

can, though I haven't the slightest idea how I'm to get him to town at this time of night, in such a storm. But he's in a tight place, and I'll stand by him, if I freeze to death."

I liked that kind of talk, and liked the thoroughbred voice of the man whose features I could not discern in the gathering darkness. I turned and shook hands with him on the spot, and thus began my somewhat eventful acquaintance with Roy Mason.

I informed him that my cabin was not far away, and that he and his friend were welcome to its shelter.

It is, perhaps, needless to say, that my offer was accepted with alacrity, and half an hour later the injured man was lying on my bed, rendered as comfortable as the circumstances would admit, though still unconscious, and baffling the united surgical skill of his comrade and myself in our efforts to ascertain the extent of his injuries. No limbs were broken, and all indications seemed to point to the head as the seat of the injury. In lifting the long, unkempt hair, I discovered a contusion above the left temple, which led me to fear concussion of the brain, or fracture of the skull.

"I'll go for a doctor in the morning," said Mason. "I suppose there is some sort of a doctor in Yum Yum?" he added, interrogatively.

"Unfortunately, no," I replied, "there is no doctor nearer than Marionville, twenty miles away."

"Then I will go to Marionville," he said, immediately.

All night long we kept up a roaring fire in the fireplace, and held ourselves in readiness to bestow any attention the injured man might require. But he lay silent all night, breathing irregularly, and seeming to be in an almost death-like stupor, from which it was impossible to arouse him.

Apparently, he was about forty years of age, brawny and uncouth as to exterior, and evidently belonging to the commonest type of rough mountaineer. But if I found nothing striking nor interesting in his appearance, I could not say the same of his companion. Roy Mason's face was one to stamp itself indelibly upon the memory at first sight. Try as I might, I could not resist the fascination of gazing upon and striving to study those pale, clear-cut features, those great, dark eyes, with a sorrowful shadow in their depths that softened and purified the whole face when in repose.

Even in those first hours of our acquaintance, while we sat there conversing in subdued tones, or gazing silently at the blazing pine knots in the fireplace, I was conscious of something vaguely puzzling in the face before me—an anomalous commingling of strength and weakness, as it were.

The broad, nobly-rounded forehead and soulful eyes were suggestive of rare mental strength, and gave to the countenance an intellectual cast; but this was contradicted by a mouth almost effeminate in its curving beauty, softened rather than concealed, by a silky, brown mustache, and a chin too delicate in its mould to convey any idea of strength or firmness.

I think I was born something of a physiognomist, by which I mean that I can no more help striving to read a man's character through the index of his face, than I can help judging of his education and refinement by his language and manners. Hence, when Roy Mason's face baffled me, and I found I could not read nor classify it with my accustomed readiness, my interest in him was multiplied ten fold, and I found myself dwelling upon his every word, his lightest gesture, and watching his face for the smile that came at rare intervals, like a glow of June sunlight.

Physically, he was a handsome, strong, well made man, with a free, unstudied grace of movement, and that intangible something that we all recognize as the sign manual of cultured breeding and familiarity with life in varied phases. Amid the rough surroundings of my cabin home he seemed as much out of place as a glowing jewel dropped by accident into the mire of the gutter. He talked freely, but confined himself to generalities with a tact I could not but admire.

Several times during the long hours of that night, we peeped out to take note of the weather, and each time found the snow coming down thicker and faster, and piling itself in feathery whiteness deeper and deeper about the doorway. Some time after midnight the wind began to rise, and was soon roaring down the canyon, and shrieking in wild blasts about the cabin in a way that destroyed whatever hope I may have entertained of getting a physician for the injured man. I knew that by morning the drifts would be so nearly impassable that even should Mason succeed in reaching the valley, with the aid of snow shoes, he would find no disciple of Esculapius willing to undergo the same hardships. I said nothing to Mason, however—time enough in the morning, I thought, little anticipating the sad verification my thoughts would receive with the dawn of the coming day.

It was, indeed, time enough in the morning, for as the stormy night faded into the equally stormy dawn, the soul of the injured man silently took its flight from earth—so silently that had we not been attentive watchers, the solemn moment might have passed unnoticed.

As we stood looking down upon the set features, locked forever in the gray pallor of death, I turned