

lady and the child, and when the red lights of the rear car had faded away in the distance, Rushton went back to his room, and, flinging himself on his hard couch, sank into the deep sleep of exhaustion.

Morning brought the superintendent, a middle aged man with a stern mouth, but kindly eyes. Ere he had been in the office ten minutes, Rushton began his confession of how he had squandered the company's funds, and thereby proved himself untrustworthy. The whole wretched story was told. Once turned on the right track, Rushton was not the man to gloss over or palliate any of his own faults, and, when ended, he said, with quivering, white lips:

"I've told you all, sir—every bit. I know I have done wrong, and I am ready to let the law take its course."

"And so am I," said the superintendent, with a kindly look in his eyes. "The law of mercy shall take its course, but, Hugh Rushton, you are too noble a man to wear the striped clothes of a convict. I mean to put you on your feet again. No one shall know of—ahem—your fault. Ever since my wife reached home she has been devising plans for your benefit."

"Your wife?" inquiringly.

"Yes. You did not know, did you, that it was my only child you saved last night? Ah, it is my turn to thank you, Hugh Rushton. I am a stern man, perhaps, but not an ungrateful one."

Years afterward, when Hugh Rushton, esteemed and respected, was visiting his friends, the superintendent and his gentle wife, he told the latter, in low tones of shame and with tears in his eyes, of the evil design his frenzied brain had once meditated against her.

"The thought of it has haunted me for years, dear lady, has darkened the happiest moments, and I can not ease my conscience until you know just what a vile wretch I was!"

"My friend!" and she took his hand with her white fingers—"my friend, I knew about it all, and forgave you. The moon was bright that night, you remember, and by its light I saw your figure reflected in the water. From the stealthy, suspicious manner I apprehended some violent assault. But then"—and a smile overspread her fair face—"how quickly the black, ugly thought was changed into a beautiful and noble deed."

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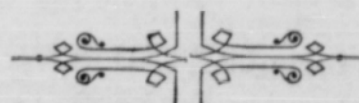
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