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ETERNAL LOVE

A Test That Tried Two and
Found One Wanting

By F. TOWNSEND SMITH
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Helen Stanley believed that love should be immortal, that true love was immortal. But how recognize true love? If divorces only occurred between those who had made marriages of convenience it would argue that incompatibility was only to be found among those who married without love. Miss Stanley knew well that many marriages between those who were infatuated with each other turned out unfortunately. Possessing ingenuity, she hit upon a plan of determining whether a case of love was true love or spurious. She treasured this plan in her mind for a long while, and when Ernest Gregory offered himself to her and she accepted him she resolved to put it into practice.

Her scheme was to betake herself, no far as her lover was concerned, out of the world. He was to understand that she was dead. If he loved her, with that love which was immortal he would never mate again. Having proved that he was hers and hers only for all eternity, whether in the flesh or in the spirit, she would return to him, and their mortal union would be a delight.

Miss Stanley was an orphan and possessed an income sufficient to enable her to go to some remote country and disappear. She made a will so that after her supposed death her property could not be administered until after she had had time to return to life and placed cash in a foreign bank sufficient for her expenses during her supposed residence in the spirit world.

When Miss Stanley informed her lover that she was about to go abroad he was much surprised and chagrined.



THE WOMAN COVERED HER FACE WITH HER HANDS.

Very much in love with her, he felt that the separation would be trying to him. She told him that there was an immortal love; that they were united not only for this world, but for the next. Therefore a separation of a few months should not be considered of much moment. She realized that after their marriage no opportunity would likely occur to them to travel, since he was tied down to the practice of his profession she had better make the trip before their marriage.

A refusal to assent to this would have been an arrant selfishness, so Gregory gave his consent, resolving to get on without his love as best he could till her return. When he bade her goodbye on the steamer he said to her: "If you meet any one over there you like better than me don't hesitate to sacrifice me. I love you too well to stand in the way of your happiness." "Ernest," she said impressively, "you know that I believe in an eternal love. My love for you is of this kind. It only remains to be seen whether yours for me is the same. If anything happens to me you are free to marry another. If you do it will indicate that your love for me is not the kind that I require. But heaven grant that your love for the wife you take may prove everlasting!"

There was something so spiritually elevating about these words that Gregory felt that if he lost her his life on earth would be blighted. If he had known that his love was to be sub-

mitted to a test, a test which would at it as useless and absurd. He had his fingers crossed and his heart was torn by his emotion for the better of him.

Miss Stanley went to Paris, where she ordered her trunk. Her love had shown such unmistakable signs of constancy that she did not doubt he would stand the test to which she intended to subject him. At any rate she was ready to take the risk of securing her wedding partner. From Paris she went to Gibraltar and crossed the strait to Tangier. There she fitted out an expedition to go on to the desert of Sahara.

Two weeks later the Arabs who Miss Stanley had hired for the expedition returned to Tangier and reported that robbers had attacked the caravan, murdered the American lady, traveler and taken everything that belonged to her.

In reporting the case the American consul at Tangier said that Miss Stanley had doubtless been murdered by her own attendants; that it was a common occurrence for a traveler to be thus dispatched, his belongings appropriated, and in order to escape punishment the men he had hired would lay the blame on the robbers that infest the desert.

When Ernest Gregory heard of his fiancée's death his friends feared for a time that he would lose his reason. He sailed at once for Gibraltar, crossed to Tangier and interviewed some of those who had been with Miss Stanley at the time of the tragedy, with a view to discovering if he could secure the body. The rumors at once caught on to a plan for making money. They said that they had buried Miss Stanley's body in a certain oasis and would go and get it for a consideration. Gregory hired them and went with them. They dug up a corpse, but the composition forbade opening the casket which contained it. However, they gave Gregory enough proof that these were the remains of the American lady traveler to convince any one not conversant with the Bedouin conscience. Gregory took the precious relic to America and deposited it in a cemetery where he could visit it frequently. Within a few months a beautiful white marble shaft arose over the grave with an appropriate inscription. On the reverse were the words, "Immortal Love."

Miss Stanley had tied up her property for five years, and they passed without a word having been heard from her. When the time approached for an administration of her property attorneys employed by her different relations began to take measures for a division of her estate. One morning Gregory, who was living a life such as she had indicated she would have him live, was treasuring her resting place on earth and looking forward to his reunion with her in heaven. One day he was laying flowers on her grave, and, looking up, he saw a woman and a little girl between three and four years of age gazing at him.

"Are you Helen in the flesh or Helen in spirit?" he asked.

Whether flesh or spirit, the woman covered her face with her hands.

"Speak."

"Mamma," cried the little girl.

"What's the matter?"

Gregory advanced and, taking the woman's wrists in his hands, exposed her face.

"Yes, you are Helen," he said, "and living."

"Mamma, come away."

"Mamma!" exclaimed Gregory. "Is this your mamma?"

"Yes. Come, mamma; let us go away from here."

"I see it all," wailed Gregory. "You left me to submit me to a test. You wished to know if my love for you was of that immortal kind you coveted. Look!" pointing to the shaft and the flowers on the grave. "Are you convinced?"

When he ceased to speak there was only silence. Then, with an effort, his face changed. Taking the child in his arms, he kissed her and said: "Pardon me, little one, for troubling your mamma. It is all over. Come, let us go away from here; the spot is hateful."

Leading the child, he started down a path that led to an exit from the cemetery, the woman walking beside him. Before entering the crowded street he stopped and said:

"One word. As I have lived so long I always. What with you has been mortal with me is everlasting."

Then they passed through the inclosure he never entered again.

Helen Stanley during her trip to the desert crossed the path of a young American traveler. She confided to him her intention to disappear from the world, and he helped her to carry it out. His own men by his order attacked her party and drove them away. Then the white man and the white woman journeyed together to Tripoli. Before reaching that city Miss Stanley found that she had met her true mate. Deeply in love, she had no thought of applying a test. Indeed, she dared not do so, fearing to lose the man whose being was as necessary to her as the air she breathed.

The period of her effort to remain faithful to her immortal love in America was of brief duration. They were married before leaving northern Africa, and Ernest Gregory was left to cherish the rotting corpse of a daughter of the desert.

The wife would probably have remained buried for the rest of her life had it not been that children came to her, and it became necessary for her to come to life in order to transmit to them their inheritance. She had lived in countries where she was not liable to be heard of till it became necessary for her to return to America to prevent her property being given to clamorous relatives. She had returned incognito, and, having heard that her "immortal" lover had erected a shaft over her remains, she had been seized with a morbid curiosity to discover the truth. She had found him at her grave and decided to take her punishment then and there.

Gregory remained wedded to an immortal love. There was nothing worldly in it. The woman he had loved died before him and left him a share of her property. But he declined to accept it, turning it over to her children. He had been disappointed in his worldly love, and with his spiritual love those things which pertain to earth could have nothing in common. He died as he had lived—in a wellock of the soul.

Attack Like Tigers

In fighting to keep the blood pure the white corpuscles attack disease germs like tigers. But often germs multiply so fast the little fighters are overcome. Then see pimples, boils, eczema, salt rheum and sores multiply and strength and appetite fail. This condition demands Electric Bitters to regulate stomach, liver and kidneys and to expel poisons from the blood. "They are the best blood purifier," writes C. T. Budahn, of Tracy, Calif. "I have ever found." They make rich, red blood, strong nerves and build up your health. Try them. 50c at all druggists.

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Thirty Years Together.

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Lodges are requested to notify this office on election of officers and on change of meeting night. Cards under this head are 75c per inch per month.

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