

THE FAMILY STORY



...PAYING A DEBT...

TILLMAN GRANT had come to the end of his tether and he knew it. He made no fuss about the matter, and any of his friends who met him that evening could not have told from his manner that anything was wrong. Grant had taken big chances to increase his fortune and now he realized that the jig was up, exposure might come in a week, or it might be delayed for a month, but it was sure to come, unless he had £1,000 in hand cash, and that amount he knew he could not get. Of course if exposure could have been staved off for some years everything might come out all right; old Monckton might die and young Monckton come into the business.

Old Monckton, Grant's employer, was a hard-hearted skindint who would have no mercy when investigation showed that his assistant was a defaulter. He was hard, even to his own son, and it wasn't likely that he would show mercy to one who was no relative of his.

On the other hand Stillman Grant, who was a calculating young fellow, had many times helped young Monckton when in trouble of a monetary nature. He did this not because he liked the young man particularly, but because he was his employer's son and would some time come into the business.

Young Monckton owed Grant money, but even if he paid it all that night it was not enough to cover the defalcation, and so was useless.

Grant had taken the money, not in any momentary weakness, but because he calculated he could make himself a rich man by the use of it. These calculations turned out to be erroneous, and for months Grant had been exercising his ingenuity to stave off exposure. He had not deluded himself with any false views as to what would happen when exposure came. He had made up his mind. There should be no trial with imprisonment at the end of it. He knew an easier way out of the difficulty than that. He had bought a quantity of morphine which he knew, when the time came to take it, would insure him a swift and tolerably easy death. He knew that six or seven, or perhaps ten years' imprisonment was the penalty for his offense and he had no desire or intention of facing such a punishment.

He walked that night to his rooms overlooking the Thames embankment.



HE WATCHED IT AS IT SETTLED.

He went to an cupboard and spent some time in choosing with particular care a bottle of wine he intended to drink. He poured out a small draught of the beverage and taking the paper of morphine he opened it carefully and sprinkled the white contents on the surface of the wine. He watched it as it slowly settled and finally disappeared in the liquid; then he poured another glass of wine and drank it off. There was no hurry about drinking the poisoned cup; he had all the night before him, so he drew his comfortable arm-chair up to the fire and sat down wondering who would find his dead body in the morning. At last taking up the poisoned glass he paused for a moment with it in his hand, thinking he heard a step on the stair. The next minute his surprise was a certainty as someone rapped at his door. Hastily putting

down the glass, he shouted, "Come in," forgetting the door was locked; then he rose hurriedly, drew the bolt back and opened the door.

"Hullo, Charley," Grant said when he saw who it was. The son of his employer entered with a radiant look on his face.

"Well, Stillman, I have come to secure my debt to you. I have made up my mind that you shall not suffer by my having borrowed money from you."

"Oh, that's all right," said Grant carelessly, "I don't need the money."

"No, I know you don't need it," said Monckton, "but it struck me that if anything happened to me my father would never acknowledge the debt and you would be out of just that much."

"It doesn't really matter, you know," said Stillman Grant in the same unconcerned voice. "I shall always be happy to lend you money when you need it and I have it."

"Thanks, old fellow, I know that," said Young Monckton. "You are as generous as the old man is stingy. Nevertheless, I got a windfall the other day and the minute I received the money I thought of you."

"Ah," said Grant, with his eyes brightening somewhat. "How much was it?"

"Five hundred pounds in one lump," answered the other.

"Oh," said Grant in a disappointed tone.

"You don't congratulate me," cried Young Monckton. "Five hundred pounds are not to be scoffed at."

"No," replied Grant; "still £500 isn't a fortune, you know."

"It isn't, but it might be turned into a tidy sum of money. Now let me tell you what I have done, Grant. I know I will never be able to pay you that sum of money; if I became a partner in the business it might be different, so I took part of the £500 and insured my life for £2,000, making it payable to you at my death. If I live I will eventually come into the business and then you will get back the money you have lent me with handsome interest; but if I am cut off in one of my sprees, which is more than likely, then you will get back all your money with interest at several thousand per cent."

As the young man said this he drew from an inner pocket what Grant saw was evidently an insurance policy.

