

often fail of getting back what they have lost of manhood and self control. I must know you can give up drink by seeing you do it before I can promise you."

Ray's face flushed hotly. Who was Nell Edmonds, that she should presume to demand more of him than his word! Why should he be put on trial! His pride rose in arms, and even love fled as he said—

"I should not think of any test of my word, Miss Edmonds, but I see you do not love me. Love doesn't argue things out in that cool fashion. I shall do as I please, and leave you the same privilege. When it pleases you I will take you home."

At this Nell's temper rose, too. She would have gone home alone, but she knew that would greatly displease her parents.

"We will go now, Mr. Kingsley," she said, drawing her slender figure up to its fullest dignity. "I know it is not customary to use any common sense on the question of love, but I had a friend who took a man's simple word. He meant what he promised, but in spite of his love and her faith, he brought untold misery upon her, and was killed in a drunken row."

Ray was subdued by Nell's evident emotion, but again pride whispered—

"She doesn't love you—she puts you on a level with a common drunkard."

So, in offended silence, he assisted her to mount, and they rode home scarcely interchanging a word. That night Ray and Frank rode to the nearest settlement, and the next week's county paper had an account of a disgraceful scene at Lowell's saloon. No names were mentioned, but Nell knew where her brother and his friend were on that night.

As Fourth of July approached great preparations were made for its celebration at the county seat. Nell, who was considered the most graceful and beautiful girl in the county, was invited to represent Liberty in the parade. She refused at first, feeling she could not take so conspicuous a position, but she was finally persuaded, and a most beautiful goddess she was in her mantle of stars and stripes, with the crown upon her proud little head.

Ray had been very gay since his talk with Nell at Willow Glen. Few suspected the hollowness of his mirth. He and Frank had avowed their intention of assisting the cowboys to "paint the town red" on the Fourth, and early that morning they started off with many jests, and Nell and her father soon followed.

The young men repaired to their favorite saloon, and then ensued a round of treats, after which a party of eight sat down for a game of cards. Frank was considerably muddled and soon grew silly, and his speeches caused roars of laughter in the group.

Soon there came a sound of music, and as it came nearer the young men became aware that the proces-

sion was approaching and would pass by the saloon. Frank sprang up, exclaiming in his drunken way—

"I'm a-goin'! W'y not? Horse right out 'ere! Easies' thing to join 'em! C'm on, fellers!"

They all laughed and he reeled out. They caught sight of him as his horse reared around, bewildered by the music and his rider's contradictory movements. Nearer came the procession, the band playing "Hail, Columbia." The wagonload of girls dressed in white, with the flag draped, and Liberty standing in the center, was just opposite the window. The band clashed, every patriotic spirit responded with "Three cheers for the red, white and blue." There was a commotion, a scream of horror, a sudden halting along the line, and Ray, still sitting at the card table, heard distinctly: "He's dead! Oh, he's dead!" in Nell's voice, the usually silvery tones fraught with grief and terror. Then, as if in pantomime, he saw the sunny-haired, golden-crowned Liberty lifted out of the car of state and her fluttering flag draperies partially cover a prostrate form some men were carrying into the next house. Ray and the other young men, stupefied with drink and a nameless horror, still sat at the table, but now Ray arose, steadying himself by the table, and raising one hand solemnly, he exclaimed—

"With God's help, not another drop of liquor shall ever pass my lips!"

Taking his hat he left the room with a firm step.

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A year had passed. Ray had spent it at his own place, almost entirely alone, busying himself with his cattle and spending his leisure hours in reading. He had seldom met Nell, but he saw grief had only added a new beauty to her face. He realized over and over what a mistake he had made in getting angry at her earnest, womanly talk, for he really loved her, but could never expect her to forgive and forget his share in her brother's death.

The Fourth of July had come again, but Ray felt sick whenever he thought of a demonstration. He stayed at home alone, and if retrospection is good for man, he surely should have been benefited. He sat under a tree about four o'clock in the afternoon, when he heard hoof beats, and glancing up saw—could he believe his eyes!—Nell Edmonds, sitting quietly on her pony, gazing at the spot she had selected for building. Ray readily saw she had come because she believed him to have gone away. From his position he could see her earnest, sad expression, and at last saw her clasp her hands and murmur—

"Oh, Ray, Ray! How can you be so cruel?"

In an instant he was beside her, crying eagerly—

"But how did I know you could trust me?"

And with roses chasing over brow and cheek she said, softly—

"Don't you suppose I heard of your Declaration of Independence?"

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