

Personal Talk With You.

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"The Kiss of Fire"

"There's your novel. I've read it."

"Well?"

"There's no use of my trying to tell you down easy, Jimmy. You may as well tell the truth. It's only fitted to be read by the occupants of a lunatic asylum."

Jimmy looked as if his friend had thrust a knife into his bosom. He was one of a lot of artists who inhabited the same rookery and every man of them on the verge of starvation.

"I tell you what, Jim," continued the speaker, "I'm a practical fellow at best, but I have a scheme for working off this stuff you've written on a friend who is a publisher. He's practical too. I'm going to see him."

"Do you want the manuscript?"

"No," John Melcher, the merciless friend, went to the publisher and made a proposition which induced him to publish "The Kiss of Fire."

Melcher was in charge of the introduction of the book to the public in his own way. He relied implicitly on the members of his gang, who were to act as a clique under his direction.

The book had been issued when all of them, having been coached by Melcher, went in different directions.

Each stopped upon passing a stand or store where books are sold and asked for "The Kiss of Fire."

When told that they had no copy of the book, the inquirer would be struck dumb with amazement and hurry away.

Before nightfall of the first day there had been from half a dozen to a dozen inquiries for the novel in the book shop in the city.

Melcher had instructed his hand to work the trumpeting and the inquiries among the booksellers with equal zeal, well knowing that to "make a market" without providing a supply would be useless.

The booksellers gave small orders for the book, and occasionally some one to whom the gang sounded its praises bought one.

Melcher was not idle. He purchased a friend, Olcott, who was the leader of a literary club, to read the story.

The reader's report upon it was, "For idiots, fools and lunatics, the most remarkable work of the century."

Melcher went to the publisher and told Olcott had pronounced "The Kiss of Fire" the most remarkable work of the century.

Melcher falling to mention for what class of readers. Before Olcott heard of this remark, he had not read the book.

One independent fellow pronounced it "rot," but the best "rot" he had ever read.

All young girls entering society, hearing of the commotion it was creating and assuming for that reason the book must be a model of literary excellence, pronounced it "perfectly lovely."

Then it was announced as "the best seller of the week."

Checks began to come in from the publisher. They were sent to Melcher who apportioned them between the author and his gang.

Thus encouraged, the clique worked on. But further effort was not necessary. The fame had been kindled, and Melcher had had them in an attempt to put it out they could not have done so.

It must burn till the fuel was exhausted. The critics abused the book, inveighing against the decline of literary taste, but they were not heeded.

Every one who read it talked about "The Kiss of Fire." Then suddenly, at the end of three months, the label ceased.

Everybody had read the book and was ready for the next wonder.

About this time the literary editor of a prominent magazine fell ill, and Ben Hathaway, an understrapper, who took care of the books to be reviewed, happened on "The Kiss of Fire."

He read it and was delighted with it. He entered his head to try his hand at writing a criticism on it.

He did so, and the criticism got into the magazine before the editor resumed his post.

The late Robert Louis Stevenson has said in the preface to one of his books, "We write to our friends, and the public pays the postage."

Now, it happened that Jimmy Heesler, a writer back of a pair of strange eyes far above in that peculiar brain of his, had some very singular fancies.

With which only a brain in rapport with his own would sympathize. In other words, when Heesler wrote "The Kiss of Fire" he was writing it to himself.

Hathaway in his criticism spoke very highly of the novel. He could not explain it. Indeed, he did not fully understand it, for no two brains are alike in all their parts.

Nevertheless of all the criticisms written on Heesler's work Hathaway's was the only one emanating from a reader who had been in touch with the author's fancies.

The pictured readers had been similarly sympathetic cannot be determined.

When Hathaway's chief saw that the magazine had during his absence committed to the approval of "The Kiss of Fire" he took to his bed again, but not before he had discharged Hathaway. The periodical was looked up to by a certain class of literary people as a bulwark against any work that would not stand the test of criticism.

And suffered a severe blow in the estimation of those persons on account of what they called "The Kiss of Fire."

Of Some Use In the World.

By HOWARD FIELDING.

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EDGAR SHENSTONE was one of those lesser captains of finance and moderately swollen multimillionaires whose names have not become household words.

In fact he was so quiet and unobtrusive in his ways that when our Wall street man came to me with a tip on Shenstone he began by asking if I knew him.

The city editor of a newspaper is expected to know everybody, so that question will serve to indicate how inconspicuous Shenstone was.

I responded that I had never had the pleasure of meeting that particular pirate, but I had heard of his name in a big speculative pool that is being organized," continued Miles, the Wall street man.

"The operations will probably be sensational enough to call for a spread sheet."

Upon this hint I looked up Shenstone in the "orgue," as we call the great collection of clippings arranged in envelopes and carefully catalogued that every important newspaper keeps for reference.

There was an envelope marked "Shenstone, Edgar, Broker," but its contents were disappointing.

I was particularly grieved to learn that we had no portrait, and after various unsuccessful attempts to procure one I sent a photographer to snapshot Mr. Shenstone, but he failed.