"There you are, my boy, with the first year's premium paid," said Monckton, as he threw the policy on the table.

"I'll leave it with you, because you are a steady, sober fellow. If I can't pay the next premium when it falls due you'll pay it for me and charge it up to the account I already owe you. You see, my friend, you are quite safe as far as your money is concerned, whether I become a staid, respectable and rich man of business, or whether I am cut off in the flower of my youth."

Grant lay back in his chair with his eyes partially closed, as he picked up and examined the document. He saw it was all right and perfectly legal. At last he said, in a low tone and with deliberation: "I think you might have spent your money much more profitably, Monckton, than in paying a year's premium on your life. Bless me! you will live till you are 90."

"I hope so," said the young man, "but meanwhile you take care of that document, and if the time ever comes that there is money collectable on it you are the man who is to have it. As you see, I have made the policy solely to you."

"Thanks, old man," said Grant, as he placed the policy on the table.

"Well," said Monckton, "I must be off. Won't you come out and take a drink?"

"I think not," said Grant; "I'm busy to-night, but if you wish a drink, have a glass of wine with me."

"I don't mind if I do," said young Monckton.

Grant pushed towards his the glass of wine in which he had sprinkled the morphine, then he poured out wine for himself in another glass. "Here's to you," he said, drinking.

Young Monckton drank off the wine

and smacked his lips after. "That has a curious taste, Grant," he said; "what is it?"

"Oh, it is a special brand I drink when I am not sleeping well. You will find it very soothing."

"Well, good night, Stillman, old fellow."

"Good night to you, Monckton, and pleasant dreams."

"Oh, I'm not going to dreams yet awhile," said Monckton. "A few of us are to have some games at the Raquet Club."

"Ah," said Grant; "that's a long distance from here. Better have a hansom. Come, I'll see you out."

They walked down the stair together and at the door young Monckton said: "Yes, I think I will have a hansom. I feel rather drowsy."

"Oh, you'll be all right when you get into the fresh air," rejoined Grant. The young man staggered slightly, as if he were intoxicated. The other watched him go down the street and hail a cab.

"Poor devil," said Grant to himself, as he turned away. "He was an unlucky chap to come in at that moment on that particular errand. There is a time for everything, and that was not the time for insurance policies. I suppose that, not having premeditated the murder, I have left some loose clew that will enable the police to trace the thing to me. Still I shall be no worse off than I was an hour ago, and after all, nothing matters very much. Bet a fiver I'll be caught."

But he wasn't. The medical men said the young fellow had died of a disease with a long name, and then the insurance company claimed it had been defrauded by the fact of his having the malady concealed from them. Thus was the honest man defrauded out of

his insurance money, and he was nabbed by the police for his defalcations before he could purchase more poison. In one of her Majesty's prisons he now regrets the fate of his friend.—Detroit Free Press.



COME, I'LL SHOW YOU OUT.

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The Era of Peace.

Great Britain is now building eighty-nine war vessels; France is a close second, with eighty-three; Russia is now working on thirty-nine peacemakers, Italy on thirteen and Germany on nineteen, but the late large appropriation for the German navy will greatly enlarge the Kaiser's operations. Explosive bullets have been long excluded from civilized warfare as barbarous, but sensitive Britain is chuckling over a new missile designed to convert heathen Afridis and Africans from the error of their ways, which simply means murder, expanding from a clean, round hole at the point of entrance to a ragged chasm three or four inches in diameter.

Equal to Nerve Tonic.

"Hear about the robbery last night?" asked the grocer.

"No," replied the early customer; "where did it occur?"

"Right here," said the grocer; "thieves broke into my store and stole three barrels of sugar."

"Well," mused the customer, "I suppose they will have sand enough to tackle a bank the next time."

A New Envelope.

An envelope for carrying merchandise through the mails is so constructed with reversible flaps and a stiffening strip attached to the closing flap that the inside of the envelope may become the outside, and the same envelope used to return merchandise in the same manner in which it was forwarded.

An Unfortunate Offer.

Adolphus Duddington (pleadingly)—Don't be cruel and hard-hearted, colonel. Give me your daughter's hand, and I promise she shall never be separated from her family.

