

THE END OF HIS TIME.

By JAMES KNAPP REEVE.

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CHAPTER III.

Ogden Chalmers was probably no better and no worse than other men, and he had never preached a high standard of morality for the guidance of others. He was content to take men and things as he found them. Yet he felt a strange repugnance when the necessity presented itself of going to this woman's house. Already he had associated her in his mind with George's downfall, and as the chief cause thereof; and as the cause likewise of the disgrace that had come upon them all. Toward the woman herself he felt a dull anger, more because she had crossed the clean, white pathway of Lina Tennant's life than for aught else.

He expected to find her coarse and loud and probably insolent. He would make his business brief and be done with her.

"I don't think I shall detain you long," he said at once when she came into the room where he waited. "I am Ogden Chalmers, and I have come to make you a plain statement and a proposal. My brother is in prison and mainly through you. (At this the woman demurred by a negative gesture and tried to speak, but Chalmers stopped her.) It is my purpose to have him released, if it can be accomplished, as soon as possible, but only upon one condition." At this the woman looked up curiously and he continued: "That condition is that there shall never be any chance of his meeting you again. If you consent to this I am willing to pay you well, more than you could possibly make out of him," he added smugly.

"And if I do not consent?"

"Then I shall have to cease my efforts for his release."

"You are very hard," she whimpered. "I care so much for him, and then never to see him again?"

"Stop," said Chalmers. "I will not listen to such stuff. You cared for him for the money you could get out of him, and I tell you that is at an end now."

"You don't believe, then, that I could care for him disinterestedly as an honest woman would—say as Miss Tennant would?"

Chalmers flushed indignantly at this use of Miss Tennant's name.

"We will not discuss that lady," he said briefly.

"You may not—I will," said the woman defiantly. "I have seen her; she is very beautiful. I grant you that; and she thinks she cares for him. But she did not know how to keep him by her, and if she knew of me she would never forgive him. That is how she cares. But I would forgive him everything."

"I told you that I would not discuss that," said Chalmers. "I will make you a proposal. If you will go to Europe at once and stay there, you shall be paid five thousand dollars every year. But if you ever come back, if you hold any intercourse with him, if you let him know where you are, this shall stop at once. I want to make sure that he will never see you again. Do you consent?"

There was perhaps a needless brutality in Chalmers' words and manner, and there was an angry gleam in her eyes as she answered:

"You make very hard conditions, but I will do it for his sake."

"Put it as you will," answered her companion coldly, "only so that you do it. It is settled, then?"

She nodded at him by way of reply.

"Very well, then," he said, rising to go. "My lawyer will call on you in the morning and complete all arrangements."

From there Chalmers went at once to Lina Tennant, feeling the while that it was almost a crime to go from so unclean a presence into the circle of her pure life.

She met him, and put out both her hands impulsively. He took them in his and held them just an instant, but long enough for the girl to become conscious of the intensity of his clasp and for that consciousness to mirror itself in her face.

"I shall go to Columbus tonight," he said. "I came only to tell you that. I have done what I could today, but am afraid it is not much."

Then he told her what he had done. That he had seen Rodney and some other of the directors of the bank. That he had also conferred with George's attorneys; had called upon some old and influential friends of his own and secured letters to the governor, which he should present in person tomorrow. Not very much, but Chalmers encouraged her to hope for the best.

After he had finished this recital, during which it required his utmost caution to avoid any reference to Leonie or to her part in George's trouble, he said to her:

"Last night you told me that you were still ready to marry him. If I have no success, and he must remain there his full time, will you wait for him and marry him then?"

It was a cruel question, but the girl did not flinch.

"I will if he wishes it. I promised him that," she answered readily.

"And you said last night," he continued, "that you would do this because you knew he had not meant wrong. If he had been really wicked, a criminal at heart, would you then marry him?"

"I don't see how we can know that any man is wicked at heart," said the girl slowly. "But if you mean, if he had done this from base or sordid motives, if he had taken this money meanly and used it for low purposes—I could never marry one who had willfully forfeited his claim to my respect. George has not done that."

It was hard to keep his peace when she said that. With a word he could shatter every tie that bound her to him, that linked her future with the future of this man who had proved himself so unworthy of her; and if loosed from him and from this false ideal that she had set up in her heart and endowed with every manly and virtuous attribute (as women do endow all men whom they endow likewise with their love), would there not in time be a chance for him to gain that which he had hoped for so long ago?

He could not help asking himself these things, although never for a moment did it really occur to him that he might thus play his brother false, to the better accomplishment of his own ends and if it had, and if he had done so, would it have profited him? Did any

man ever learn to think kindly of the one who unmasked to her her own delusion? "We will do our best," said Chalmers, breaking the silence that had fallen between them. "to put George speedily back in the world and among men again, where he may have the chance to make a new place for himself."

"Don't speak as if he had lost his place in the world," answered Miss Tennant impatiently. "He has made a single mistake. Many men make a dozen, do they not? And because they happen not to come to the surface, to the knowledge of the world, they do not count. Oh, I do believe the world thinks it less of a crime to commit crime than to be discovered in it!"

"I am afraid you are getting worldly wise," answered Chalmers. "There is too much truth in what you say. But if he is discovered, the inexorable fact remains that he must go to the wall. A man takes his chances; George has taken his and lost."

