastly and convulsed, was partly swathed in bandages. At the door of the judge's room a girl stood transfixed and staring.

The crowd gasped. They saw the familiar profile, a replica of the prisoner's; the mark that slanted across the brow, the eyes preternaturally bright and fevered.

A pale faced, breathless man in clerical dress pushed forward through the press as the figure stopped—thrust out his hands blindly.

"Not—guilty, your honor!" he said.

A cry came from the prisoner at the bar. He leaped toward him as he fell and caught him in his arms.

The group in the judge's room was hushed in awestruck silence. The door was shut, but through the panels, from the courtroom, came the murmur of many wondering voices. By the sofa on which lay the man who

"Not—guilty, your honor!" he said.

had made expiation stood the bishop and Harry Sanderson. Jessica knelt beside it, and the judge and those who stood near him in the background knew that the curtain was falling upon a strange and tangled drama of life and love and death.

After the one long, sobbing cry of realization, throughout the excitement and confusion, Jessica had been strangely calm. She read the swift certainty in Dr. Brent's face, and she felt a painful thankfulness. The last appeal would not be to man's justice, but to God's mercy! The memories of the old blind days and the knowledge that this man—not the one to whom she had given her love at Smoky Mountain, at whom she dared not look—had been her lover, was now in very truth her husband, rolled about her in a stinging mist. But as she knelt by the sofa the hand that chafed the nerveless one was firm, and she wiped the cold lips deftly and tenderly.

Hugh's eyes were filming. That harrowing struggle of soul, that convulsive effort of the injured body, had demanded its price. The direful agony and its weakness had seized him. His stiffening fingers were slipping from the ledge of life, and he knew it.

He heard the bishop's earnest voice, speaking from the void, "Love—covereth—all—sins." The words seemed to stand out sharply, with black gulfs of nothingness between. They roused his fading senses, called them back to the outpost of feeling.

"Not because I—loved," he said. "It—was because—I—was afraid!"

False as his habit of life had been, in that moment only the bare truth remained. With a last effort the dying man thrust his hand into his pocket, drew out a small, battered, red disk and laid it in the other's hand.

"Satan," he whispered as Harry bent over him and the flicker of light fell in his eyes, "do you—think it will—count—when I cash in?"

But Harry's answer Hugh did not hear. He had passed out of the sound of mortal speech forever.

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There came a day when the brown ravines of Smoky Mountain laughed in genial sunshine, when the tangled thickets and the foliaged reaches, [illegible] purple of late autumn, flushed and stirred to the touch of their golden lover and the silver water gushing through the flumes sang to a quicker melody. There was no wind. Everywhere save for the breathing life of the forest was dreamy beauty and waiting peace.

In the soft stillness Harry stood on the doorstep of the hillside cabin for the last time. Below him in the gulch

He dropped on his knees and took her hands and kissed them.

the light glanced and sparkled from the running flume, and beyond glimmered the long street of the town where the dead past of Satan Sanderson had been buried forever and the old remorseful pain of conscience had found its surcease. In the far distance, a tender haze softening their outline, stood the violet silhouette of the enfolding ranges, and far beyond them lay Aniston, where waited his newer life, his newer, better work and the hope that was the April of his dreams.

Since that tragic day in the courtroom he had seen Jessica once only—in the hour when the bishop's solemn "dust to dust" had been spoken above the man who had been her husband. One thought had comforted him—the town of Smoky Mountain had never known, need never know, the secret of her wifehood. And Aniston was far away. About the coming of Hugh injured and dying to his native town would be thrown a glamour of kindly charity that would bespeak charity for judgment. When Jessica went back to the white house in the aspens she would meet only tenderness and sympathy. And that was well.

He shut the door of his cabin and whistling to his dog, climbed the steep path where the wrinkled [illegible] flung its splash of scarlet and amber [illegible] trail to the Knob, under the needled [illegible] of the redwoods. There in the dappled shade stood Jessica's rock statue, and now it looked upon two mounds. The prodigal had returned at last, father and son rested side by side, and that too, was well.

He went slowly through the brown hollows to the winding mountain road, crossed it and entered the denser forest. He wanted to see once more the dear spot where he and Jessica had met—that deep, sweet day before the rude awakening. He walked on in a reverie; his thoughts were very far away.

He stopped suddenly. There before him was the little knoll where she had stood waiting on the threshold of his palace of enchantment that one roseate morning. And she was there today—not standing with parted lips and eager eyes under the twittering trees, but lying face down on the moss, her red bronze hair shaming the gold of the fallen leaves.

There was a gesture in the outstretched arms that caught at his heart. He stepped forward, and at the sound she looked up, startled.

He saw the c[illegible]ping color that mounted to her brow, the proud joy, passionate hunger of her eyes. He dropped on his knees and took her hands and kissed them.

"My dear love that is!" he whispered. "My dearer wife that is to be!"

THE END

UNIFORMS FOR SCHOOL CHILDREN

[illegible] the Indianapolis [illegible]

The desirability of a uniform [illegible] for school children is a [illegible] being advocated by certain [illegible] folks thought in the state of [illegible]. The argument is said [illegible] would do away with class [illegible] bitterness of heart and that [illegible] would not have to struggle [illegible] keep them from being [illegible] school because their companions [illegible] else their pain or [illegible] ridiculing.

The idea, which is by no means new, is sound and deserves to be agitated until its merits are generally recognized and it goes into effect by common consent. The wise directors of certain private schools require, if not a uniform, at least such simplicity of costume that the cause for envy or hard feeling on the part of the poorer pupils and the opportunity for ridicule by the more favored children is removed. No such order could be made by public school authorities, of course, and the practice of wearing uniforms would have to come about through its gradual adoption and the force of popular opinion. The mothers' meetings now held in connection with many schools would serve as an admirable means for propagating the opinion.

The desirability of a uniform is greater in the case of girls than of boys, for common sense relents to a greater degree with the latter than the former, seem having long decreed much sameness in masculine garb whether for young or old; at the same time there is room for betterment and a special costume for school boys would have its advantages. The fashion of the day calls for greater simplicity of dress for girls than formerly, but if good taste reigned and all dressed alike, enormous bows would disappear from childish heads in school hours, laces and embroideries would vanish from little gowns, and there would not be of rich material; high school girls would not appear as if arrayed for an afternoon "tea" and immense pompadours and disquieting puffs would be unknown among them. There is room for the reform suggested; the tyranny of dress should at least be postponed until after the school years.

No "little store" ever commenced to get big until its advertising started to outgrow the store.