In the course of that week a writer named Sidney Colbert called to see me and asked for work.

He was a gentleman in his way, but entirely useless on a newspaper. His vocation was literature, and he had written some very good stuff that had been printed in the best magazines, but he had no aptitude for enduring poverty.

I don't know how it happened, but somehow in the course of breaking to Sidney the sad news that he must continue to struggle because neither the Daily Record nor any other human institution had any use for him I mentioned the unsuccessful search for Shenstone's portrait.

Thereupon Sidney fell into deep thought. The furrows by which his handsome countenance was wrecked and riven became positively painful to behold, and he maintained so long a silence that I began to think of ways to be rid of him.

Suddenly he said: "I can get you a likeness of Mr. Shenstone." And then, with earnestness, "If I give you my word that I will not fail will you—er—could you—"

"Well," he said in rasping desperation, "that you might be willing to pay as much as \$5 for the portrait, and if—"

"Oh, Sidney," said I, "why don't you get a business manager? Five dollars!"

"Is it too much?"

I laughed aloud.

"Here's an expense order for ten," said I. "Bring me a good picture by ten o'clock tomorrow afternoon and I'll give you fifteen more. If you had might be penitence. It appeared, however, that she was a fairly good manager, and though the allowance upon which she lived was barely sufficient for her support, she had never gone into debt.

Indeed she had for a time preserved some small savings, but these she had spent for Sidney during his illness. Sidney did not know this, of course. It would never occur to him that little expenses for a sick man's delicate provider could have any considerable total.

I saw Sidney quite frequently after that, but did not see Sidney nor could I get track of him, though I made various endeavors. A hint from Sylvia gave me the impression that the mysterious work in which Sidney was engaged might not be viewed with approval by a stern moralist, and this led me to believe that he was employed by Shenstone. It was possible, however, that he might be serving Shenstone's enemies. Consider it possible that his resemblance to the speculator was being used in some wild scheme of persuasion? Sidney would never consent to such dishonesty, but in the hands of the shrewd and reckless men who were fighting Shenstone's case, it would be a mere child. It would be no trouble at all for them to make Sidney believe that black was white.

Sylvia was as careless as most women are of the ethics of business. Her sole anxiety in this matter was for Sidney's health. I made out that she had either very meager reports of him or none at all.

"I should not be surprised any day to hear that he was dead," said she, with black foreboding written on her face.

I think it was not twenty-four hours afterward that I was going through the regular daily report from one of the city newspaper typewriters upon the thin, dirty yellow paper that they use:

"Sidney Colbert, a writer, was taken to St. Margaret's hospital late last night suffering with fever of the stomach. An immediate operation will be necessary. In this disease surgery is not resorted to until the ulcer penetrates the wall of the organ, and the chances are always against the patient. Doctors at the hospital declined to discuss the case."

As soon as I could get away from the office I went to see Sylvia. She was at home. Presumably she was at St. Margaret's. There, however, I could get no word of her, nor was I able, with all my "pull," either to see Sidney or to send him a message. I obtained the information that the operation had been performed and that the patient's condition was fairly good. On the following day I learned that he was dead.

As Sidney had no near relatives I joined with some other men who had known him, and we claimed his body. The funeral was held in the chapel adjoining the hospital, and we gathered quite a company of mourners. But Sylvia was not present, and I could not find her. My anxiety was extreme, for I knew that she had loved Sidney with all her heart, but before I had taken any step to trace her through the usual public machinery I received a rather curt message that she had come in her old home in Maine.

About three weeks later, however, I met her on the street. It was near the place where she had lived, and I accompanied her there. "Sylvia," said I when we stood in her little sitting room, "you say you have just got back to town. I don't believe you've ever been away."

"I haven't," she admitted. "I took her by the arm. "You are happy," said I, "foreverly happy. What does this mean? Not very long ago I stood by the grave of a man I thought you loved."

"You didn't," she whispered. "I'm dead!" I cried as a blow and stared at her.

"I have felt this in my bones," said I slowly. "I have dreamed it at night. We buried Shenstone!"

"Swear to me," she cried, "that you never saw him!"

"Give me the story," said I. "You have my word."

"Mr. Shenstone was taken ill," said she, "just at the beginning of a great fight. I don't fully understand it. I know all about that. He was managing a mighty big pool."

"It was thought that if the news of his serious illness got about," she continued, "the speculative public would have swamped it in one day."

"Yes; that's it. Now, Sidney had been to see Mr. Shenstone for you to ask him for a photograph of himself, which Mr. Shenstone refused. So they knew how they should look like Mr. Shenstone. He had been ill for some time, and as both men had been ill the deception was made easier. They offered Sidney \$20 a week merely to go to Mr. Shenstone's house every day and sit in the private room. But, of course, they didn't let anybody in who knew Mr. Shenstone well. And Sidney has been living in Mr. Shenstone's house. They were both there together until Mr. Shenstone died. It was then that he was seen by me. Then he was secretly smuggled into the hospital as Sidney Colbert. They begged me to go to the funeral, but I could not. I should have died at the sight of him," said I.