Col. Bluntly—That's precisely why I object to the marriage.—Detroit Free Press.

Might Be True.

Doctor—There is one thing in the scriptures that puzzles me, and that is to what the longevity of the ancients can be attributed. Have you any theory to offer?

Minister—It may have been owing to the fact that there were no physicians in those days.

The hotel clerk who puts on a brilliant front is not the only pebble. A great many newspaper men use paste too.

SCIENCE AND INVENTION

The tint of birds' eggs, especially the light colors, are apt to fade, on exposure in museums to too great sunlight. This is the case with the greenish blue eggs, as those of the nurre. By experiment the darker colored eggs of olive brown or chocolate hue have been found to undergo little change.

A very curious method of making an underground conduit or pipe is reported from France. A trench is dug, and cement or concrete placed in the bottom. On this an inflated canvas-covered rubber tube is laid, and more cement is added until the tube is covered. When the cement has set, the tube is allowed to collapse and is withdrawn, leaving a concrete or cement conduit.

A Russian chemist has discovered a most powerful anaesthetic. It is several thousand times more powerful than chloroform, volatilizes most readily, and acts when freely mixed with air at great distances. Experiments are being made at St. Petersburg to see if it cannot be enclosed in bombs, which would have the extraordinary effect of anaesthetizing instead of wounding the enemy.

A correspondent of Nature tells a remarkable story of a dog, which having, through an accident, lost both legs on the right-hand side, has learned to walk and to run on its two remaining legs. Enough remains of the right foreleg to serve as an occasional prop, but when running the dog touches the ground only with the two left legs. With these it hops rapidly along, and having been a trained sheep-dog before the accident it manages to herd its flock as it did when it had all its legs.

The Scientific American describes an electric trolley road wagon which has been invented and tested at Reno, Nevada. Wires, like those used in city streets, are stretched on poles along the road, and the wagon receives its current from those wires by means of a connecting cable, automatically, to two hundred feet, if necessary, thus permitting the wagon to turn around, or to follow curves in the road. It is suggested that water-power may be utilized to develop the electricity.

The use of aluminum is gradually spreading, and has now been applied to the making of violins. Violins made entirely of aluminum are said to have a richer tone than those made of wood, and the inventor declares that he has found a property in the metal which consists of a tendency of the fundamental tones to outweigh the upper tones. For this reason means are employed by which the player can regulate or introduce the partial tones to suit his individual taste. Naturally the feeling for wooden violins is still very strong, but the aluminum instruments are having a steady sale.

How often we hear the remark, "We shall have rain, the atmosphere is so heavy." The reverse is true. When one sees smoke hanging from a chimney, with a tendency to sink to the ground, it indicates that the atmosphere is light—in fact, too light to float the smoke. When the smoke rises from the chimney it indicates a heavy atmosphere. A column of smoke is not a bad barometer, for a barometer simply records the pressure of the atmosphere. When the atmosphere is light and the smoke settles, the pressure of the mercury is light and the column falls, indicating storm. When the atmosphere is heavy and the smoke rises, the pressure is greater and the column rises, indicating fair weather.

Aged Man a Wanderer.

Investigations regarding the report that an old man named Alonzo Huntley had walked from this city to Niles, Mich., has resulted in a curious story. The old gentleman not only hails from Council Bluffs, but he has a remarkable history. He has relatives in various portions of the country who are willing and able to care for him, but he absolutely refuses to take up a permanent abiding place.

There is something pathetic about his wanderings. Years ago his wife died, and from a happy, steady husband he developed into a veritable wandering Jew. With the grief occasioned by that event his mind became unsettled, and he could not be satisfied any place. He has a sister, Mrs. Tinnell, of Monona County, in this State, and a niece in this city, Mrs. F. M. Phillips. He was staying with the Phillips family, but last spring became restless and started to find his sister, Mrs. Badger, supposed to live near Niles, Mich. He invariably carries his bucksaw and is followed by a devoted little black dog. His wanderings have covered a large area of the United States. He depends upon his wood sawing for a living, and when money is given him by his relatives he saves it and walks rather than spend it for car fare. Once he started from Michigan and tramped to California in search of Mrs. Tinnell, whom he found on his return trip at Plattsmouth, Neb.