"No, you must not say that. You must not let him think it. I shall not. If he were here it should be just the same with us as it has been in the past. I would not let him see that I knew any difference."

He did not say so to her, but Chalmers wondered if her courage would hold out, and if it did, and her pride sustained her to the end, would not the effort be so great that it would kill her love? Doubtless she loved him well enough to do this, but would she love him so well after it was done? Up to a certain point women like to suffer for their love; beyond that—under other circumstances he would have liked to pursue this metaphysical problem.

"I don't believe that is the best way," he said finally, as though he had been reflecting on his brother's suggestion.

"It's the only way, I tell you," answered the other impatiently. "I have been here long enough to see that. But if you mind the money—"

"I don't mind the money; I think you know that. I am ready to spend my last dollar to help you out of this, and then we can begin life again together. Perhaps we had kept closer together this would not have happened."

"I don't know; I guess I wasn't cut out to walk quite so straight as you," returned the other carelessly.

"Well, we won't talk of the past. Let us see what we can do for the future."

"If you are going to do anything, I hope it will be soon. I can't stay here forever. I am tired enough of the place now."

"I must have time to think. There must be some way. Perhaps I shall try the board of pardons. At any rate I shall not desert you; I will be here again soon."

"You will find there is but one way. Money is the only key that will unlock this place."

They were standing up now, and Chalmers noticed that they were just the same height and seemed to have about the same spread of chest and shoulders. Again he wondered if they would still look alike in that dress, and both closely shaved.

And this thought took root and grew. He had had his chance at life, and had made precious little of it. Why not give the chance now, such as remained of it, to George, and let him try it over? There was no reason why this could not be done; it would be simple enough to arrange the details, and though he had tried to encourage George with the hope that he could yet secure his release, he could see no other way in which it could be accomplished.

(To be continued.)

FARROW BROWN'S CONCLUSION.

Well, the first I heard about 'em was through some boarders we had. 'Till I was a pretty regular customer. We've lived on the farm for thirty odd years. We've raised eight good, smart children which is as well as most of folks do."

But last summer we took some medicine. And they made such a racket of it, to George and let him try it over? There was no reason why this could not be done; it would be simple enough to arrange the details, and though he had tried to encourage George with the hope that he could yet secure his release, he could see no other way in which it could be accomplished.

Compared to the yarns they told about microbes that swim in the water and fly on every breeze through the air. That have to walk about with And can stick to your skin and hair.

They peered over the edge of the well curb To see if the lockets was clean. And analyzed the perspiration To find the parts green. That I put on the tops in early spring. Before the perspiration was grown: Then how they thought it could get inside Was more than ever I knowed.

They wanted our tomcat kept to home, Because one of 'em'd heard of a case Where a cat brought home a disease in its fur, And though there warn't one to ketch in the place.

They went up into the pasture, To see if the cows had weeds. For if they did the milk we used Would be full of cold seeds.

They sprinkled in the miller and sired the barn, To kill all the lice that were to keep clean. And speckled oleosin powder around That small wren's a day old seen.

They kind of puffed the dander, And thought to myself the Almighty was wise. When on some of the kinds he put wings.

Well, after they'd gone away in the fall I had to take 'em. The best thing we can do, Caleb, Is to let the whole thing be. So we come to this conclusion: No matter what microbes might bring, A little bit of leeching, Is mighty dangerous thing.

—Yankee Blade.

Offensive and Exasperating Expressions.

In our own opinion the use of "common form" jocularities is most offensive in those who think of them as wit, though most painful in persons who use them unconsciously and as mere methods of expressing their meaning. We feel that those who try to force a laugh out of such expressions as "my downy couch" or "committing matrimony," who squirm into a smile as they ask if "there isn't room for a little one," or who speak of "japanizing their trotter cases," might fairly be shot at sight.

When some excellent mother of a large and heavily facetious family catches up and uses almost unconsciously such phrases as "getting outside a square meal," "the clerk of the weather," "she's no chicken," or "put on your warpaint," and when even the father mechanically talks of "performing his ablutions," the sense of pathos overcomes all others.

—London Spectator.

Fishes swallow their food hastily and without mastication because they are obliged unconsciously to open and close the jaws for the purpose of respiration and cannot long retain food in the mouth when quite shut.

Of the entire human race 500,000,000 are well clothed, 200,000,000 go habitually naked and 300,000,000 only cover the middle parts of the body.

be should become a convict and have his beard shaved off and his hair cropped. He ignored his brother's last words.

"I have been trying to do something for you," he said, "but am afraid I have failed so far. I have just come from the governor's."

"Oh, you can't do anything. He could have told you that. He and old Rodney are hand in glove. Did you see Rodney?"

"Yes."

"He's a wild old fox; he'll block you at every step."

"I found he would not help us. Can you suggest anything? I came home to get you out of this if it can be done."

"I know but one way. Money does anything here, or at least will let you do it for yourself. Two fellows went out over the wall last night."

"His brother's ready acceptance of offers as a splendid thing, a possible means of escape did not surprise Chalmers more than the ease with which he seemed to have dropped into prison ways and expressions."

Was this a proof that the governor was right when he said the place was soul destroying? Would he have lowered his standard so readily under the same conditions? He looked at his brother again more closely. There was certainly a lack of character in the expression of the mouth and chin. Yet it had always been said that the two were strangely alike. As boys, notwithstanding the difference in their ages, they had often been mistaken for one another.

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