"The coffin was sealed."

"They don't want Sidney any more," she resumed after a shuddering pause. "It will be announced that Mr. Shenstone is going home, and his body will be going secretly to Dakota, where she will get a divorce for abandonment. And he is dead! Won't it be dreadful!"

"And Sidney?"

"I shall be married very quietly, and we shall go to Italy. They are to give him a thousand dollars."

"What?"

"A thousand dollars," said I. "If my dear young friend," said I, "if they ever let it out it will drive those men up the tallest tree in the United States. They'll have to run for their lives. A thousand dollars, indeed! Just let me drop a hint in certain quarters, merely a hint, and you'll see what happens. You don't understand the fraud and trickery of which Sidney has been the mainstay. To you his act even savored of virtue. It seemed unjust that Mr. Shenstone's enemies should prosper, and he should be so miserably poor. They nearly frightened them to death. They executed contortions of apology and performed miracles of explanation, and the result was that Sidney got a life pension of \$5,000 a year upon which he increased income he and his wife were living in the most delicious content by the blue Mediterranean, and Sidney is writing a book, which will make his name famous. No; not his name, for that is on a tombstone, but the carving. Perhaps the book will be by Edgar Shenstone."

London's Water Supply. It has been estimated that if a city covering 850 acres and 345 feet high could be constructed and the water supply of London for one year turned into the warships of all the world's navies could ride at anchor in the harbor of London. It is estimated that the water supply of London for one year would cover 850 acres and 345 feet high could be constructed and the water supply of London for one year turned into the warships of all the world's navies could ride at anchor in the harbor of London.

BABY'S WINTER CLOTHING.

The Practical Dressing of a Year Old Baby.

The tradition is, I believe, that a child should be kept in white until its second year.

This means a great deal of expense and care on the part of poor people and even people in moderate circumstances who send their children out religiously every day.

I am happy to say this tradition is being done away with. This season it is possible to obtain one year dress in blue and brown coats. These have tiny poke bonnets of velvet and satin to match, and the effect is really much smarter than the cheap white costumes one sees.

The sport is still used in winter, but it made warm and cozy by means of an angora robe, which is part of the narrow expressly for it. Part of the sport is still used in winter, but it made warm and cozy by means of an angora robe, which is part of the narrow expressly for it.

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There can be no mistake about this. You know it is true. And your own doctor will say so.

The best kind of a testimonial—"Held for over sixty years."

Made by J. C. Ayer & Co., Lowell, Mass. Also manufacturers of Sarsaparilla, Blood Purifier, Hair Vigor.

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You Cannot Afford to take chances

Of course those who are acquainted with Watkins Liniment would not be without a full supply at any time as it is good both internally and externally for man and beast.

For Coughs and Colds try our Cough Cure, money back if not satisfied. Watkins Laxative is the very best liquid laxative made, as over 400 customers in Sherman County can testify. It not only acts as a laxative but tonic as well.

After some search they found a path that led straight up to the wild place. They followed it and at last discovered an aged negro sitting before his wretched hut smoking his pipe, while he kept an eye on the flag.

"What's the flag for?" some one asked.

"Perfection," said the old man quietly. "I heah dey done begin suadder revolution, so I put hit up. Yas, sah, I come here twenty-two years ago and I see dat old man, 'Tus George, as cook on a steamer out o' Savannah."

"[Lak de place] Yas, sah. Plan yam an' coffee an' cassava. Resolutions don trouble dis aligah. Ebery time dey resolute down yam dey go de flag, an' dat's all dere is to hit."

"Since we have been married I've grown sorry I saved you from drowning that time."

"So leave it."—Houston Post.

Fools, like children, may always tell the truth, as the proverb says, but that is not the reason they are fools.—Somerville Journal.

Hicks—Does your wife believe all you tell her?

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"The Blood is the Life."

Science has never gone beyond the above simple statement of scriptural. But it has illustrated that statement and given it a meaning ever broadening with the increasing breadth of knowledge.

When the blood is "bad" or impure it is not alone the body which suffers through disease. The brain is also affected, the mind and judgment are dulled, and many an evidence of impure blood is to be seen in the face, in the eyes, in the hair, in the skin, in the blood, in the urine, in the sweat, in the breath, in the odor of the body, in the taste of the food, in the taste of the drink, in the taste of the air, in the taste of the water, in the taste of the earth, in the taste of the sky, in the taste of the sun, in the taste of the moon, in the taste of the stars, in the taste of the planets, in the taste of the galaxies, in the taste of the universe.

In the cure of scurvy swellings, enlarged glands, open sores, or old sores, the "Golden Medical Discovery" has proved the most marvelous cure. It purifies the blood, opens the pores of the skin, and causes the blood to flow freely through the system.

It is well to apply to the open sores Dr. Pierce's "Golden Medical Discovery," which causes wonderful healing potency when used as application to the sores in connection with the use of "Golden Medical Discovery" as a blood-cleansing medicine.

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