Eight or nine years ago he had a job of wood clearing near this city and decided to marry and settle down once

more. So he purchased a new suit of clothes and took his bride to a small cottage. Love in the cottage was short lived, and one day about three weeks after the marriage things became too interesting for him, and he deliberately threw a plate at his spouse, picked up his bucksaw, whistled to his dog and left his wife to get a divorce, which she very promptly did.—Council Bluffs Nonpareil.

TAMED HER UNRULY PUPIL.

Thrashed Him and His Sister and Expelled Them Both.

There is one young school teacher in Long Island who need never be out of a job. So completely did she succeed in quelling a rebellion last week that offers from other places have already been received, but the school directors will not hear of her departure. Her name is Ella Hart, and here is how she came to establish herself so firmly in her present position:

John Coleman, who is a boy of tender years, but tough tendencies, has for several days been living under the shadow of the rod. Miss Hart has an official whip, and Friday her experienced observation told her that John Coleman was ripe for castigation and she called him up to receive his due. The operation proceeded with complete success for a few moments, John Coleman gave all the evidences of mortal anguish customary to such occasions. He squirmed and twisted and rended the air with lamentations, protestations and ejaculations of penitence.

Stella Coleman, a stout girl of 16 years, sister of Johnnie, heard the walls of her brother and appeared as a rescue and punitive force. She dashed into the room like a young whirlwind and attacked the teacher with a rush. The boy took advantage of the diversion to rub himself a few times where he felt that rubbing was necessary and salutary and then joined in the attack. Miss Coleman scratched vindictively and reached for her teacher's hair. Miss Hart proceeded methodically and according to the most approved principles of pedagogics. She first captured the girl's hands and then tripped her up, threw her and sat on her. Then she reached for her whip and thrashed Miss Coleman, until all the fight and most of the family affection were thrashed out of her. After that she caught Johnnie Coleman and began on him all over again.

Having completed her work conscientiously and thoroughly, she expelled both the offenders and appeared before the trustees, scratched and somewhat flattered and disheveled, but triumphant, and reported her action. She was sustained and the school will probably continue its exercises peacefully.

VENOMOUS CONFLICT.

Fight Between a Tarantula and a Rattlesnake.

The mention of a tussle between a spider and a snake does not conjure up a very exciting scene; but the description recently given of a meeting of rattlesnakes and a tarantula spider shows that the insect is by no means a despicable opponent.

As I caught sight of them (says the narrator), the tarantula was bristling, while the rattlesnake reared his head and thrust forth his forked tongue with the rapidity of lightning. Thus the two strange and deadly creatures remained for a moment, gazing at each other.

Suddenly there was heard the thrilling whirr of the snake's rattle, and with the pliancy of a steel spring the snake threw himself into a coil, with his head raised in the center and vibrating rapidly from side to side. The tarantula was as immovable as if carved in stone. Then with a motion almost too swift for the eye to follow, the rattler struck; but he missed his mark, for the tarantula, with the speed of lightning, bounded into the air, and descending on one of the serpent's coils, sunk his fangs into the flesh.

The snake instantly began thrashing, and dislodged his foe. Again the tarantula became immovable, and again the serpent coiled and struck, only to be foiled. Fire seemed to flash from the eyes of both the contestants, and both appeared to know that it was a fight to the death.

There was now a tremulous motion visible in every limb of the tarantula, and it was evident that he was contemplating offensive measures. With a huge leap he bounded upon his foe, and once more sank his fangs into the body of the snake. This time it was in vain for the serpent to writhe and flounder for the tarantula clung to his enemy with the tenacity of a bulldog.

The spider was bruised and beaten, some of his legs were broken, but he held on with desperate courage, and gradually the efforts of the rattler grew weaker, until at last his coils relaxed, and, with only a faint vibration of his tail, he lay stretched upon the ground, dead. The venom of the tarantula had done its work.

The fight lasted only ten minutes, and was a most thrilling exhibition of ferocity and courage. The quickness of motion exhibited by the tarantula was marvelous, and through it he avoided being even once struck by the serpent.

The druggist would rather sell a pound of cure than an ounce of prevention.